

Transcript – Class of 1974, 50th Reunion

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Amanda Knox: Alright. Good afternoon, at least from where I am. It is Monday, March 4, 2024. It is 2 pm eastern time. My name is Amanda Knox. I'm the assistant archivist at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University and I'm here today interviewing members of this year's 50th reunion class, members of the class of 1974.

Before we get into what that meant for everybody, what that time was like, I'd like for our interviewees to introduce yourself. So, if you could please just share your name and your concentration that would be great. And we'll start, I'll just kind of follow around my little Zoom room here. Marge, if you wouldn't mind kicking us off.

Marge Grayson: Sure. Marjorie, I was Neifeld then, Grayson now. I majored in history and I, my focus was American and European, 1870 to 1970. [1:00]

AK: Wonderful. Welcome. Pamela.

Pamela Lenehan: I'm Pam Lenehan. I was Pam Farrell back then. And I started out majoring in math. Once we got to the fourth dimension, decided to switch to mathematical economics, and I was able to finish the degree in 3 years so I stayed for fourth year and got, also a master's in economics.

AK: That's amazing. Thank you. Welcome. Jane.

Jane Green: My name is Jane Green, but I was known as Jane Heitman back in college. And I started also as a math major, but when we stopped using numbers and used only letters, that's

when I realized I needed to do something applied. So, I majored in urban studies which basically was a focus on social history and culture from mostly 19 – 1865 to 1880.

AK: Wonderful. Thank you. Welcome. Mary.

Mary Vascellaro: My name is Mary [2:00] Vascellaro. Back then, Mary Aguiar. I came to Brown thinking I wanted to be pre-med, but very quickly changed. And got my AB in psychology with a focus on developmental psychology. But then did not use that degree specifically, but went to Wharton immediately upon graduation and got an MBA.

AK: Wonderful. Welcome. And Donna.

Donna Williamson: Hi! I'm Donna Williamson. I was known as Donna Erickson when I was at Brown. And I was a major in applied mathematics. I got a bachelor of science degree in applied math, and was told as a sub-frosh that women never finish their degree in applied math, so I was determined to do that, and I then went straight to MIT and got a master's of science [3:00] in management.

AK: Wonderful. Thank you all so much for taking the time to be here today. I just want to set some context for our listeners a little bit. So, you all would have entered around 1970, the fall of 1970, graduated in the spring of 1974. So, what that meant was that you were also the last class admitted to Pembroke College, the Women's College in Brown University.

MG: That's actually not true. The next class was admitted to Pembroke, but it wasn't there when they got there.

AK: Oh, okay, alright, that is –

MV: I didn't even know that!

MG: Yeah, because they didn't, they still had a separate admission office for the next class.

JG: That's right. Yeah.

AK: That makes sense for the time, the academic timeline. So, can you tell me a little bit, did you know the direction that Pembroke was going to take when you were applying, or were you all kind of applying for the experience of kind of [4:00] a women, "exclusively women's education?" I know it didn't kind of turn out that way, but can you tell me a little bit about your thought process going into it, and whether or not that felt like a big shift when that change happened so soon after you got to campus? And feel free to kind of jump in as, as you feel comfortable.

MV: I, I'll start. I don't remember choosing Brown or Pembroke because it was a women's college. Personally, I grew up in Rhode Island, and I was choosing it to be close to home. I have, I had a windowed mother. I wanted to be close to home. So I think as soon as I got to Brown, other than having the independent, the separate college, it felt co-ed from the beginning. I knew the classes [5:00] were co-ed going in. Did any of you have a different reason for applying to Pembroke?

MG: Well, I was interested in the coordinate school because there, there weren't that many really, really top coed schools like, and I knew I didn't want to go to a seven sister. And I knew that it was basically like separate living, but every – classes were co-ed from the, you know, World War II on, and we all, we knew that. But yeah, I mean, I knew I didn't want an all-women's school. So, it was more probably more coed than I actually had anticipated. But I loved that it was.

JG: And I, I knew that Brown was going to be a coed in terms of the classes right at the beginning, and I picked Brown specifically, because of the, [6:00] my major, which at that time was math. I knew Brown had a very strong program in math, applied math and, and all.

I don't think that I knew that Pembroke was going to be merged into Brown at the time that I applied, and I really was opposed to it in a lot of ways, because, academically, I think the women who applied and were accepted at, at Pembroke were, had, had better credentials than a lot of the men. And I was figuring that we, we should keep that up. At any rate, then I didn't, major in math. And you know, coeds fine.

DW: I, I applied thinking I was applying essentially going to Brown. I was looking mostly at the curriculum, and I really was impressed by the applied math group, because almost all the other schools I looked at had engineering departments, [7:00] and I really didn't want to do engineering. And so, I got that along with the new curriculum which allowed me to do things like French and English and other humanities that, that I was really interested in as well. So, I, I really liked the combination of the core curric – the new curriculum and the applied math discipline. That, that really attracted me.

PL: So I, I applied to Brown. I looked at all the Seven Sisters and the Ivies. That's sort of what my family insisted on, and my sister was at Brown, and she had a really good experience. She was 2 years ahead, and so it seemed like the natural place for me to go. So I applied early, was delighted to get in early. And I thought of it as Brown, not really Pembroke, even though for all four years I chose to live on the Pembroke site because I just liked the campus.

MG: So the, I, I also got in early and back then you had to apply, I, I don't know why I remember this so [8:00] precisely, but you had to apply by July first and you heard by October first of your senior year. Which I also remember, made me like an object of veneration my senior year in high school because everyone was like, “Oh, my God, you're already in college!” And so there were some things about that like, like, I didn't know that Pembroke would end because I really had applied a few years before we, before I got there. So, and Pam, obviously you did, too. So, I mean I thought of it as Brown and I had a male cousin who was at, who had gone to Brown. So, so I knew, like the general atmosphere, and I visited but –

MV: I, I do remember when the acceptance letter came. And I applied regular because I had severe financial aid needs. So, I ended up, well, that's the side story [9:00] that I do want to talk about. But what I was going to say is, I remember getting the packet and we had to buy a gym suit. Do you all remember that? We had to buy a navy blue bloomers-type gym suit and a special bathing suit, and –

MG: I thought they dropped that.

MV: And we got there and it all had been you know, I think they had gotten rid of it. But I had bought it, and yeah, never used it. So things happened that sort of summer, be, you know in terms of a lot of changes.

But what, well, I don't know, if you want to get into financially or any of those things, but you know, I'm still really active at Brown, so I've seen sort of, as we all are, and I've seen the evolution of what is offered now [10:00] for financial aid. But I remember getting into University of Rhode Island, Boston University, Northeastern, and Brown. And maybe, did I apply to Salve Regina? I don't know. I was staying close to home. And the, the aids packets came, and despite Brown's much higher tuition, which now seems like nothing, it was going to cost my mother, and it was going cost us less for me to go to Brown because I had gotten a significant financial aid package. But I remember how it, it involved work study, it involved summer, and that all impacted my experience at Brown when we start to talk about things [11:00] we did there, I did nothing but work and study. But I had to prove to my mother that it was going to be more economic for me to go to Brown because of that generous financial aid package. I don't think probably any of you were on financial aid.

MG: I was.

MV: Were you? But not, not to the extent –

MG: Not to the extent you were. But so, I, I had a like a scholarship slash loan.

MV: Yeah. But you didn't have a work study?

MG: No, I did not. I didn't have as much of a need as you did.

DW: I did when one of my, when, I have 3 younger sisters. When they started I got some financial aid.

MG: And, and that was what happened is my brother, I have an older brother, and he was in college and, well, actually, he was in medical school.

MV: Medical school.

MG: So that's why I, I think I got the aid [12:00] because he was in medical school.

JG: And I'm the oldest of 3. My sister was, is, 2 years younger than I am, my brother 11 years, and my father was so thrilled that I had gotten into Brown. So, I really had a good time. I didn't have any financial aid, but I really appreciated the time and the opportunities at Brown. But it was very different, because while I worked very hard through high school, I, I worked, I studied a lot, but I had a good time because I didn't have to work so –

MV: Where did you go to high school, Jane? Were you in a public school or?

JG: A public school on Long Island. I mean, it was a good public school, but it was a public school, and our classes were fairly large. And I just always loved to study. I, I, I really enjoyed high school [13:00] as opposed to law school. But, but I, I did very well, and I was ready for the challenge.

And one of the things I remember, though, is I had taken AP math and whatever else in in high school that I could take, but the first. I think, the first year when we were coming home from the first semester of, of school, I remember the last exam I had to take was a math exam. And then the people on the train with me going back to Long Island were also in my math class. And they were some people who had created computers – and we're talking 1970 – and all sorts of things. And I said, you know, I can't compete with that. I don't want to compete with that. But I had more interest in, in using numbers applied, and yet I found that [14:00] if I had had a little more career counseling or academic counseling, I would have changed my major sooner, and also probably have taken many different courses. Engineering would have been perfect for me in a lot of ways, but I never knew that. And, and my father grew up, he was an all science major, so he, he knew I wasn't into science, so it, it. I always liked to write, which is why I went to law school ultimately.

MV: Yeah. Yeah, I'll, I'll sort of second that about not having great counseling. I don't know if it's gotten any better, or if you all had different experiences. But I, I mentioned that I came in

thinking I wanted to be premed and I had been an excellent math science student in high school, and won the [15:00] Rensselaer Award that year, you know, and I got to Brown and I got placed, or I chose to skip a more basic biology class and go right into, I can't remember what it was called, but it was very cellular biology, and it was really hard for me, you know. I shouldn't have had that. I shouldn't have. So, and then I remember it was the night before, I don't know if Marge remembers any of this, the night before a final in that class and my mother ended up in the hospital in Newport. And Jerome, who's now my husband, then my boyfriend, drove me there. I came back the next morning, took the exam and got a B-. And it was like, oh, my God! My first B ever! [16:00] And I just decided I couldn't be a doctor, I mean, from that one experience. Now, maybe there were other things going on that. I don't remember that didn't give me the confidence I needed. But I think if I had a good counselor or somebody I could have gone in to talk to, it might, I might have ended up differently. And I took three applied math classes, computer science classes, loved them, did really well in them, and I wish there had been someone pushing me in that direction.

MG: Okay, so I have this really wacky memory. When you're just talking about that, you know, we had like an RA in the Hall and she ended up having academic problems and grad – she was started a year ahead of us and graduated either with our class or the year after ours, so [17:00] I mean, she was a lovely person, but she wasn't exactly giving us advice. She needed her own.

PL: We were the first class with the new curriculum, and I think there was a lot of confusion at that time, because they had done away with all the requirements, except for in your major, and that those were decided by the individual departments. And so, I just felt, I mean, I had gone to a very small school. It was very strict, you know. We started in eighth grade with Chaucer in the original English and then went through EE Cummings, and so everything was sort of plotting along, and then I got to Brown, and it was like being in a candy store. You know, you could, you could take anything, you could do anything.

We had these modes of thought classes, I don't know if you remember those, that were taught by full professors. They were very small classes of like 20 people. I remember taking one on Japan. And so it was just liberating, I thought, to be able to take, even though I was, I was a math major and then went into mathematical economics, I mean, I was taking psychology and I

was taking sociology and philosophy, and, and I took a lot of art, history courses, and I just thought [18:00] it was really fun.

JG: It seems to me that most people who are accepted at Brown or Pembroke were accepted in part, or in significant part, by the fact that they really had a well-rounded background and was, were interested in a lot of different things. I think, in the 4 years I was at Brown I only met one person who clearly wanted to be a writer, and took 32 courses in either English literature or writing. And I did the same thing as, as Pat. I took all sorts of different courses, and I really enjoyed that because I was exposed to different areas that I had never been exposed to before.

MG: So, so I came to Brown, thinking I would never have to do math and science again. And at the end, I don't know. I think they, they did some kind of survey or somebody did a something, and it turned out I satisfied all the distribution [19:00] requirements from before, because they had been pretty broad. But it did turn out that, you know, I dipped into this, and I dipped into that. And even though I really focused on history and English literature, I had done it all. I mean, I still remember one of the most memorable classes I took was computers for liberal arts majors, and man. That was the most useful thing. Like, like, years later, I, I was in a law firm that was just starting to do some computers and I remembered somebody saying, "It won't do this," and I said, "I know it will do it. I don't know how you make it do it, but go investigate because it will do it." You know? And it was something like, you know, search and replace, or something like that. But I knew all those things from that one class that I had taken.

MV: But not as much fun as Schroder's Shakespeare classes. [20:00]

MG: No, that was a great class.

DW: I, I had 18 math courses with a bachelor of science degree. And you know, my parents said I had to basically earn my keep when I get out of Brown. So, I figured the best way to do that was to have some sort of technical background. And so I stuck with it. But I, I did a lot of auditing. So, I audited Shakespeare and Champa [?] art history, and, and I just loved, you know, being able to sit in on these courses. And then, of course, I, one of my most, I didn't think I'd ever

take another English course once I got to Brown, but I did. I, I took a creative writing course with John Hawkes, and I just really enjoyed being able to explore different areas.

AK: Somebody had said specifically, when I put the call out to participate in the interview that they wanted to talk about [21:00] women's inequality and, and that experience on campus. Would anybody like to talk a little bit about that or your experience, you know, in this moment where Pembroke is kind of dissolving, things are sort of coed, it's the seventies. Can, do, does anybody want to talk about that a little bit?

JG: I have some very distinct recollections of being on the business staff of the *Brown Daily Herald* and I was probably the only female in the entire, on the entire staff, news and all. And I remember the, the people who were, as a freshman, the people who were in the managerial or editorial positions were not used to having a woman there and so they would, and, and their language was very, very foul. [22:00] And they started off saying, "Watch it. There's a woman in the, in the office," or something. And ultimately, little by little, I started cursing, too. And I, and I wrote a sociology paper my second year on the patterns of, of, of profane language at the *Brown Daily Herald*.

DW: That's really funny because I had an interview in grad school for a manufacturing position, and I, I had two guys interviewing me, and they went around and they, there were two positions, one in finance and one in manufacturing, and when I told them I wanted the manufacturing job, one guy looked at another and said, "What are you going to do now?" And so they said, "Well, how would you feel about being in a plant? You know, they have all these foul words," and so forth. And I said, "Well, I've probably heard worse in my dorm." [23:00] So he said, "You're probably right."

PL: I, I had a TA position with an economics professor, and I was, he was helping him do research for a book that he was writing. And I think it was the second semester I was working for him, he made a pass at me, and I was just shocked because I had gone to a girl's school and I had never seen anything like that before Brown. And I had a boyfriend. And, and so I just sort of, you know, I, I don't know what I did, but I sort of got out of that office pretty quickly as he was

coming around the side of the desk and trying to get me. And, and I went home and I called my mother, days before cell phones, you know where we had the, the rotary phones. And you know she burst out laughing, and she said, “You have to learn how to say no gracefully.” And so, I’ve always said that to my daughters, I think we were the last generation that really faced such, maybe not the last, but, but you learn pretty early how to say no. I obviously quit and insisted he pay me my [24:00] final check for the hours that he owed me. But it was, it was for the first time I ever had someone treat me other than as an equal

MG: This isn’t really so much about that, but I remember that it was very odd our freshman year, because we had parietals and, and we had like there was somebody at the desk, but you actually had unlimited overnights, so it was like more awkward to come back after whatever it was, 10 o’clock, 11 o’clock, than to just stay out. And so somewhere in the midst of our freshman year, they kind of, we as a dorm, dorms voted on whether or not to keep that. And, and some of the, the seniors did not want to get rid of the, of the visitation rules and stuff like that. But I mean, it’s so, I mean, and [25:00] the boys’ dorms didn’t have any rules at all. So that, that was just an inbred thing that we all just sort of rebelled against, and by sophomore year wasn’t an issue at all. I mean, half of us were living in co-ed dorms by sophomore year.

JG: Yeah.

AK: This is an interesting point that I don’t know if I’ve asked any other reunion classes about. I am often asking about the relationship between men and women on campus. But what was that relationship like with, with upper class women at Pembroke? Did you find that they were more committed to sort of the tradition of Pembroke, and, and kind of the older way of being? Or did you feel like, did you feel very different from one another, or was everybody sort of meshing better than one might think?

MV: I don’t think I had any contact, much contact [26:00] with –

MG: Not when we were freshman.

[overlapping audio]

MG: One of my best friends from Brown was the class ahead of ours, and, but she was one of the first people to move into a coed dorm. That was like experimental, so. But there were definitely women in Andrews who did not want to let, like let guys be in the, in the dorm at all hours, but I would say by sophomore year it was sort of moot.

PL: Oh, my sister was two years ahead of us, so I knew all of her friends. In fact, I'm probably closer to some of her friends than I am to some of the people in in our class. But the thing that I remember is that they had gone through all of the student riots and the camp demonstrations, etcetera, and I think that the four years we were around was just very quiet. I mean, the war was basically over, the you know, the, the curriculum had changed, there weren't any rules. There's sort of nothing [27:00] to rebel against, and so I think that they felt that that we just, you know, we were kind of riding on their coattails in the sense that they had given us this great environment, and we were benefiting from it.

JG: That's really that's really funny, because I didn't have that approach. I didn't have that feeling at all. It seemed to me that war was still not only going on, but, but increasing, and I remember we were allowed to go home for the two weeks before election day to work with candidates which, I don't know how many people actually did that, but I had been very opposed to the war from an early time in I want to say high school, but it may have been in, in middle school. And, and I was just, I remember spending hours in boy, Faunce Hall discussing politics with other people and what was happening. And when the, when the [28:00] Watergate hearings were going on we were all glued to the television. I do remember that very distinctly.

MV: Yeah, that was certainly the case, but the campus environment as Pam said, you know, the reforms that happened, the demonstrations, Ira Magaziner and that whole thing had already set the course for us. But, and maybe giving us more chance to focus and think about the bigger issues off campus. But the on-campus stuff was pretty quiet. There may have been things going on. What, what is, I, I can't even remember now the classes where there were racial, taking over University Hall, and that, that was all before us, right?

MG: No, some of that happened while we were there.

MV: I can't remember now. [29:00]

MG: The other thing that, that when there was the conference that actually Mary put together, the 120 Years of Women at Brown, and someone raised, then, like a student, said something along the line of, "Well, gee, you, it sounds like none of you people went abroad for a semester or year." And this person on the panel, and she was a couple of years ahead of us, but it still applied to us, was like, "Well, the guys couldn't because, or take time off, because they would have been drafted," because the draft was still really big up to like end of '72. So we, as women, were probably less likely to take time off because none of the guys were, and the guys totally couldn't. And it wasn't until that person said it at that conference that I went, oh, yeah, that must be why nobody ever took time, you know, like no one took a gap year, no one, and very few people went abroad. I mean, granted, maybe [30:00] it was a little more expensive to do it per, you know, based on what our families were worth, but that was something that underlay our education is that we had to just go straight through. I don't know anyone who didn't.

PL: I had an internship the summer of Watergate, and in fact, I worked at the FDIC, so I must have gotten it through Brown. And the FDIC, as you may know, faces the side of the White House, and so, Nixon's last term in office, he was trying to bring in all sorts of, of leaders from overseas, and they needed an audience to be there to clap, and people who were pre-screened, etcetera. And so, they would just come in some afternoons and say, "Okay, all you interns should go over to the White House." And so we would go there, and so, "The Shah of [inaudible] arriving by, you know, Marine, Air Force, Marien One," and whatever. And so they, we were just, I spent a lot of my afternoons, and then we would spend our evenings watching, you know, replays of the Watergate hearings. [31:00] And we had a very political guy from Harvard who would give us all of the background and all this other stuff. So, you're right, I guess I had sort of forgotten that. But it still seemed that the campus itself was quiet. It was sort of what the outside world was doing.

AK: This is jumping ahead quite a bit in your time at Brown. but while we're on this topic of sort of like the national context that you're living in, the summer before your last year at Brown, Roe v. Wade is passed. Did that have any impact on your experience at Brown like life pre-Roe, do you have kind of anything to share about that or life in that year on campus once Roe is passed? Did that have any major impact?

JG: My father always treated me equally to any boy in terms of academics [32:00] and opportunities, and I guess from a relatively early age, also, I was very much in support of women's rights and equality. So, I know that Roe V. Wade was something that mattered to me, even though it didn't personally affect me. It's had far more of an impact over the last 50 years than, and, and now, than it did at, at school for me.

MG: I, I would actually tend to agree that I don't remember anybody who needed to have an abortion that confided in me in any way, although I'm sure there must have been people who did. And certainly, I was very pro Roe v. Wade, because I somehow, and I really have no idea how this happened, but at some point in my [33:00] teenage years my father told me that his mother had at one point self-aborted with a coat hanger. So that was just part of who I was, and am as a human being, to have known that. And I honestly have no idea why or how he came to tell me that.

PL: I don't remember it being a big subject when I was at Brown, but maybe Mary remembers this – at the 125th, we had a speaker from Planned Parenthood, and one of our fellow alums got up there and announced, kind of as a surprise to everybody who knew her, that she had had an illegal abortion right before exams and had never told anybody. And so really, I think that – and I've subsequently met other women who, during that time period, had had, you know a, a, a pregnancy that that was not ideal, and that they had illegal abortions. And it's the type of thing that just even your best friends didn't know about it. So, I was just [34:00] surprised in retrospect that it was much more important to people than I realized at the time.

MG: I, I had a friend at Brown who told me she'd had one in high school.

MV: But I, you know, I'm trying to remember. I think there was a national controversy at the time even over distributing the pill at Brown. I think, Roswell Johnson, was that his name, was on the Today Show? And was that our year? And it was a big national controversy on whether the pills should be distributed on campus.

DW: I, I had a friend who had an abortion in college and she had to go to New York before Roe v. Wade was passed. I think that was, was very limited at that point, [35:00] and so it, it was a real concern of college age and high school age women, particularly before access to the pill. The pill really changed things too.

AK: So to look again, a little bit, perhaps more, personally or specific to your experience at Brown, do you have any high points or low points, like really vivid memories, of your time on campus that you would like to share for the record?

JG: I have a couple of things, and you have to help me out here, because I can't remember the name of it, but one of my favorite places to go when we finished our homework or whatever was the, a little snack bar, or whatever, in the, I think it was in the basement of, of –

PL: The Gate! [36:00]

JG: Yeah. And they had the best hot fudge –

MG: Yes! Ice cream sundaes!

JG: On peppermint ice cream. I never liked peppermint until then. But more seriously, the one thing that I remember from Brown that I found was reflective of the times and very disconcerting, well, disheartening was, okay, so I grew up in a neighborhood which was almost all white. It was religiously mixed, but that was, but, but not racially mixed. And when I came to Brown there were a lot of different backgrounds of people and, not as diverse as today, but there were, there was diversity, and certainly economic as well as academic, and racial and, and religious. It [37:00] worked out that my best friends were somebody who was just like me and

somebody else, Rita Rouse, who was very different from me. She was Black. She grew up in Scarsdale. She graduated in '74. She grew up in Scarsdale, but her mother was a housekeeper for a wealthy family. It turns out that the, the husband was, had gone to Brown, and the wife had gone to Smith, and she was always very, very bright. And so that's how she made the connection to go to Brown. But, and I also learned that from what I knew, a lot of the African American students were from solidly middle-class backgrounds, or professional like top college professors and all. So, when she and I were friends, a lot of the [38:00] Blacks who wanted to stay together and unified really, treated her as a pariah. And I found this, one, offensive to me because it was hurting her, and, and very detrimental to her experience at Brown. We, we parted at after college, and she went off in one direction, and I went to law school. We found each other 25 years later, at the 25th reunion, we recognized each other instantly. And on and off, and now it's much, much, much more on, we are still very close. I mean she lives in Charlotte, I live in Durham, North Carolina, and my son lives in Charlotte, so we get to see her, and she's come here, and there's, there's, it, it's something that I thought was a very difficult situation [39:00] at Brown because of the separation by choice of the races, and I'm wondering whether you all found anything similar or, or different from that.

MV: I wonder how racially diverse our class was. Amanda, do you have that information? Because we had, Marge and I, we had a few Black friends, but I can't think of a lot of people.

MG: I went to a high school that was about 40% Black. So, when I get to Brown, it was like I, it was, it was a very white feeling. So, I mean, yes, we did have a, a few but there, a few friends who, who were Black, but not a lot. But I, I would be surprised if we were as much as 20%, [40:00] probably less, 20% minorities. And I doubt, there were almost no Asian Asians.

AK: I don't have any statistics on the demographics, but I do know that it was definitely more white than anything else.

MG: You know. One thing that I noticed as you're talking is I think every professor I had was a man. And I think everyone was white. And I don't think I really even questioned it. It's just sort of the way it was. And it's interesting because my daughter's an academic now, and she's a

professor, actually at UNC, your neighborhood, Jane, and it, and it's just so interesting to see some of how things are evolving or not evolving nearly as much as you'd think today. [41:00] It's very interesting. But yeah, I can remember at times thinking, but I don't ever remember, I, I certainly never had the kind of experience Pamela had. And I felt like they were, I think the professors hadn't quite figured out how to incorporate the new curriculum in how they taught. So they still taught in lectures, and they didn't, it hadn't really evolved the way it would now. So it would be, you know, a class is 50 minutes and you have a 45 minute lecture and 5 minutes for questions, and it was very top down. And I don't, I never had a professor who, like invited people to go for coffee or have lunch, or something. That was certainly not in history and English. They did not do that sort of thing. And so, as I said, it was very top down, and I mean I had some absolutely [42:00] brilliant professors, and that was kind of okay. But it wasn't, like I can say that when my daughter went to Brown many of the professors sort of acted like they were learning from their students. I don't think that was true for professors who, you know, got their Ph.D.s in the forties.

MV: Well, I was lucky enough to have a Modes of Thought class with Sheila Blumstein, who went on to be a president at Brown, and she was wonderful. And it was a small class. And you know, years later we, we ran into each other on campus, and she remembered my name. She was like the Barrett Hazeltine in some ways. But yeah, not a lot of women. But all that stuff with Louise Lamphere and all that was happening while we were there. So that was the beginning, I think, of [43:00] a real change in hiring and tenure, and all of that. But we were, you know, in the classrooms, and having fun, and not really focused on some of those big things that were happening then.

MG: I agree. I think you know, we were knowing we were getting a good education. And we were having a blast.

PL: I wrote a master's thesis because I was getting my masters and my thesis was on labor force participation rates of women and it was – labor force participation rates of married women. And so, I did all this statistical data and it basically came down to, and all these guys who you know, in the economics department, I think at the time they were all men, at least the ones I remember

were all men. It was all, “Well, it’s because how much their husband makes,” and it was all going to be around their husband, and it came down to exactly what you would think. In situations where they could make, in areas where they could make more money, more women worked. In situations where women made less money [44:00] fewer women worked. And so it was just, to me it was like, of course, and these guys were, “Oh, this is such an interesting outcome!” And so, it was, it was very interesting to see that they had their, their prejudices even in the, on the research side.

JG: Interesting.

DW: I remember my freshman year, one of my professors was a woman and she was pregnant. And she introduced herself as Miss, and I was like really surprised. I had never, you know, considered. She was older, and here she was obviously pregnant, and she introduced, but it turned out she was married to a faculty, another faculty person but kept her maiden name, and that's how she found herself professionally. But that was my first experience. I had, I think, one other female professor, but I had a couple.

JG: I had only one that I can recall, and I don't remember her name, but it was, [45:00] I think Russian literature and translation, something like that. But I thought the men who were the professors that I had were, were great, and they certainly treated us, in, in the class if it was a lecture, or not a lecture, a seminar, as equals.

AK: So, before we wrap up here for today, just one more opportunity for any other high points or low points or stories that you want to get into the record.

MG: I got to say we had some amazing things like Spring Weekends, and we had, we had great entertainment on the campus. We had amazing speakers who came in it. It was like, it was such a special place. And making such good friends. It really, it really, really was [46:00] amazing. And I mean, I know Mary's son went to Brown, my daughter. I don't know if anybody else's but it, it's just like – yours, too, Pam?

PL: Two.

MG: So it's just kind of, you know a place that, that had just created great memories while we were there.

MV: And, and being back as a parent. My son ended up in Andrews his first year, which is where we were. And so I mean so much seemed familiar and the same, so many of the things that we we're happy, that Marge mentioned as being wonderful, I think still, at least for the class of '07, were still important to the students then, at that time.

MG: So one of the places that I hung out in was the reading room on [47:00] the second floor of the Rock. And they also, back then there was a, like a little coffee shop in the Rock, too, so that, that was great. I probably spent more hours in the lounge of the reading room than in the actual reading room. But, I just remember that as it was like a community of people who just, you know, you kind of knew this was your table to sit at, and that, I don't know. It, it was, you know, I, I used to say it was a place where people worked hard and you didn't actually start partying till like after 10 o'clock on a Saturday night, because you were working up until then. And that was all good.

PL: So I like, I like the access to RISD as well, and so they used to have great meals on Sunday, and if anybody ever went down you could actually use your, your card to go down there. And they had a beautiful museum. I took a number of art history courses, and if you really wanted to get away, [48:00] it was great to just go down to the RISD Museum.

JG: I do remember venturing to the Freshman Quad at one point my freshman year, which was known as the Zoo. With good reason. It's where all the freshman males were being housed and it was crazy. The stereos were blasting into the quad, you know, full blast. People were running around. I, this could have been a Friday afternoon. I don't remember, you know, it was during the day. I remember yelling in the halls and people pounding doors, and whatever. It was crazy. I think I went there maybe once or twice, but I had a good friend, a woman who was admitted to Brown the following year, who wound up in the Freshman Quad as a freshman, and I was like

appalled, I thought, oh, my God! I went over there, totally quiet. When they put women in the Freshman Quad it totally changed. And it's interesting, because [49:00] 20 years later, I believe there was a, a hold out for a male dorm somewhere in Ohio, and they said they couldn't maintain the damages. And so, they decided to introduce women. So that was a real change in terms of atmosphere when, when women went into the freshman zoo.

JG: I remember that distinctly, too. I had a great time at Brown. I just felt liberated from the need to have grades for everything, and to take courses that I really wasn't interested in beyond high school. I loved the courses I took and the, the environment of community and, as my younger son said when he got to college, he said, "The kids are really smart here." Well, I loved being in that atmosphere of, of curious, intellectually curious people, and all [50:00] I remember is I remember at graduation my father going up to Judge John Sirica. My father had fought in World War II and it took a lot, but he said he, he thanked the judge. My father was not a proud man, but not a humble man, but he was humbled by, by the judge. And then when we packed up the car and we drove the four hours home, I cried the whole way home because I knew I was going to miss college. It was great.

MG: And of course it was so hard, so much harder for us to stay in touch with people. Like today it's nothing.

JG: Yeah, yeah, that's true.

PL: I know that my kids are still really close to all of the people they knew at Brown and their roommates and their greater circle of friends. But for us it was really hard. You had to write letters because there was no, there was no email, no Facebook, no Instagram, nothing.

MG: And phones were expensive.

JG: Right, right. [51:00]

MV: Well, Marge and I have stayed very close. We were freshman roommates, we were roommates throughout our experience. She was my maid of honor, I was her maid of honor. So –

MG: We've been to each other's kids' weddings, too.

MV: Yeah, yes.

MG: But no, here's, here's a great thing. Mary and her husband lived in England for five years and I got on a reunion committee one year, and they gave me a credit card, so I was able to call them in England.

MV: Wow. I did not know that.

MG: I was like, oh this will be great! I can talk to Mary and Jerome!

PL: So you two made the dream because I had a friend who said once that when girls go to college, what they hope is that their freshman year roommate will be their maid of honor. When boys go to college they're just looking for roommate who doesn't snore.

DW: Well, I stayed in touch with my freshman roommate Susan Lightman. [52:00] And we've been close. We've been to each other's weddings for kids and for ourselves. And but you know, I had a very different experience in the applied math department, because there were only a couple of us women majors. So you know, I can remember being in a class, probably with an average about 2 women out of 30. So, it was actually not until I got to MIT that I had something like 20% female in my class, in my math classes. So being close to Susan was a real asset, and being able to be in humanities classes with other women was also great. So, you know, but, but I think that the sciences were, were very thin in that regard.

MG: I don't know if anybody's read a book called *Yale Needs Women*, and because this was, it's a, it's really worth reading, and it's about how Yale took women in, [53:00] and all you'll do is read it and go, thank God I didn't go there, because I mean it was like, they, they were treated so

badly at the beginning. And you just, I, I mean, I swear every page of it I was going, oh, my God! Oh, my goodness! People, you know, when we were applying were like, “Oh, Yale's opening up to women, do you want to apply there?” I was like, I'm not a pioneer. I don't think I want to try that. But, man, it was, it was tough.

AK: Well, I want to thank you all so much again for taking the time to share these memories with me and with all of our listeners today. For you and for our future listeners, I want to share that we do also have interviews with Dr. Roswell Johnson, as well as a series of interviews on the Lamphere case. So I, I direct anybody listening to check those out as well. This interview will go into a corpus [54:00] of over now 300 interviews and growing, and I just thank you all so much for your time.

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