

Transcript – Class of 1954

Narrator:

Interviewer:

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Track 1

Q: We're here this afternoon at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research Women at Brown University. The reason for our gathering is to record an oral history for the class of 1954, who this year, celebrate their fiftieth reunion. This was the Pembroke College in Brown University, Class of 1954. Welcome, and certainly congratulations to all of you. Participating in the oral history today are Jettabee "Chris" Edman, Diana Coates Gill, Barbara Reuben Levin we assume is coming in a few minutes, Felice Rinder Kirsh, Pearl Schwartz Livingstone, Diane [01:00] Lake Northrop, Patricia Crabtree Bradley, Marilyn Carlson Simon, Marjorie Gould Sharpe, Joan Bliss Wilson, and Kay Hellstrom Shields.

(tape edit)

Q: And what was your admissions process like? We hear so much today about what the students go through nowadays. So who would like to start? Why did you decide to come to Pembroke?

3: It was in the city.

Q: Were you a city girl?

3: No, but I had been at Northfield for two years, and I really wanted to get out of the booniedocks. And so the admissions – the assistant admissions director came to Northfield and talked to us, and it sounded good. And I also got into Mount Holyoke, and decided after much

discussion with our admissions director at Northfield, that this would be the place for me. I would be a big fish in a little pond. [02:00] So I'm very happy I came here.

Q: Good. Anybody else?

9: I became because my best friend's sister was here, and I came to visit her, and just really loved it. And so –

Q: Where were you from? Where were you living?

9: In Methuen, Massachusetts. Yeah, so it was really just serendipity.

1: I was at a school at the time as Katherine Irwin, who was in the admissions office (inaudible). She's the one. She's the one. And she came and gave a talk, and the headmistress of the school said, "Patty's going in to sing," you know, "we need to fill the room." And it sounded (inaudible), well, I think it was the coordinate aspect that probably, I was all set to go to a small coeducational liberal arts college in Pennsylvania. And she changed my mind.

Q: So the coordinate status was probably important to you?

1: [03:00] It was to me.

7: Katherine Irwin is a very unusual person. She knew all the counselors in the high schools around the country. I was in Cleveland Heights High School, and she knew Marianne Woodsy, who was our counselor. And she came, and I think they talked about different people, and she went after people that she thought would fit into this school. And that was a time when counselors, you know, made a difference. I think these days, it might not be the same. But that was very influential, as far as I was concerned.

Q: You didn't have to take any tests or anything?

7: Oh, SATs.

GROUP: SATs.

6: I don't remember taking those.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

6: I went to Classical High School, local. I was a City Girl, which [you meant?]. And I went to [04:00] Classical High School which was geared for going to college. And I don't know, maybe we didn't have to (inaudible). I don't remember ever taking major tests. And my sister had gone here, and that was because I was following her. But also, I think it was four years later when I was talking to Dean Lewis, and she mentioned that I think the next year was going to be the last year that they had to have a certain percentage of people from Rhode Island attending. That was part of the deal that Brown had with the state of Rhode Island. So I think I lucked out.

Q: Who else was a City Girl? Any other City Girls?

6: I'm the token City Girl. (laughter)

Q: So you lived at home, then?

6: I lived at home.

Q: Did you feel like you missed a lot?

6: Well, we had West House, which I understand now is a vegetarian coop dorm. Somebody was just telling me that about five minutes [05:00] ago. So I don't even know if they had a West House, but I hope they have something for the City Girls, because that made the difference. We could stay there 15 nights a semester, and we could just go there and meet and eat (inaudible) kitchen. It was a little house. And definitely made the difference.

Q: How many dorms were there in your day?

8: There were six freshman dorms freshman year. And then we all moved into one of the three upper class dorms: Miller, Metcalf, or Andrews, as far as I know.

6: Well, Whittier. There were a few people in Whittier.

8: As upperclassmen?

6: Mm-hmm.

8: Oh, Okay.

1: Whittier was a freshman dorm by our junior year.

8: Right. But the freshman dorms were Angell, Allinson, King, Sharpe, Bates, and East.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

8: – totally irrelevant. [06:00]

_: I'm impressed.

8: Can I just say something about why Pembroke was chosen? When I was 14 years old, I was sent to summer camp. And one of my counselors was a Pembroker. She spoke in marvelous tones about the school, and about the academics, and about the parties, particularly the parties. Since she arrived two days late, she was recovering from a party she had attended. And I never forgot that. It was the way she described the school and the atmosphere. And when it came time, I applied.

Q: So those of you who lived in the dorm, can you describe to us a typical day in the dorm?
(laughter) Giggle.

10: The dormitories were all homes here, in Providence. So if you were on the first floor, you were, as I was with my first roommate, it was the kitchen. So it had a gray linoleum floor, and [07:00] pale green walls. There were three stories in Allinson house, if I remember correctly. And a living room area, and all the other rooms that were logical were just made into bedrooms for all of us. Some of them took three students. But it was home away from home when we first got here.

_: Our room had big red and pink roses on the wall. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

8: I can't remember that.

Q: These were the freshman dorms we're talking about [right here?].

7: Yeah. The ones in the houses.

9: I come from St. Paul, Minnesota, and had taken a train overnight in order to get to Providence. Had never been east before in my life. And the Brown students met us, and picked us up, and took us to the dormitories. And then the amazing thing to me was that all these houses were right up next to the street. I hadn't seen that ever before. That was the first impression.

Q: Were you going to [08:00] say something, (inaudible)?

5: Well, I just think it was a wonderful idea to have these little small enclaves, so it was the way you made your friends. You had an immediate group you could refer to, so to speak.

1: It was a transition, I think, for (inaudible).

5: Yeah. It was wonderful, yeah. It was like a sorority, but not really, but –

1: There was always someone to talk to, down in the living room, interaction went on there, and bridge games, and people were probably – we learned more there than in our classes. I just remember the phone ringing all the time.

Q: The phone in the hall? You mean there's a phone in the dorm? (inaudible)

5: I remember we had a fire drill one night, and it was warm, and we were all outside in our pajamas and so forth. And one student did not appear. You remember that? She was married, and she was off with her husband. [09:00] And we never saw her again. (laughter)

10: That's not allowed.

Q: You mean nobody knew she was married?

5: No. I also remember we were not supposed to have cars. And I remember being somewhere, oh, five or six miles away from campus, and Carol [Folder?] drove by in a car. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) And I never said a thing! Until now, until now. (laughter) Well, 50 years later, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

9: I can't remember, how many lates did we have that we could –

10: We had 10 lates a month. Yeah.

7: We also had pranksters. I'm sitting one person away from a prankster from our dorm, Diana, and she used to dump –

9: Dump water bags. We were on the front, over the porch. So when people came to the door –

7: Especially the good-night kisses. Clung. (laughter)

9: [10:00] That was fun.

Q: Now, about dating and social life here, how was that? Did you most date Brown men, or –

9: Generally.

2: Pembroke dated Brown men, but Brown men didn't necessarily date Pembroke. (laughter)

6: Yeah. They chose from the school of design.

8: You could meet other students from other colleges, other men from other colleges. I met my first husband from Amherst, and he came down with the Amherst Glee Club. And I was in the Glee Club. So there were occasions that you – but mostly, it was Brown and Pembroke. And the social life was very lively. It was.

4: There three times as many men as women when we were here, too, which is why Pembroke is a residential and leadership entity [of some import?].

5: And there were 17 fraternities. That's a lot of fraternities. No sororities. [1

1:00] No. I had two very strange dates. One was a fellow who, we rode round and round in his car, he was a ham radio operator, and we just talked to everybody in Providence. And the other fellow –

6: Was he a Brown man, that first one?

5: Yes. I think he's a lawyer now. And the other fellow, we went to Yale, to a game, and the way he got through college was to appraise and buy and sell diamonds. (laughter) And I don't whether it was legitimate or not, but that's how he paid for his tuition. Kind of strange, but –

Q: Now, the generation of the '50s is called the Silent Generation. Any reactions?

11: I think it's absolutely true. Politically, I remember Eisenhower was president, and that's about it. And [12:00] I don't remember any activism on the campus. Or even thinking about –

_: Of course, I don't think we – we couldn't vote – you had to be 21 at that time to vote, so that we weren't –

4: I could vote. I did. It was the first time I voted.

11: But I don't remember any –

2: Any issues that – issues to be resolved.

10: But when read some of – not to overstress the difference between the men and the women, but the men, many of them talked about politics, talked about the possibility of going into the war, the McCarthy hearings. There was a lot more – there really was more emphasis on it from the men's side than there was from the women in those days.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

7: From the women's side, there really wasn't. I was president of Students for Democratic Action, and we had a communist, Anna Louise Strong, come to speak, from China, [13:00] a Chinese communist. And we got into all kinds of trouble. Phil Taft, who was the economist teacher, was a sponsor, and he got into trouble, and I got into trouble, because it was just too much off the wall. You didn't do things like that during those times.

1: I remember being very aware of some of the more domestic issues, the civil rights, very concerned about, you know, the injustice in the world, and that sort of thing in a very broad, general way. Not being unaware of that sort of thing, but not being anywhere near knowing what to do politically. Just naïve about a lot of things, although I don't think it's fair to say we didn't care about the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

10: I remember working in a settlement house in Providence when I was a freshman. [14:00]

7: Actually, Diane (inaudible) I were involved in what's called the campus chest. And we sponsored work to raise funds for charities. And I remember the United Negro College Fund, and another college fund that would work to get African Americans into college, as well as other kinds of agencies. So we did that. I mean, it was kind of a local –

1: It just reminds me of how completely self-centered I was. Because, really, all I could think of was how to get to the dorm, how to write a paper since I never had to do it in high school. And just how to survive here. So I think that's just so admirable.

4: Well, remember, we were encouraged to have volunteer activities. I remember working [15:00] at Providence Lying-In Hospital in the nursery. I mean, and they wouldn't let you even near newborns now, I'm sure. But, you know, we'd pick them up and change their diapers and everything. And we were encouraged, I think, by Dean Lewis and others, to do some form of –

9: I'm sure that's why I was at the settlement house.

4: Yes, exactly. And that's what made me think of it.

8: (inaudible) worked at Rhode Island Hospital freshman year in what they called occupational therapy. That meant I wheeled a cart around with magazines on it [and made them out?]. But it was something.

5: Well, it was the McCarthy era, too, (inaudible).

4: Remember, we rented a television set in East Andrews to watch the Army McCarthy hearings.

1: I do remember watching.

6: Well, wasn't TV fairly new then? Or was it just my family that was the last on the block?
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

6: But I think it was fairly new, and I think [16:00] political activists kind of depend on TV coverage, you know, to get their messages across. And if we didn't have that kind of thing, if we had any kind of activism, it would have just been locally. Maybe would have hit the Brown paper, I mean, the Providence Journal.

10: A lot of it, though, you know, seriously, was about being able to get a decent grade in your class that you were taking. I mean, this was [hard, today I've told people?] that I thought that it was really [national distribution?] was why I got into Brown, and they say, "oh, no, no, no." Well, oh no or not, these were difficult courses. They took someone like me way out into the world that I'd been in before. Totally, totally new psychology, sociology, everything we took, music. None of it related to how well prepared we were. And [17:00] we were all probably well prepared, or we wouldn't have gotten here.

9: I don't know. I don't think I was. I really did not know how to write a paper.

1: Prepared enough to float to be here today anyway, so –

5: Anyone remember Dr. Weiss? He discovered the third sex in some little microscopic animal. That was what he was sort of known for.

3: I didn't know that he was known for that.

5: And I think they always – they always gave you, in these distribution courses, the best professors, and heads of the department. And I think there were two reasons. Number one, they were recruiting for their department, and they were also rooting out the ones who wouldn't be taking those courses and being majors. And just to say, in biology, all of my friends were in biology, like Betsey Jeffords, who's passed on. And they would talk at dinner about cutting up the [dog-faced shark?]. And we'd have spaghetti, and it would be a little hard to take it, [18:00] you know?

6: Well, I was the only senior in Bio 1, because I couldn't face cutting up a cat. And so, you know, there I was. But you had to have it before you graduated.

1: Distribution, yeah. Like passing the swimming test (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And [Reg?] was there to (inaudible).

6: We had to take the course in public speaking that the men didn't have to take.

7: Public speaking course, and then there was one on how to get in and out of a car gracefully. I forget which – which course. I don't know what they called it, but maybe – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

7: Yeah. How you get into and out of a car gracefully. Just don't forget, we didn't wear slacks in those days.

3: That wasn't a course.

8: How to go up and down stairs.

_: In heels.

10: It was phys. ed.

3: Van De Water. Was her name Van De Water?

7: That's right, Janice Van De Water.

6: What did they do with the pictures of us –

9: The posture pictures. [19:00]

7: Well, there was a scandal connected with that, (inaudible) pictures, because – yes, because there was a big article in the *New York Times Magazine* on this company taking all these posture pictures of women, and then there was never any authorizing. I mean, we didn't authorize them to take it. And you had all these pictures of nude women and their postures. Anyway, that came up fairly recently –

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

9: Oh, I remember, lordosis, scoliosis.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

3: No one passed!

8: No, everybody had either scoliosis or whatever.

3: And they were right!

8: Absolutely.

5: And we were reminded that they also took them at Wellesley, and probably Madeline Albright had hers taken.

4: They did at several schools. [20:00] (inaudible) They had a wonderful extracurricular activity. Certainly, music was wonderful, and WBRU, and all the various things you could do.

9: Theater. You could get into all kinds of extracurricular.

4: *Pembroke Record*, *Brown Daily Herald*.

Q: Those were coed?

4: No, we had both.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

7: There was a Brown glee club and a (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

5: Women did not write for the *Brown Daily Herald*. They had their own –

GROUP: The Record.

4: But you could be in the Pembroke Glee Club, or you could be in the Brown Pembroke Chorus. And WBRU was coed. So it was a mixture of whatever you preferred.

3: (inaudible) and Brown as at, too.

8: We had our separate student government, too. We had our SGA, and the men had their own student (inaudible).

7: Cammarian Club.

8: Cam Club, right.

5: Separate chapel, separate library. Separate sports.

10: And everything else was together. [21:00] (laughter)

7: Separate dorms.

5: The labs were together.

7: Separate dorms.

_: Separate meals.

4: And then there were the parietal rules, and the era of gracious living.

6: Well, part of it was because we were a city college. And, you know, you pass by all of these lovely stately homes, you know, and here comes the little – (laughter) in your Bermuda shorts, for heaven's sakes.

7: I think the two major things that I recall in, especially our senior year, one was that our student government became a representative student government. Up to that point, the heads of organizations ran the student government. And we set up a representative student government. And the second thing was – and this was a local, and it was very political, it was work on an academic honor system. We worked all that senior year [22:00] to try to pass an academic era honor system for Brown and Pembroke. And it failed.

4: We had a social honor system.

7: Yeah, we had a social honor system. That's right. And that came up during our tenure here. It didn't start that way.

Q: What is a social honor system? I've never heard that.

8: There was an honor council, you were on it. You headed it.

1: Would that have been the second year? Was it begun the year before we were seniors?

4: Maybe junior year. Yeah.

1: Junior year? It began our junior year. Right.

6: What did it entail? I don't remember.

1: Well, you know, we had rules about checking in and out of the dormitory. You were on your honor to get home on time. You know, all that sort of thing, rather than being checked in at the door with somebody.

3: You know, that happened our freshman year, because one time I came back from vacation, [23:00] and I got in at one o'clock, but it was because I was coming from St. Louis by bus, and there wasn't a bus that got up here before that. But it just so happened that it was a Monday, not a Sunday, and that was the difference. That's how I was exonerated. But I did go before the council.

7: It also involved drinking in the dorm. Alcohol. That kind of thing.

6: That book that I brought for the archives will explain a lot to you. It has all the rules.

Q: What were the hours? Was it 10:30 on weekdays? And one –

GROUP: Ten o'clock.

5: And one o'clock on weekends.

9: And you could be away from campus with signed permission from your parents.

10: And there were only so many a month, though, so you had to sort of plan.

8: That was freshman year.

9: Yeah, freshman.

8: Starting sophomore year, it was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

Q: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Overnight. Did you have to have permission from that?

5: Yeah, [24:00] from your parents.

10: Your parents could give a blanket permission. You didn't have to necessarily have them every time, "My daughter may..."

5: Then Wednesday night and Sunday noon dinners, where we dressed up.

3: Sort of.

5: Sort of. With our gym suits underneath.

3: And the teas.

5: And the teas. Faculty teas.

4: And how about the women who married? That's interesting. You may want to talk about that.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

1: I will be glad to tell you.

Q: You were a married woman?

11: Yes. I was married at the end of my junior year, and had accelerated, went to Trinity College in Hartford. So that I only needed one semester. But I was called in to Dean Lewis's office, [25:00] and she told me that I was not allowed to live in dormitory anymore. And that I could eat in the dining room, but that was it. And I definitely got the impression that I was contaminating
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

_: You were going to lead us astray.

11: Dangerous. I don't look back on that with fondness.

4: No. Dorothy Brandon Stehle. She was married, too. But her husband was in the Navy or something like that.

11: Yes. I think, you see, if your husband was far enough away (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). But if your husband could just drive up two hours, then you weren't so good.

Q: Did he ever come on campus? Did your husband ever come on campus?

11: Well, he'd come up [26:00] a couple weekends. Yeah.

4: Chris was married, too.

10: I got married Christmastime my senior year. And my husband was teaching at Vermont Academy, which wasn't so far away. And I was told I couldn't live anywhere in the dormitories, so I lived on the block right on the – I can't remember the name of the street right now, but on the backside of Andrews. Yeah, I guess it was Bowen, had a little apartment. I thought it was absolutely wonderful. We had a parakeet named Kiki, and a dog named [Trapes?]. I went up to Vermont Academy, you know, about every other weekend, sometimes he came. We thought it was very grown up. Actually, of course, we should have been much older before we got married. Way too soon to get married. Yeah, well, it works for some, but we were very young. I was just barely 20. [27:00] I think one of the things that does for you, it doesn't give you the opportunity to know who you are after you graduate from college. It doesn't give you that experience of entering the work world, or whatever your world might have been to find out a little bit more who you were beyond. But in those years, it was not uncommon to look for your husband in college, even though they say that movie about Wellesley is just hated by everybody there, but still, there was lot of truth in the fact that –

4: There was more truth in that movie than –

10: Than most people would like to admit, so –

1: I can remember wanting to live off campus senior year. I can remember thinking this living in dorms, we'd had enough. And I can't remember who it was that, besides my roommate and I, and I think a couple of others who went to Dean Lewis with a good case, we gave her a good case for why we should be allowed [28:00] to have an apartment. Well, no.

10: I should say not.

1: Not. Absolutely not, not done. Not done.

9: Did your parents care?

1: You know, I don't know if I went to them first (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). I don't remember that part.

3: How many of us had children who came to Brown? Oh, quite a few. Good. Good.

Q: Did you all know Dean Lewis? Did you have (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

5: Everybody had an association with her. She was involved, she was open to having you come in.

9: She made a point of it.

4: I never could have come here without her. I didn't win the Western New England scholarship, and so I wrote back and said I couldn't come because my parents couldn't afford it. And in

August, she wrote a letter and found some money. And she had a math background, and I majored in math, and there were only five of us in the class who did.

Q: Did she know that when you (inaudible)?

4: Yes, and she was so supportive. [29:00] I mean, I just love Nancy Duke Lewis, with her dogs.

1: She was such a role model, you know, as a professional woman, an educator.

6: Very genteel. I know mine, the scholarship she found for me, I didn't find out until later was only \$10 a year, and she said they were embarrassed to give me \$10 a year, so they found money elsewhere. And so it was 100, but 100 was a very good percentage of what we had to pay.

Q: What was the tuition? Eight hundred?

7: Eight hundred dollars for tuition, and 800 for room and board. And by the time –

6: But I think that might have been when we were seniors. I think –

7: No, it was 800 freshman year, and then it got up to 1,200 (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And I remember thinking, my goodness, a 50% up to \$1,200 a year. That was still just as hard for parents to find then as it is [30:00] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

6: I mean, our fathers probably weren't making more than nine or ten thousand at the time.

9: Maybe not that much.

7: She was a very involved dean, also. I recall having a weekly meeting with her my senior year, going over the problems connected with student government, and this academic honor system, and she'd give her advice, and, you know, how to handle things, and I thought she was extremely

supportive and very involved. Very involved in what was going on. I also felt that the Brown administration didn't treat her as an equal, that she constantly had to battle for her position.

Q: Where did the motivation come for the honor system? Did it come from students, or was it her idea?

7: It wasn't her idea. It came from the students, actually. And I think it was an outgrowth [31:00] of what happened with our social honor system. And that's where it came from here, and with Brown, I think they probably heard about the social honor system. But was as strong on Brown campus as it was here, and I was reading some of the old materials, and there was a concern with Brown students that, you know, a certain percentage had to pass it. It had to be passed by 75% of the student body. And Brown thought that if all of Pembroke passed it, then, you know, they may be stuck with it. But I don't think that's the way it happened. I think that it was universal.

5: So do you remember studying all night? I remember, and grabbing coffee and a muffin on my way down to the test at Sayles Hall, which was foreboding. And there was these yawning grad students who'd be handing out the papers, and sitting [32:00] there for three hours, yawning and reading. And while you struggled with writing that composition. And the only thing that it prepared me for was the ten, two, and six o'clock feedings that they (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) later. Other than that, it really didn't help me at all. I didn't remember a thing on that walk between Pembroke and Brown, what I'd studied the whole night. It didn't stay with me.

10: A lot of that business about not having so many female teachers, though, this was Pembroke College in Brown University. When we came – at least when I came – it was the idea that I was coming to an Ivy League school, and a coordinate opportunity to still be separate with women, and still have a Brown degree, was extremely important. So I didn't think that it was odd that we would have male teachers. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) It was [33:00] quite something just to come here.

7: I think there may have been some instructors that were female. I remember in the psychology department, Rosemary, she came back in the – Pierrell. She was an instructor in the psychology

department when we were there. But generally, I don't remember [any of it?]. She became dean later.

10: We also could take courses with Rhode Island School of Design. (inaudible) went there. You could minor in it. It was wonderful to be able to do that, and I understand that was not possible now. You have to go to one school or the other.

9: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) art department than they did.

10: Oh, that was a creative school to be able to go to.

Q: What did you all major in? Did anyone major – I know Diane majored in math. Did anybody else major in math or science?

9: Arts.

10: Sociology.

_: American civilization.

11: I majored in international relations. [34:00]

_: Art.

7: English literature.

8: Modern European History.

6: Music and French.

5: English.

4: Music.

3: Music.

2: American civilization.

Q: Diane was the only one who –

4: There were only five in the class, yeah.

1: It would be interesting to know what you'd major in today if you could choose. I would change mine.

Q: To what?

1: English literature, or psychology, because those are the things that I find out –

10: You're attracted to.

1: Exactly

10: English lit was a wonderful department. Just wonderful.

1: The courses I took there, I think I probably did the best in, which is (inaudible). And I think I'm sorry that I didn't go into something with more depth, because American civilization was – I don't know if they even have it anymore – an interdepartmental major. [35:00] (inaudible) A little of this, a little of that.

8: Well, I enjoyed my English major very much, but looking back on it, I should have majored in math, because professionally, I got into the technical field of computers, and it would have been

a lot more helpful, at least early on. But I can remember a discussion with my freshman advisor where I told him I might be interested in math. And I quote him: “Girls don’t major in math.” And I allowed him to talk me out of it. Yes. Absolutely.

4: Another thing is that even though we had freshman dorms for our freshman year, we always ate three meals a day in the same place together, Andrews Hall. And that was, you know, really a very unifying kind of experience. Yep.

_: [Chipped beef on toast?], right?

10: Liver and bacon.

9: Yes, the train wreck. Remember train wreck?

_: [36:00] Train wreck, yeah.

9: Yes, remember that?

5: Remember Reggie Sullivan getting up? “I have a few announcements.” She used to get on a chair, and [she’s gone?]. She was the first to die, wasn’t she? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

Q: Oh, she was in your class.

5: She was a waitress. And she’d give the announcements. She could be heard all over.

7: She had a booming voice, and a booming personality.

8: And a marvelous sense of humor. And she would get up and say, “There will be!” (inaudible) And then she would announce whatever it was.

4: And we passed all the serving dishes around, too. Family style.

6: I remember waiting on the head table. I did that for extra money. Whenever they had some kind of a function. So it was nice, because I got to know Wriston and Keeney. Keeney wanted me to babysit, but that was beneath me. Waitressing was OK.

5: You really had to straighten up after a date, [37:00] and you went in the door, and there was the judge and the jury sitting there, and –

10: Waiting for people to come in. I still remember that, because there was no drinking in my life before I came to college. And I was one of the people to sign one of the girls in. And she came in just so sick, and we got her up to the second floor, and she was sick, and the third floor. By the time we got her into bed and then had to change those sheets again, I thought, that's the end. I'll never, ever drink to that point. Ah! But that was pretty rare. For the most part, I think nobody had known much about drinking, but there was certainly a reputation at Brown for partying.

4: But we also sang so much and had such fun, partying, dancing, and singing.

7: Yeah. It was a wild and good time.

1: And look at the old pictures in the yearbook. I mean, the parties, [38:00] the boys with ties, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

3: Football games with stockings and (inaudible) dresses.

10: And Art Tatum was playing for one of the fraternities. I have that written somewhere, that, you know, we had great jazz pianists who would come from the fraternity house. And we didn't have any idea how good it was, I think.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

6: She came, and she wore this dumpy old gown. I just remember that. And she was (inaudible). She came and she sang for us. Yeah.

4: I remember Louis Armstrong down – [yeah, the celebrity club?]. Sammy Davis, Jr. came to Brown (inaudible).

(video edit)

6: I mean, I like to hear the name Pembroke and see the name Pembroke on things. And the same thing with the whole, all the people that live in San Francisco. If you bring in something that says “Brown,” it does not sell at our auction. It has to say “Pembroke.” And –

11: Really? You are in San Francisco? I didn’t know that, because my daughter lives in San Francisco, and [39:00] I had no idea.

6: If you’re in our area. (laughter) It’s the first Saturday in December every year. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) And we used to meet four times a year, but now we’re down to one time.

4: That’s why, among many, many reasons, it’s important to support the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, because that is the history of women at Brown, and so many other things, of course, that are done. But it’s very important that everybody be a member and support the work of the Pembroke Center.

7: Ask her what her license plate says. (laughter)

4: BROWN-dot-U. I hope I don’t get a ticket. (laughter)

Q: So what did you all do after graduating from college?

5: May I make a comment? I noticed in the yearbook that [40:00] almost everyone in that yearbook married, either male or female, married a person who had a college education. And not necessarily when into a profession, but they had at least a BA degree. I was quite surprised when I saw that. All of us, without exception.

4: However, you asked about what we did, and I majored in actuarial mathematics, and I went to New England Mutual Life Insurance Company to work in the actuarial department. And all of the sudden, I went to the vice president who was chair of the actuarial department. I said, but everyone around me is a high school graduate. And he looked right at me, and he said, "Actuaries are officers, and officers aren't women." Quote, unquote. Now, I'm sure I had no clue as to what I was doing anyhow, and a good friend of mine said, "Diane, there were women pilots in World War I, and you weren't one of them." But that's just an example [41:00] of what happened. I eventually went into teaching, but, you know, Barbara, what happened to you?

11: Well, I was married, and so went back to, you know, Hartford where we had an apartment. I had some dreams of, you know, international relations. I was going to be a Foreign Service officer. And of course, that didn't happen. And then I applied for jobs at what was then Hartford National Bank on a training program, and the person who interviewed me said, "I have to ask you, are you planning on having children?" That I remember very well. And I didn't get in the program.

6: Well, I was in a female oriented job. So I didn't get that, because I was [a TWA?] hostess, and they were [42:00] mostly women then. It was probably the men that got the questions. And then after five years there, I married, and my husband didn't want me to work, but finally, he got sick of my volunteering so much, and he said, "Well, maybe you could get some money." And so I worked at De Anza College, which is a community college. Largest in the world, I believe. And I helped with registration, and did that as a temporary job for 25 years.

Q: Where was this, [Kate?]? Where?

6: Sunnyvale, California.

Q: But you're not from there, are you?

6: I was raised in Rhode Island. And I know I'll go back with a Rhode Island accent, because I used to get letters from my father, and he'd say, "Oh, you heard from Rhode Island today,"

because I must have read them in Rhode Island-ese. (laughter) And talked that way. All I had to do was say hello, you know? And “Oh, you got a letter from home.” You know?

9: [43:00] I had the same thing with a Massachusetts accent. And it comes and goes. (inaudible) Yeah, it’s just funny.

6: Well, when I was waiting for the shuttle today, I was thrilled because all these guys around were talking Rhode Island. Oh, it’s wonderful. I knew I was home.
(video edit)

Q: You’re an artist, is that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

9: Well, I majored in art, and I worked for one year in an advertising agency. And then got married to someone in the Navy, and traveled, and had children, and never really – other than I worked later for an art association in Mystic.

Q: Isn’t there one of [the group that was?] a painter?

GROUP: Barbara.

11: That’s me, the international relations lady. Yeah, used to be we had. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) the other way around for me. [44:00]

1: Barbara has painted – I haven’t seen it yet – she has a painting of Federal Hall, which she will be presenting as part of the class gift. And we’ll hang it [in an honored?] place when we take back (inaudible), which is (inaudible) moving hard on that.

7: Whose portrait are you taking down to put her picture up?
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

3: Well, I started out majoring in math, but at the end of my sophomore year, I realized just not the thing for me. So I switched to music, and I don't know if you remember, people – music majors talking about 198, which is a terrible course. I managed to get through it. No, it wasn't theory, you had a paper a week, and you had to listen to all these records, from medieval to renaissance to modern music. And I thought, my gosh, these are [45:00] terribly boring things. Well, as it turned out – I got married right after college. And in '60, we moved to Princeton, and I joined the Y, and in 1962, they had a luncheon for the people who were going off. You were no longer a newcomer, so you had to. And there was a recorder group I heard, and I thought, oh, what a beautiful sound. I have to learn how to play that instrument. So I did, and then in 1974, I took up the viola da gamba, which is also renaissance instrument. But it's a stringed instrument, and I'd gotten certified in teaching both of them, and that's what I've been doing as well. So all my music.

7: Your major was music? But Joan, you led the chapel choir, I remember. I remember chapel choir, and Joan was leading us, right?

3: And still, now that I'm at [46:00] [Kendall?], which is a CCRC, and we have a chorale. And when the conductors can't come, well, guess who [gets in?]?

_: You're it. (laughter)

3: I have a class there of older women. Not necessarily residents, but some of the people. So I'm still doing it.

4: Well, math is music, and music is math. I've spent most of my life doing music, too, so it's so important. We had wonderful opportunities.

Q: So I guess you all agree that it was a good thing for you to come to Pembroke.

GROUP: Absolutely. Yes.

1: My first job was right here.

2: Oh, I remember that, too.

1: Yeah. I was offered a job in the admissions office. I was an admissions officer here for two years. Got to travel, [47:00] got to talk to girls in schools. Like, somebody talked to me, and I decided in those two years that I really did want to stay in the education field, but it was more important to be in the classroom. So I ended up teaching, which was not what I ever thought I would do. Judy Wells came by and said that she was going to go to graduate school, why didn't I come, too? It was something like that in there. So we both got a master's in teaching, and that's what I've ended up doing.

2: I worked at the Travelers Insurance Company when I graduated from college for a year, and then got married, and my husband was in the service, so we lived in Arizona for a year. When we came back, he went to law school. And today, I would have gone too, but back then, it wasn't in the cards. [48:00] When the kids were old enough, I went back and got a master's in speech pathology, and worked for 21 years in public schools, doing articulation and language therapy with little children.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

5: I never finished college here, as you probably know. I had three years, and the reason was that I was offered a job touring with an acting company for children. And I just took it, and went all over the United States. And it was quite interesting. So I did go back 23 years later in Vermont, and finished. But can I just say something about music appreciation? Because I had such luck. We studied Brahms, and we had to go and listen to all the records. Well, when I was working for a newspaper, I think 30 years later, the music critic couldn't do [49:00] the concert, do the critique of the concert. So they jumped on me to do it, and I really didn't want to. Because I could do a drama one, but not music. But wouldn't you know that it was Brahms' 1st? And that was one I had studied. And I found my notes, and so I was able to go and take the concert with a little bit of knowledge. Talk about luck.

3: I remember Brahms' Variations on a Theme.

11: And Brahms' 3rd. I remember living over there, and [that melody?]. (laughter) (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Every time I hear it now, I'm back at Andrews, really.

7: One of the things that helped me in getting a job was working on *Pembroke Record*. And I had a portfolio of stories that I'd written, and I got a job at the *Cleveland Press*. And it was when [50:00] the *Cleveland Press*, they really made the Sam Shepherd trial. And it was very exciting time to work there. And I worked there for a few years, until I got married and had children. And then I got my master's degree in education, went back teaching social studies to sixth graders for about 25 years. So teaching –

6: Sixth grade, that's a tough grade.

7: Oh, it's a great grade, though. You know, they're just able to start abstracting. They're so much fun. But there are social problems to it. Anyway, yeah. That was good.

Q: Are you all marching on Monday?

GROUP: Absolutely.

10: Hope it's not raining on Monday.

Q: We'll trust the weatherman. Well, does anybody have anything to add? Anything that comes to your mind that you want to say that you wish you had said?

2: [Things] will happen tomorrow.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

1: I just think [51:00] maybe for another time, I don't mean to stretch this out any longer, but I think it's so interesting to hear the volunteer organizations that people are, you know, giving their lives to, their hearts, and their souls to. And just in reading the yearbook. We're all volunteering in something. I don't suppose volunteering will ever go out of style, but it certainly has been important to our generation.

10: Yeah. That there is less time for people to volunteer.

7: Maybe our fifty-fifth reunion, we'll do something on volunteerism. That'd be great.

Q: And what do you have tomorrow? You have a luncheon?

GROUP: Yes.

6: We're eating our way through this weekend. I can't believe all the dinners and lunches.

10: Lunch, dinner. (laughter)

12: I'd like to hear, in one more minute, what you do do as volunteers.

1: We live in a small community now in the Eastern Shore of Maryland. And my husband and I are both docents [52:00] at the Maritime Museum in St. Michaels. And we both work with Habitat for Humanity. And I'm involved in in a women's club, and do a couple of book discussion groups. But that's for me, that's not – that doesn't do anybody else any good. That's just, and work with our church in a number of ways around the social concerns. I say "we," because Joe and I are pretty much doing the same things. He does some things I don't do, and vice-versa. But pretty much, it's together.

6: Well, I belong to a women's society called PEO. And –

1: Another (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

6: Don't ask me what it means.

7: Because she won't tell. (laughter)

6: But we run a thrift shop, and it helps run the health unit, and a facility that PEOs [53:00] can belong to. And so I run the book corner, and it's about – we sell about 1,000 books a month, which means I'm putting them up so they can be sold. And they add a dollar each, that kind of thing. I mean, come. And it's getting me to read a lot. So, I mean, it's helping me too. But, and I just have a whole lot of them. That's the one I spend the most time. But...

4: I've been in elected office for 31 years. Yeah, Ward of Finance in Glastonbury, and I'm the chair. And before that, the library board, public service, and all kinds of committees in my town. And then CONCORA, which is – I'm on the board of CONCORA, which is Connecticut Choral Artists. And that's another labor of love. And then [54:00] the Associates Council of the Pembroke Center. So all kinds of involvement. And I go up to the Brown Charter, which says you should lead a life of usefulness and reputation. And that was the message, I certainly felt very much when I was here, and for the rest of my life.

Q: Good legacy. Well, thank you all very much for coming. And again, congratulations. And the weather has cleared, that's a good omen. So have a wonderful, wonderful weekend.

6: This is a great way to start the weekend. Thank you, whoever thought of (inaudible).

(crosstalk to end)

(credits)

[55:00]

- END -