

Transcript – Class of 1973, 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion

Narrator: Martha Banks, Joan Betesh, Nancy Clarke, Jane Desmond, Lynda Durfee, Phyllis Fineman Schlesinger, Lillian Lim, Patricia McMillen, Nina Peskoe Peyser, Marian Weber, and Lucy Winner

Interviewer: Amanda Knox, Pembroke Center Assistant Archivist

Interview Date: March 15, 2023

Interview Time: 6:00 p.m. EST

Location: Zoom

Length: 1 video file; 1:36:03

*\*Please note that some information is redacted to maintain the privacy of those being discussed.*

Amanda Knox: Good evening. My name is Amanda Knox. I'm, the Assistant Archivist at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University. It is March 15, 2023. It is 6 p.m. Eastern time and I'm here with the class of 1973 to record an oral history in honor of their fiftieth reunion. So welcome, everybody. I'm so glad that you're here. I always, when I start interviews that way. Everybody just looks shocked, even though you signed up to be here. I was very clear, it's the fiftieth, but everyone still doesn't believe it. So, we'll start this interview with just a brief round of introductions of everyone who's here, and then I'll kind of set the stage of what was happening when you got to campus, and while you were on campus, and then we can start talking about some of your memories and your experiences of your time at Brown. So I'm just going to kind of call on [1:00] people and Nina, I'm sorry. But you were in my top left corner. I'm going to pick you first.

Nina Peskoe Peyser: Okay, so you want me to start up with like the one or two sentences of –

AK: Yeah, that would be great.

NPP: Who I am.

AK: Yes

NPP: Okay. So, hi, everybody and thank you for organizing this. It's kind of an interesting idea, Amanda. My name is Nina Peskoe Peyser, yes, class of '73. I was a psych major with a sort of subspecialty in linguistics. Thought I was going to do research, discovered I was never going to

make a living if I did research, and I'd be working the next 10 years on a Phd. So that idea didn't last too long. But about a year after I graduated, I married Paul Peyser, who was a year ahead of us. We got divorced 10 years after that, but I think I met actually a number of people in this group [2:00] through Paul, through Hillel, through some of those groups. And eventually I went back and got my MBA in healthcare administration, and almost my entire professional career was substance abuse treatment. HIV/Aids, public health, but working in academic teaching hospitals, as they call them. My retirement career went back to linguistics, which is really fun for me, and I've been teaching English as a second language. And still keeping my hands in public health, which is how Martha and I have been in touch over the last several years. So, there's a lot of overlap there. Nancy and I were roommates, I think that was sophomore year, and we've stayed in touch the whole time. So, I think that's enough about me. That's more than 2 sentences, I'm sure.

AK: That that was fantastic. [3:00] Thank you so much, and welcome. Lucy.

Lucy Winner: Hi! I'm Lucy Winner. I was a theater major at Brown and I went on to, and while at Brown was a founding member of the Rhode Island Feminist Theatre, which kind of was part of what started me on a track of work that I spent most of my life doing in theater and community health, theater and social change. I fought, taught for many years at the State University of New York, Empire State College, and in the, in that field. And I'm really happy to be doing this. It's really exciting. And I know some of you very well.

AK: Thank you so much, and welcome. Martha. [4:00]

Martha Banks: It's so good to see everybody. I'm Martha Banks. I, I'm a, I may be, I don't know if I'm not, whether or not I am, but I may be the only double legacy daughter here. I, my parents met at Brown and as the oldest child I really didn't have very much choice about where I was going to go to school. My, my brother and sister were, were able to get out of state, so. I went on after, after Brown I went to University of Rhode Island. Got my masters and doctorate and then escaped from Rhode Island to Iowa for an internship. And kind of drifted a little bit east, and I wound up in Ohio. [5:00] I worked for many years at the Cleveland VA Hospital, and its satellite,

in clinical practice during the day, doing research during the evening. And I simply gave up sleep for a few decades. I also, I taught, I taught at the College of Worcester, which is an interesting place because the undergraduate students all do research and 95% of them go on to graduate school because they're, they're ready.

I have, I've retired from clinical work and then and made a complete sort of career change. I'm now doing everything I did in psychology for the United Methodist Church [6:00] as a volunteer. I'm a certified lay speaker, I preach, I teach, I conduct research. I guess I do everything but clinical work. I'm, I'm also very involved, as I was, with the American Psychological Association in governance. I'm very involved in church governance. So, if you need somebody to write legislation for your faith denomination, you can call me. I've done a lot of that.

AK: Thank you so much, welcome. Jane.

Jane Desmond: Hello, everyone. I'm Jane Desmond. I'm currently living in Champagne, Illinois where I'm a professor of Anthropology and Gender and Women's studies and I also hold an appointment in the College of Veterinary Medicine which is a total shock to me. At Brown I did an independently designed major in [7:00] music and dance, and I'm imagining it was the first, first time dance had appeared on a degree designation at Brown. I went on to have a, a professional career in modern dance, and taught at Duke and Cornell and freelanced in, in New York, and then did a Phd in American studies at Yale. And since that time have been a full time academic in American studies, and more recently, in the last decade or so moving into anthropology. So at the moment I'm working on a book, and I'm running a campus-wide program on human animal studies. And I'm about to embark on some, a workshop, training on animal law, so some kind of exciting adventures at the moment, and I continue to do some work in performance studies. Early on in my academic career I was very active [8:00] in helping develop critical studies, cultural studies of dance.

AK: Amazing. Thank you. Welcome. Phyllis.

Phyllis Schlesinger: Hi, everybody! I'm Phyllis Schlesinger, Phyllis Fineman Schlesinger. I came to Brown from Atlanta Georgia and found it to be an incredible place. So different than Atlanta, and just so wonderful place to open, to, to discover new things and ideas and people I haven't – I was, I did a lot of work in the Providence school system. I have an independent major in sociology, urban education, and science. I was a, sort of a bio major as well, so I could teach science in high schools in urban areas.

I met my husband at Brown. He was also a class of '73. We kind of went away from urban areas that our first year that we lived together [9:00] when we were in Green Bay, Wisconsin, which is definitely not urban. But, so I, and, and there were some – I couldn't get a teaching job teaching science in high school because I was not a football coach, although I did know about football, but I wasn't a football coach. So, in the process of suing for sex discrimination, which I ended up winning with like 17 counts of probable cause, I got a job doing organizational change work at the University of Wisconsin, and that's just sort of set me off into a whole new area of leadership, teamwork, and organizational change. I got my degree, my doctorate in that. I was teaching organizational change and leadership at, and power and influence, at various – mostly Babson College in Wellesley, Mass, and then also in Ohio State University when we lived – The Ohio State University – when we lived in Columbus for a while.

I am now semi-retired. I've left academics, thank God. No more grading. But now I am an executive coach at Harvard [10:00] Business School in their executive programs, and we work on leadership, individual leadership assessment, and career goals for the participants. And it's, it's wonderful.

I also have 3 incredible daughters, one of whom went to Brown as a double legacy. But you know, she, she wasn't, she wasn't like Martha. She wanted to go. She, you know she was always a, a big Brown supporter. And then I guess another big part of my life is that I have 4 grandchildren, and one, the fifth one is do like any minute. So that's a big part of my life.

AK: If you have to run out, we'll understand.

PS: Oh no. I don't have to be there. I just have to be ready.

AK: Well, thank you, and welcome. Lillian.

Lillian Lim: Well, I have to, to say, well, thank you, Amanda. You, you said thank you to us. I feel like every [11:00] day we're here is a victory. And I have to say, I'm, I'm intimidated by the presence of all these wonderful women who've led such creative lives and leadership types of lies. And I have to say, I'm glad to see Martha because when I came to Brown I was also very much intimidated. You know I came from California. It was my first flight on an airplane to, first flight out of state. First flight, right. And I arrived at Brown as a, a freshman and that – they let us come early, the students of color. The same, an earlier week along with the athletes. So you would have the spectrum of people who are there. The elite [12:00] recruited college athletes and then students like myself. And, and during that first year I met Martha, and I have to say it was a comfort meeting Martha.

It was, I had, my first year I was in shell shock. I mean, I functioned, but I think I kind of went into this zombie state where I felt very little, did the minimum well, not the minimum. But I thought, like many, I was going to be a, a doctor, a medical doctor. I thought, oh, that's what you do if you can do a little bit of math, and, and you're a person like me, that's what you do. You go into the sciences. But Brown gave me an opportunity to take all these other courses for no grade. So I could see there was more [13:00] to what I would enjoy than physics. I mean the, my classmates were in physics and math and sciences. I could never do it. But Brown gave me an opportunity to see that there was a life beyond being a premed student. So that's pretty much me.

I came out of Brown, I went to school. I had a career as a lawyer and as a judge. And unlike what seems like most of you, I spend my days just messing around, you know. I retired from full time work when I was 55 years old because I could. And, and then I did like 5 years of what's called, no 5 years of riding, kind of riding the circuit. I was like a troubleshooting judge. They would send you to different places. And then, after that, I did 5 years of private judging, which is mediation and arbitration. [14:00] And then I slowly kind of got myself to where I could do the things like scribbling back there. I like to do little artist stuff. And I like to, in Hawaii I play the ukulele. I paddle an outrigger canoe. I just like to, you know mess around. So, so there is a life for the rest of you 10 years from now, when you're ready. So that's me.

AK: I do want to say for everybody here and for our future listeners who are listening to this, Lillian has also donated her own individual oral history that is streaming online, and it is

fantastic and wonderful, and one that I think about quite often. So, for all of our listeners, I encourage you to check that out as well. Thank you for being here again, Lillian. Nancy. [15:00]

Nancy Clarke: Hi, I'm, Nancy Clark. I live in the opposite ocean from Lillian. I'm on the East coast, New Jersey shore, right on the, 2 blocks from the beach. And Nina said something about us, knowing each other for a long time. We met Freshman Week during the Nor'easter where we were trying to set, sign up for oh the modular. Those classes that were so great. So, anyway. And let's see, I started at Brown actually as a chemistry major. Lasted about a month because the lab did me in, and I switched and became a music major. And while I was there I was very involved in the chorus and, and other musical things. And that led me into realizing, of course, I could never make a living off of that, because I wasn't that committed to it, I think. And so, my career has always been the administrative side of, of the arts or things related to the arts, including about 10 years, was working with a group in New York which is the Theater for Social Change. So I'm hearing some common themes here among folks.

I am currently partially retired. Still doing work, because I always worked for nonprofits and guess what, they don't put any money into retirement. So, you got to keep going. But sort of my latest passion has ended up in a way that I never thought it would, which is really on the political end. I'm not a politician myself, but I've gotten very involved in what's happening in my local level. [17:00] After the election of 2016, I realized I couldn't affect change at the national level, but I could perhaps work from the bottom up. I've been doing things like voter registration and rights within our, our, our town. And Nina is tired of hearing me talk about the, of hearing me talk about this. But so, it's a really passionate, and I love being able to do that kind of work.

AK: Thank you so much, and welcome. Joan.

Joan Betesh: Hi, Thank you very much. This is such a treat for me. And one of the things that is surprising me already is that I remember most of you. I thought I would see a lot, you know. I didn't know most people at Brown, but I, I remember most of you, at least to some extent, some people I knew better than others. Lucy was actually [18:00] instrumental in my meeting my

husband so, so many years ago, and that worked out great. So, thank you, Lucy. And since then, what did I do?

I came in with the class of '73, and then, but I graduated in '72, and that's part of a whole theme in my life. But we'll leave that there, and I went from there to law school, and the thing that I did with most of my career, I did a few things, but mostly I practiced immigration law. And as my kids said, "Mom, you must like meeting people from other cultures." Which I did. "You, you met Dad, you fell in love because he's from another planet." But I did enjoy practicing immigration law, and I retired on, when my mother became very ill, I thought I was taking a leave of absence, but it turned out that the 2008, 2009 downturn took place and in immigration law that made a huge difference. My firm split up, [19:00] and, and I also realized that I didn't really need to work thankfully. I was sort of padding my retirement account rather than really paying the bills. And so I fulfilled more of a, a lifelong dream, and I'm really a full-time volunteer, just as busy as I ever was, with diversity, many things that I like to do. And the great thing about it is, if it doesn't feel meaningful to me, or it doesn't feel like a good fit, I don't have to do it. So I get to do things that I like. And I, I would say that this is really the happiest time of my whole life. So that's me.

AK: That's so amazing. One of the toughest parts of interviewing the fiftieth reunion groups is, I just can't wait for retirement. I love doing this work, and I love getting to talk to all of you, but retirement sounds so cool.

JB: Each in their right time.

AK: Thank you. Welcome. Linda. [20:00]

Lynda Durfee: Sorry I'm trying to click on my picture. Realized that's not where the unmute is. Hello! I know you don't remember Martha, but I met you Freshman week, and I remember your story about your parents because you were from Newport, and I was from Rhode Island, and I have followed your career in the class notes. You've done very well.

So again, you know I was from Middletown, but my father was the first person on either side of the family to have gone to college, so I didn't have any history. I actually from the age I

was 12, wanted to go to Radcliffe and then, when I was in Junior High, a friend, my debate partner, who was a senior, got 800 – perfect scores for SAT's, Presidential Scholar, and she was turned down from Radcliffe, went to Brown. So that's how I ended up applying to Brown, and was accepted early decision, which I never thought would happen, so.

But I started out, I was, I was [21:00] accepted into the applied math program because I thought that's what I want to do. But I took AP biology in high school and then decided I wanted to go in medicine, not necessarily as a doctor, but as a researcher. So, I took all those labs freshman year, you know, and chemistry did me in. So, I got – Student Strike came, I was, became a political activist, and in the fall of '70 I, I was in a group independent study project where some of us from various classes were the cam – the core campaign for a candidate for Congress, who lost to Saint Germain, which wasn't, which was unexpected, but that that was in – and I also did later an independent study project on the 1968 campaign, so.

You know the, we were, we were the first class with the new curriculum where we didn't have the distribution requirements and all the options. And as someone pointed out, [22:00] you could take a class for just pass fail. So, so I ended up in political science, finishing political science, and right after, right after Commencement week I came down to DC and I found out that a political science degree was worth worm spit, especially if you were a woman. So, I had a couple internships over the summer, ran into somebody I met in the campaign, and ended up being a secretary to one of the deputy press secretaries at the White House. So I always tell people I start at the top and work my way down. So, after I was there for 2 years, and then went to a couple, worked in the Senate office in a, in a Congressional office. Got laid off and ended up as a logistics analyst at, quite accidentally, for a defense contractor. Did that for 30 years, got laid off. My mother needed more hair, care, took care of her for part time for 5 years and then I've been back in the job market for 2 years, [23:00] and I'm finally getting paid what I feel that I'm worth after all those years of getting, you know, twice the experience and half the pay of men much younger than me. So, so, I, I've been living in the, the DC, northern Virginia areas for 50 years now. So, I actually enjoy working because my mother lived to be 97, so.

And then. In the meantime, I did travel a lot, and Scuba dived all over the world, so it's nice to be able to travel when you still have the legs, as my mother always told me, you know. Because when you start to get medical problems it's not, it's a lot harder, and you don't want to



be on a ten-hour flight. So, I am, I'm so glad that someone actually is interested in our opinions after all this time. So thank you, Amanda.

AK: You don't even know the half of it. Thank you so much, and welcome. Patricia, or Patty. Do you have a preference? [24:00]

Patricia (Patty) McMillen: Yeah, I'm Patty. I've been both back and forth for 70 years now, but I'm kind of okay now with Patty. Boy, what a fabulous group of women. I'm just so happy to be among you all. I've been like writing down what I should say, and a lot of my personal history is kind of X-rated. I was subjected to violence in my home as a child, and so when I got to Brown I was 17. I was barely 17. I had all kinds of AP credits. I was, I had just finished my junior year at boarding school. And [25:00] I ended up in the Human Studies department, which, by the time I, which I never finished my degree requirements for. So I took introduction to everything, had no idea where I wanted to go as a, as a real adult. I was the Associate Editor of the *Brown Daily Herald*. I was, I started out as a photographer on the *Brown Daily Herald* staff, and then I, then I started doing features, editing. I came back to Chicago without finishing my final requirements, but they gave me my degree because the Human Studies department, George Morgan was retiring, and the Human Studies department was closing, and they kind of went, "Okay, here. Here's your degree." So, I have this transcript that says "graduated pending final requirements," which is always kind of been a source of shame, but I went on.

Eventually I went to music school for a while. [26:00] I've had a band for 25 years, but I just left it during Covid because it was becoming toxic. I went to law school, finished at University of Chicago in 1983. That also was not a good placement for me, although it, I made a lot of money, and, but I also inherited some money, and was able to retire from the active practice of law in 1992, and I've, I've continued to do advocacy and pro bono work to the extent my license permits.

I've been married twice, divorced twice. No kids. In 2001, my dad who was the perpetrator of the violence in the home [27:00] suffered a stroke, and I had to take over the family business, which was a farming business. He died in 2002, and I wrapped up that business and that again put some money in my, and my sisters, and my mom's, pockets.

I then went to the University of Illinois, got a master's degree in creative writing, finished that program in 2005. And I had been writing poetry since my, and during my first, during my first marriage I had 2 miscarriages and I started playing banjo, and I started writing poetry. And those have been my continuing passions. My first book of poetry is coming out finally in March of 2024, very excited. And, yeah. I live in Chicago. I have a dog. Whoever was doing the [28:00] dog human stuff, I am very interested. My, thank you, Jane. I, my dog is completely taking over my house, but you know I'm pretty codependent, so you can see how that would happen. Okay, that's all I got.

AK: Thank you so much, Patty. My animals run my house, and I'm okay, with it. I don't need any help with that. Welcome. Last, but certainly not least, Marian is on the phone. Welcome, Marian.

Marian Weber [ON THE PHONE]: Hi. Thanks so much. Yeah, it's been great listening to all of you. And to the ladies that dropped out of chemistry, yeah, 8 of us made it through to the ScB Chemistry in '73. 6 guys, a Romanian lady, and me. But she was there dictated by what the USSR told her to do, [29:00] so I still consider myself the only American female that year.

I had a 45-year career in 7 different states. I've managed labs for environmental research, hazardous waste disposal, and [unintelligible]. I did meet my first husband, class of '72, in the line to change classes first week, but that only lasted 5 years. But I got my blessed daughter and my 2 grandkids. Let's see, now I'm retired, and we live on a mountain in southwest Virginia, near the grandkids.

It was tough when I first got out. I, I hear you guys talking about the, the different pathways you went. Unfortunately, [30:00] those years at Brown they didn't come recruit chemistry students for just about anything. It was a very rough time to be a chem major. It was kind of a rough time to be in college, I thought. When I finally got out, it took EEOC for me to get my first chemistry job. In fact, one place in Augusta, Georgia, would only hire women chemists if they got sterilized and brought proof. And from there on, I had my chemistry work, and it was great. We retired in 2018 to move to Knoxville to take care of the mother-in-law and I remember you talk about that. It was a Mode of Thought course, and I never did get into one either. The rain was awful. I remember my little pamphlet falling apart in the rain. And yeah, I

sure did like [31:00] the fact that they had eliminated the requirements because that meant for my chemistry degree I didn't have to take 2 years of German. So that was really great.

AK: Great. Well, thank you. Thank you so much. Those were all really fantastic introductions. So now I, I want to jump into a little overview of kind of the, the era of your time at Brown, and if I'm doing the math correctly, and I was never a math person, unlike like you, I never even tried. You would have entered in '69, is that right? Okay. And then graduated in '72 for some of you, '73, right? So, you were the last class to enter as Pembroke students –

PM: Or for me, '74. [32:00]

AK: What's that?

PM: I got my degree in '74.

AK: Okay, perfect. So, we're, we're looking at early seventies, we'll call it. So you were the, the last class to enter as Pembroke students. The first class – and the what?

MW: They had the Pembroke Book, commonly called the Pig Book.

AK: Yes, I have this on the list. The, the, the Pig Book, and the Beast book. The Beast Book I think is a new one to me. I have heard of the Pig Book.

NP: It's just the men and the women. The, the Pig Book was the women, the Beast Book was the guys.

AK: You were the last class in the Pembroke dorms. The last class with the parietal rules. The last class of the swimming requirement. The last class with the Physical Ed requirement. [33:00] A class ratio of about a 1,000 men to 300 women. Birth Control became available at the Student Health Center, which is definitely something that we should talk about.

NC: You forgot posture pictures.

AK: That is coming up, yes. The posture pictures are something that we definitely want to touch on as well.

Nationally, Apollo 11 lands on the Moon the summer that you're about to enter Brown. Woodstock. The draft lottery. The First Earth Day. The student strike. The 26<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified, lowering the voting age to 18. The Rhode Island drinking age was lowered to 18. Ms. Magazine came out. And Title IX was approved. [34:00]

So these are just some things we can talk about. So, let's kind of, let's start if you would like, and I'm kind of, I'm not going to call on anybody at this point. Like, as, as you would like to participate, please feel free to unmute yourself and do so. Why don't we talk about some of your first memories of coming to campus? And, again you can talk about, you know, coming to Brown under these sort of national historic moments, or, or just some, some things that you remember of your first time on campus, you, you enter Brown as a first year student. What's going on?

NP: I, I can mention just kicking off of some of the things you were saying. I spent the summer of 1969 studying at the University of Leningrad, and it was Leningrad at the time, it was the Soviet Union. And we watched the Moon landing [35:00] in the Soviet Union, and of course the Americans and the Russians had been in this space race. And it was the most amazing experience to, you know, I never felt patriotic. Nancy makes fun of me, because I have no interest in politics whatsoever, I didn't have interest then. But to actually see the moon landing surrounded by my peers in age, but people in the Soviet Union, was really quite an amazing thing.

But what it also meant is I didn't have the opportunity to do any pre-registration for any kind of classes. I came back and Woodstock had started, and I immediately sort of went off and got to campus as fast as I could. So, I, I didn't have time to think about what classes to take. The best thing was, news had come. [36:00] There was mail piled up from Brown that my parents had accumulated for me that said, "Ta-Da! No more grades. Ta-Da! You don't have distribution requirements." And this was such wonderful news to me that I, I just celebrated that what I was actually entering was so much better than what I thought I was going to go to.

I was still to the day my parents dropped me off fighting with my mother who went to Wellesley and thought, and we can read all about what Wellesley thinks of how to define women in today's paper, but my mother thought a women's school was the only kind of appropriate education. Fought her tooth and nail. Fortunately, I had a, a cousin who was a couple of years ahead of me, a male cousin at Brown, and he convinced my father that I should be permitted to go to this [37:00] coed institution. And like, I never cared about Pembroke. I, I, whatever that was, I don't think I ever said out loud to anybody that I was going to Pembroke. I was going to Brown. And that, that's sort of the way I remember the, the transition of that summer.

PS: I will say it was really interesting, because you're, if, I know we will all remember that time, but just for your historical perspective, Amanda, it was a time of incredible social upheaval and change. And with the, the SDS and you know, then there was this violence that was the Democratic Convention of 1968. It was just, and we saw I, I don't, I, I can't speak for everyone on this panel, but I know many of us saw ourselves as the forefront for a new way of operating, and had a new way of life in the United States where we would be more equal, where, and the women would have the same [38:00] chances as men, and we could do just, you know, the world were, was open to us. And I from, from listening to this group of women, I think we all achieved that which, which is just incredible.

But it was, I remember getting to Brown with that in mind, and from Atlanta, Georgia, which was quite conservative. My family wasn't. My parents said, "Go," but my High School guidance counselor told me, "You're not sure of your vocational objective, so you should probably go to secretarial school." And they had never heard of. They've never heard of Pembroke. And I think maybe 10 of us from my high school class came up east to college. And it, so it was just this incredible, liberating experience. I'd never seen the campus. I got on the plane with two suitcases and a typewriter. And you know, went to my, I got a trunk a couple of weeks later, but you know we didn't have all the – now you take [39:00] a kid to college and the van is full, there's all this stuff, and they plan with their roommate. We didn't, I didn't do any of that. I just was just glad to be there. I was just so thrilled. And then to have no grades and be able to take educational risks, and have close relationships with faculty members if we so wanted, and really be able to – It was just, it was great, as far as I was concerned. It was wonderful. Posture Pictures notwithstanding.

JD: I want to pick up on that, the sort of moment of entry, and I was growing up in Washington, DC. And you know that year '68 to '69 there was, there was the man on the moon, there was also, you know, the killing of Martin Luther King, of Bobby Kennedy. There were riots in so many cities, including in, in Washington, DC, the summer before, of '68, [40:00] and I had just started working as a clerk typist in summer, my first job. So, there was all of that. And then I went to Woodstock, which I can't believe looking back, you know, my, my parents. "Yes, Drive with these, your other friend and these two young men who seem very nice, that had been at my house." And so, we all went to Woodstock. And so it was, you know, that, that whole period, from, of sort of coming into 17, 18, and I just turned 18 a few days before Woodstock. So that sense of it, extraordinary upheaval. It really, it really was just in, you know, the tech, from the technology to the Cold War, to the racial uprisings, to the women's movement, [41:00] and of, of course, the gay rights movement, Stonewall. All of this at the same time a really, really extraordinary moment to arrive on campus.

MB: I, I had the experience of being part of one part you didn't mention, Amanda., and that was that I was a member of the largest Black class that Brown had ever had. And I believe we held that record until maybe 10 years ago. And for me it was, it was a very strange time. I, I was getting accepted to colleges I'd never heard of – I got accepted to 37 colleges, many of them [42:00] I had not applied to, but on the basis of my grades and somewhere, I don't know how they knew, that I was African American. Well, no, we were Black back then. Maybe I was a negro. I don't know. Whatever. It was, it was a time when, when colleges were trying very hard to diversify. I got two acceptance notices from Brown, weeks apart with completely different numbers. That was my decider. Nobody else wanted me that much. And then I, my boyfriend from high School, from early high school, had got, had also gotten into Brown, but he wound up in the transitional summer program. I did not. And that [43:00] turned out to seriously divide the Black students. So, there were a bunch of, a lot of Black students who got to know each other for the, at least 2 months during the summer with the transitional summer program. And then there was the rest of us who showed up in September. And it, it was, it was a division that never changed. And it, and it was, it was very disappointing. The students from the summer program when I got there and said, "Oh, yeah, this is where my parents met," they were absolutely

convinced that they were the first Black students ever to go to college. And, and it was, you know it, it, it was difficult. It, it was very difficult. Yeah.

LD: I was going to say that there was, that there was an occupation, the Black students had occupied [44:00] the building the year before, when I was a senior in high school. My dad was kind of upset about that, and it was like, but I don't think they ever thought I would get in, so they never told me that I couldn't apply. But the other thing is that you know, Brown didn't have the prestige then that it did now. I, we, you know, for the men it used to be, well, they couldn't get into Yale, Harvard, or Princeton. But I think the percentage of women accepted was much lower, as applicants, as men, because there were an awful lot of men that were legacy students that the prep schools had slots for. And I can remember going to a party freshman week, and some you know guy, a nice guy, and he's bragging about his math SAT was 550, and I said, "Well, mine was 727." So I think it was pretty clear to all of us that we were much smarter than most of the men. Certainly, a lot of them. I mean, and my, you know my roommate was, was, was from Texas, and she was even smarter. So yeah. But it was, it was definitely, and I think we were sort of [45:00] put, put down a little bit, because you know a lot of them on the weekends. The men disappeared to go walk to, you know, to Boston, New York, or Wellesley, or Smith.

And I actually had two, two high school math teachers. One went to Wellesley and the other went to Mont Holyoke, and they were both really trying to get me to go to those colleges, and I just didn't, you know, from my experience in high school, you know I was the only girl in the class. You know, a lot of ones smarter than me that would raise their hand and question the teacher. And I just didn't think in an all-female environment that I would feel comfortable. So, I had no problem challenging the guys. But you know, when you, when you were a woman in, in middle school or in high school at that time, you know, it's the way it has always been. You know, women speak up and get criticized for speaking up or being pushy. And the men, well, we can, we've all, we've been fighting this for 50 years, or most of our lives, so it's nothing new. But, you know it was completely, I had, had not, not, [46:00] I didn't have any idea what to expect when I got to Brown.

It was the first time I had a roommate since I shared a bedroom with my brother when I was little, so it was hard getting used to that. But, because she would go, she was studying in the library at night, and I'd had two 8 o'clock classes, and she'd come back from the library at

midnight, wash her hair and dry it, and, you know, keep me awake. But it was a great experience. But I think you know, freshman year, or we were sort of grouped freshman on a whole floor like, I was on the top floor of, of Champlain. And I think we met friends then that that once we got further into our programs, we pretty much socialized with the people that were in our classes, and some of those people we never saw again, so. Because I think, I don't think any of you were in clinical science or history from what, from what I gather, unless you took an occasional course.

PM: I found [47:00] the, the change that happened at Brown over the summer before we entered extremely challenging. And I mean, I think part of it was that I had been so strongly controlled in my previous education. I kind of made myself into this math major and I didn't find the math department at all welcoming. So, when I left that I was like, I did get into some Modes of Thought classes. I just kind of bounced around and couldn't figure out what, what department to go to. And you could do that because there were no grades, and so you know. [48:00]

It wasn't enough, it wasn't the right place for me, I think, in retrospect, but it didn't really come to a head in my family until Pembroke was demolished, and my father was absolutely furious because he believed that I was, even though he could have looked it up, you know, he just had convinced himself that I was leaving a girl's school to go to a girl's, a women's college. And he just didn't do well at all with my being a young adult.

And then, when, I, I wonder if anybody else remembers the Risk. 101 lecture which was our freshman year? Because it was possible to get birth control from the Health Center, so, the chaplain's office, I think, organized it. There was a, a panel of [49:00] 3 or 4 women and men talking about risks of drugs and risks of sex, and I'm sorry, to this day it's messed, it messed with my mind all of the responsibilities that women had to not tease men, to not lead them on. You know, it was all, basically we were Eve and the apple was there, and you know, stuff that really should not have been going on in an intellectual institution, was very, very strong against, against women's rights, in my opinion.

AK: Can you give me a little more context for that? Was it, was it, was Risk 101 [50:00] a requirement? Was it only –



NP: I had never heard of it.

[overlapping audio]

PM: I don't think so. Well, of course I did, because I needed structure, I did get involved very quickly with the Chaplain's Office. So maybe I heard about some things. I, I was involved in setting up a drug emergency line for when LSD became kind of a big deal on campus. So yeah, I don't know, maybe I heard about it and others didn't.

[overlapping audio]

MW: I remember when the [inaudible] came in and said that Pembroke was "P" for "pill," and he said there were a 1,000 women on campus and 100 of us were going to get pregnant and he didn't want us to lose our education that way because [51:00] they were going to drop out. And they first sent us, before they had them in the medical office, they didn't have it over on the Pembroke campus, they eventually had the pills over next to the quad. But first they sent you to local gynecologists who proceeded to give you a moral lecture on "what would your mother and father think of you?" And I had to tell him they'd be really proud I was protecting myself.

LW: I, I think I remember that there was a lecture by the gynecologist at Brown whose name was Dr. Everard, and I remember him saying, this is the only thing I remember about this, but I remember him saying, "It's not possible to get a little bit pregnant. Every year, every time I, a woman, comes into my office and says, 'I think I might be a little bit pregnant,' I want you all to know that it's not possible to get a little [52:00] bit pregnant." It was, I don't remember it quite in the same way you do, Patty, but I do remember that.

But I think, I think that you know you're sort of raising the issue of being a woman at that moment, and some of the kinds of experiences that we had. Whereas I, I do agree with you, Phyllis, that we entered at a time of extraordinary, exciting, liberating activism, etcetera. And for me, freshman year was just, it all sort of funnels into the National Student Strike, which for me was an absolutely extraordinary time when I learned about gorilla theater, and I, I did all this

fantastically creative and exciting and activist work, and I felt like all everything I believed in [53:00] was all in one place. So, I think that was that was there.

There's an undercurrent of other kinds of experiences that I know some of us had that fall into the category of, of, well, it was, I came, I had just read *The Second Sex* before I came to Brown, but I hadn't really, I wasn't really aware, until I began to have some experiences, that kind of cracked all that open for me, which is probably why I got involved with starting, helping to start a feminist theater company. But, but I'm curious about other people's experiences with sexual harassment by professors, [54:00] etcetera. I certainly could talk about that if you want. I think that there was, it was, it was really tricky being one of those 300 women to a 1,000 men in that class, for me anyway.

NC: I'm just going to say –

AK: Are you comfortable elaborating on that?

LW: Well, you know, there were a lot of sort of subtle experiences that, that probably many of us shared. I can talk about pretty, pretty, what's the really great word – yucky experience that I had in a [redacted] class where I wrote a paper, and I got a pretty bad grade on the paper, and I think I, and I went to the teacher and he wanted to, he, he called me into his office. I had written a paper [55:00] on theories of women's personality and he said, "Well, I can raise your grade if you can just talk to me a little bit more about this, and maybe you could tell me the difference in your experience between a vaginal and a clitoral orgasm." And I left the room, but I didn't report it. And that was a professor [redacted] at Brown. So, there were other experiences here and there that I had, and that I certainly heard about from others. But I think you know it was a moment when we were beginning to understand what it was to be a woman, and what it was going to take for you know, this second stage feminism to begin to have an effect on our lives, and allow [56:00] us to become what clearly everybody in this Zoom room has been able to become.

NC: And I, I was just going to speak a little bit about two parts of that [redacted] and I know, I learned later that I had really dodged a bullet, because when I had my piano audition I wasn't good enough to study with [redacted] and I was lucky because he was a very aggressive harasser

for his women students. And so, I was very lucky that way. And then I found out later another professor, I don't know how, well, I, I do know how I got didn't have the issue, but years, a couple, few years after we graduated was fired basically for harassment of, of his students.

But then I also want to talk about sort of a lack of response for what happened [57:00] to women on campus. [redacted] was gang raped at a party. Never reported. Never talked about. Just, it happened. And I mean, you hear now about you know, yes means yes and no means no. Obviously that wasn't the case. And she was a target for those particular people. And, and it, and it really hurt her, her, her, her time at Brown. And I'm glad, I would hope that that kind of thing would not be happening again, but it was also, unfortunately acceptable not to report things like that.

AK: And so that was a, a follow up question, is this is something we hear often of having these experiences and not reporting them. Was there ever a sense that, did it occur to anybody to report it, or [58:00] was it just not done? Did you feel that you wouldn't have been supported? Kind of what, could you talk about that that a little bit?

NC: Well, it's the same in our work lives later. You know, you were supposed to shut up and take it. And I don't think anybody expected that anything would be done, even if you did report it. There wasn't anybody to report it to.

PM: I'm feeling so much better because I, and I, you'll probably all relate to this. When things like that happened to me, I thought, well, it's just me. I'm just, I, I'm just a fragile person. And I had a situation [redacted] that, you know, there was unconsented touching that never crossed my mind to report it. I was [59:00] told by one of my advisors that if I had a problem, I should marry a wealthy man and get, get some psychiatric treatment. And you know, that was just that, that was kind of the, the zeitgeist in those days, I think, at Brown.

NC: And I don't think it was just Brown. I think it was, I think it was everywhere. It wasn't just a Brown thing. I mean that, that's —

PM: I agree. I agree. Sorry. Yes.

PS: One of the things that being at Brown did, I never would have sued the strong, the, the small little school system in Wisconsin and I sued for sexual discrimination unless I had the strength that I developed at Brown to say, "This is wrong. You behaved badly. You can't tell me that I was more qualified than the other person, and you hired him because the other person in the, the chairman of the department wanted a male in the position. That's illegal that's sex discrimination, and you can't do that." [01:00:00] And that, and, and I think Brown gave me the courage to stand up to, to, to fight some of those things.

I remember I didn't have, I, maybe I just was naive. I didn't, didn't recognize it. I had an, one of my professors in the biology class, the guy who led my lab actually was the opposite. He became an incredible mentor who encouraged me to speak up and speak out and participate, and do all of these things. So, I, I, I'm appalled to hear about these experiences, and they're really, really, really upsetting.

MW: I agree. [01:01:00] Especially in the sciences.

PS: What?

MW: They should have stayed with the sciences. As a cam major, everyone behaved perfectly in the chem department.

LW: Well, I'm sure that that there were lots of people who had experiences like mine on the campus. And I was 17, and there wasn't a culture of, you know, how to report such things. It's, it's part of what I think maybe happened when Pembroke dissolved that there was, that this, that I think that the 300 to a 1,000 was a big deal for us in terms of feeling like we knew where to turn. You know there was, yeah, I don't know. I mean it did not occur to me, of course, later I thought to myself, why didn't I report this? And he must have done things like that to many other young women. But, but it didn't at the time occur to me at all. It just occurred to, all I knew was to get out of that room as quickly as possible. And [01:02:00] you know, I went on, and, and there were extraordinarily supportive, wonderful professors at Brown, for sure. And I

experienced, I had experiences with lots of them. It was wonderful. But there was no institutional protection, I think, for us at the time.

NP: It's, I'd like to paint a slightly different picture. So, I'm not talking about anything about the example Nancy mentioned [redacted], and that had nothing to do with the faculty, the group that attacked her. Those were members of our class. But for me, it was hugely liberating that we could get the pill. And I didn't, Dr. Everard was terrific about it. I remember the, the nurses, these sort of little old lady nurses giving me something in a brown paper bag [01:03:00] and hiding it. I think they were far more embarrassed than anybody else that we would do such things. But this was, you know we're talking about many, many changes going on in the country, in the world. And this was, sexual freedom was starting out. Again, putting things in context, forget our current Supreme Court. This was pre Roe v. Wade, this was pre HIV. The absolute worst thing that could happen to you was getting pregnant. At least that's the way I felt about it, because that would just ruin your life. And [01:04:00] I remember some of my friends and classmates, both the ones at Brown and at other schools, who got abortions. Either went some place like New York, where it was legal, or went to Europe. And we would pool our resources to give them money. But pregnancy was a really big deal, so the ability to have sex, to have fun, that was a new concept –

LD: Just like the guys did!

NP: Kind of just like the guys did. But, but I didn't compare myself to the men. I'm comparing myself to me. You know what I mean? I, I didn't, I still don't, I'm sure I got paid less all my life than, than a male equivalent would have been. But you know I made those decisions. I don't, I don't feel that it was their fault or something, but I had male and female professors who were wonderful mentors to me. And I I didn't have some of these same experiences. I don't think I've suppressed them, Lucy. [01:05:00] I'm thinking, I'm trying to go back to the day. I remember many of those things in the workplace, some very subtle, some very overt. But I had the strength, and I do credit Brown and my experiences as an undergraduate with the ability to, "go away, you know. Leave me alone, not interested." But I, I do remember this as a liberating experience. Birth control, I think people really have to understand that in an historic context, in a pre Roe v Wade,

in a pre HIV, having sex was not a death sentence. Pregnancy was, socially at least. So, little bit different.

MB: I, I, one of the, the things and I, I, I'm going to call on Nancy's memory too, but at the end of our first year we went to England [01:06:00] in the chorus. [redacted] spent most of our month in England entangled with two of the students, two of the women students. And I was, we were, we were out of the country, we were in England. We were not, we were not here. And I was like really frustrated, because I didn't know what to, what to make of this, what to do about it. And I wanted to let somebody know that I was really uncomfortable about it. But there wasn't anybody to report to, because the only faculty person was the [redacted]. And when we got back to Brown the following month he was gone. [01:07:00]

NC: I didn't join the chorus that year so I'm glad I missed him.

MB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LD: You know, I didn't think I had an experience, but this brings it back. I think most of the boys just kind of figured out I was no nonsense, especially in politics, you know, you know, there are so few women. But I had one semester, it was a class on Rhode Island politics. It was taught by Professor Cornwell, who was head of the Political Science Department. So, it was a small class, and we, we all had internships with Rhode Island legislatures. So, it must have been the, the spring semester, and I had, there was a TA that was supposed to supervise this. So, one time he called me to go, to meet him at his apartment to go over my and so forth. And then he tried to grab me and kiss me, and he was married, and I just quickly get out of there. But it never [01:08:00] occurred to me to report it. I just thought that I made a bad mistake by going to his apartment.

But this this afternoon I found out that there's an oral history with the Pembroke [Center] of Dr. Roswell Johnson who is the one I remember as being head of the Medical Department, and he talks about how they were able to get, started to be able to get birth control on campus. And you got to realize that Rhode Island was 90% Catholic back then, and still is. So, I mean, and I think for most of us is that we had never gone to a doctor without our mother being there.

So, having being able to go to the doctor and talk about intimate problems, you know whether we were, you know, having a, a fungus infection, or whatever it is, that we could talk to openly, I think, was extremely liberating.

JD: And I remember a real public discussion of this oh, or I don't know what the group was, but you know these were, they were demonstrating diaphragms. [01:09:00] And when you said the thing about the Brown, you know the Brown paper bag, I think I, you know, got one. It was in the Brown paper bag. But there, you know, for all of these things, that, that so many people with sexual harassment and, and sexual violence that we're talking about, that were present. At the same time there was this really strong emergent discourse of feminism and how to figure this stuff out, like Lucy was saying. And of course, it was also, you know, going on with the Civil Rights Movement and, and gay rights all of this at once to, in a sense, say no. We're saying no to that past. We're saying no to that past. We're saying no to that past. And we're shutting down the University and all of that coming together. So, I remember really sort of public, to me, shocking like, okay, now, here's the, like, now, here's [01:10:00] how you use the diaphragm. I had not had that conversation at home. I suppose I could have. I mean my father was a biologist. Could have had it, but you know I didn't. So, the, I think all of these things were very much co-present at the same time.

LW: It was kind of it, it seems to me that we, we, it was such a kind of a tipping point. You know we were, there was the awareness that we were beginning to have really fed into the work that all of us did, to the way in which we were in the world, and to the changes that we, that many of us worked to make, I think. So, it's just some of those experiences, maybe 5 years earlier some of those experiences wouldn't have even been quite conscious, they would have just been sort of the norm. But, but because many of us had begun to read feminist texts, etcetera, at the time, those kind of horrible, difficult [01:11:00] experiences became a really fertile ground for us to begin to, you know, have consciousness raising groups, etcetera. All of that stuff.

NC: But wouldn't that have been the – oh, go ahead Lillian, you haven't spoken. Go ahead.

LL: If I can just interject for a moment, we're talking about 50 years ago. When we come to today, it's like you take a step forward and you take a step back, or maybe it's more than one step back. But you kind of, you're trying to like move forward. And, and in this context I want to make a, a, a pitch for how important lawyers, really, lawyers and other advocates have been in this journey of ours from back when, you know, we entered college to this point. It's, it's the protective function [01:12:00] that activists and lawyers serve. These cases like that, that have been mentioned, that that set standards for, for us. And, and I think one of the things Brown gave us was we had a picture in our mind of what the ideal would be. We had a picture in our mind what the goal would be. And so we kind of move towards that in whatever function we have. And, and, and I have to say in in my own personal life that you look at women's rights, and I was like, you know, real young and naive. I felt I had to kind of make a choice. Where am I going to put my energies? Am I going to focus on women issues? And I had a lot of friends who were women who would say, well, you know – or would I focus on issues related to race and ethnicity? [01:13:00] And I'm not sure you even have to make that choice, but in my own mind I, I felt I, I needed to think where my energies were best spent. And frankly, when I was younger, I would look at and say, well, half the world is female, and then I would look at my particular marginalized group, and I'd said, there are not that many of us and so maybe that's where I should put my priority. Yeah.

And I would say that I was in one case when I was at Brown and it's because lawyers from the ACLU came to me and two other classmates and said, "Will you be our plaintiffs in this class, class action?" And they came to Brown because they felt we would be protected there at Brown from [01:14:00] law enforcement issues. And so they said, "We can't go out and find somebody in the community because they're so vulnerable. But you can be representative of the class, because we think you'll be safe at Brown." Because we sued the police department. So, I said like 3 different things. So, I should be quiet now.

LD: Well that they did not allow the police to come on campus for drugs, or, you know, unless somebody was dealing, they did not allow the Providence police on the campus. But I was –

PS: I was thinking – Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead, Linda.



LD: What I was going to say is that you know it's thinking about this session, you know, I remember an episode of Murphy Brown where she goes back to her alma mater to get an honorary doctorate, and obviously it's one of the Seven Sisters. And she goes to a meeting of the Women's Studies group which she had helped found and they're kind of oblivious, you know. It's like they just assume, [01:15:00] you know, they, that they have all these rights, and, and so forth, that are equal, and she gives him a lecture about, you know, what my generation did for you guys that you just take for granted. And you know I, I tried to find it, to see if I could see it free online. But I, I did remember that, and it was just really because I think that was filmed in like about '88 or '89.

And I think we all remember when we got out, as is like, you know, we got paid less. I can remember first couple of interviews, you know, before I got the job at the White House, but is that you could not go into employment office, that they made you take a typing test and a grammar test, and a spelling test, before you even got the interview. Or you go into a Congressional office, "Well, we always start our girls out as receptionists," where the guys get hired for press secretary with no experience. So, it's, yeah. I think we were all where at the time, the second, second wave of feminism was coming in, but it was a lot of hard work to get there.

PS: Also the kind of [01:16:00] the class, the class that was at the forefront of women applying to medical school, and women applying to law school before they, and, and going into PhD programs. There had not been, as I recall, there hadn't been quite as many. There were women who were doctors, and there were women who were lawyers, and some who did incredible things like Lillian said, like Sarah Waddington, I think was that her name, on Roe? But, but there were more of us applied, and more of us actually went to medical school, law school, and got our PhDs. And I think that actually may have helped us not, sure we were still anomalies, I think, in some levels, to be smart professional women at that time. But, on the other hand, being smart, professional women at that time enabled us to maybe make some changes so people recognized that women could be smart, professional [01:17:00] women and achieve just as much, and do as well, and probably even better than men could do on some levels. You know, I mean, I just that, maybe I'm just optimistic all of the time. My kids will tell me that I will find a pony in a room full of poop. But it, I, I just, I think, I think we really, because we had this experience, and because we were that transition generation, we were able to normalize women going to college,

women going to grad school, women becoming professionals, in a way that may not have been possible before. Can we talk about the strike?

LD: Yes! I actually did a masters, for my master's thesis in history, 20 years afterwards. I actually went back and did a paper on, on the strike, and I went back, and I read all microfilm, all the *BDH* articles and the, the *Providence Journal*. And you know it's funny, you know, 30 years later, [01:18:00] you know, you, your memory is different, but I, I remember it was like the, the radio station. Well, first there was Kent State, and then they –

AK: Can, can we have a little bit more context just for people who could be listening to this 50 years from now. A little bit about Kent State and then the Student Strike kind of the, the of it, why, what was, what was going on?

LD: Okay. So, what happened is that there were Vietnam War protests on Kent State University in Ohio and the National Guard were called in and students were shot. And there's a famous picture of the, the girl who actually was not a Kent State student, over the body, screaming. So, so there were demonstrations everywhere, and a couple that actually I can remember [01:19:00] that, I don't know exactly what the call was for Student Strike. I think it was a lot, over a lot of campuses. And I remember the Brown radio station played the fool on a hill, you know. A, no, maybe that was, the, Cambodia. I'm not sure if that was the same time. But we ended up having mass demonstrations on the quad. And the, the question was as to whether we shut down the campus. And I remember there were like two doors at Faunce Hall, and if you voted yes, you went through one door, and if you voted no, you went to the other door. But what it meant is essentially the, the idea is the campus would close down so everybody could go out and protest. But what happened is most people went home. But, but what happened is that you were sort of left in limbo as far as your grades, because if your course depended on a final exam, and you didn't have anything up to that point to get graded for, or if you needed that exam to get your grade up, you could take pass, but [01:20:00] back later on we found out that when you'd apply to graduate school that that counted pretty much as a C. So, that was, that was the whole thing. Is that some of you had the option of maybe coming back and taking the exam in, in September, you know, after you know, 3, 3 months. So, it, it was extremely disruptive. You know we, I don't

remember we had any, you know, violence on our campus, and so forth. Again, I think that you know, once the, once the classes were cancelled, you know people went elsewhere.

MB: We, there were, there were actually two strikes. There was a strike by the Black students at the, in December of our first year. And my memory of that is, is very personal. My father came up to the campus and told me if I missed a single class I would not be [01:21:00] supported for the rest of my education. That was, you know, and that was, that was very, very difficult for me. Coming from Newport, where Newport we were only 2%, African Americans were only 2% of the population. Coming to Brown was the first time I had found any kind of a Black community. And then, all of a sudden, I was not allowed for family reasons to be part of that. And then, 6 months later, 5 months later, with the Kent State shootings, the chorus sang at midnight mass. And so that gave me, that gave me a way to participate, commemorate, [01:22:00] be involved. But my advocacy, all my, my advocacy for anything racial or anything feminist, all of that happened after graduate school. And you know, and of course, once I, once I was on my own, then it took off. But it wasn't something, it wasn't, that was not part of my Brown experience.

AK: So we are kind of running up on time here, and like we had so many amazing conversations here, and there are so many other things that I want to touch on. But since we, we're running out of time, I know a lot of you participated in some really cool, extracurricular activities. Is there anything [01:23:00] about any of those other kinds of memories while we've got a little bit more time for, for some of these stories that you would like to share?

NC: I was just going to say, being at Brown taught me how to be a leader in many ways. Because, and I'm glistening over time, my freshman year I was very pulled back. I wasn't so involved, and I realized now, I mean if it wasn't the political stuff, it was the musical stuff, but that of being involved in standing in front of people and talking and working with other groups to get things done, the organizing a protest because the Music Department didn't have the proper kind of pianos. [01:24:00] I mean those, you know, which in maybe in the grand scheme of things was not huge, but that sort of development outside of classes, but that sort of development, I think, really has helped shape the kinds of things that I've ended up doing the rest of my life.

LL: Yeah. I would say that during my first or second year, Asian American Students Association was formed at the Brown University. I think we had the first group intended study, Asian American studies, where we got to work with Asian, Asian American, professors at Brown. It kind of gave us the tools. And my classmates who went on to form, you know, the Statewide Bar associations, the national associations that are based on, you know, our communities, our racial communities. And out of those organizations there is advocacy [01:25:00] so that more judges would be appointed, more political, you know, members of the cabinet for the, you know, all of that, you know, started really with the little groups at schools like Brown at that time period. And it just kind of gave us the tools to, to move on and organize, move on and organize. So that there, you know, I guess Brown, like many schools, played a big part in structure change and institutional ways of advocating for the things that are important. So, it was an exciting time, I think, for our college, and, and likeminded students and other colleges at the time.

AK: So, this is a quick pivot back, because I'm, I'm sort of swimming in all of these [01:26:00] thoughts now. But there was a big reaction to the mention of posture pictures also, and I know that takes you back to your first year. We've moved through a lot of times here. But before we close, is that a topic that anybody would like to touch upon?

LD: Amanda, you should mention that you sent me the article, that you actually knew about this.

AK: I did. So this is, posture pictures come up in a lot of our interviews. There is a lot of research going on in this area. In the '90s, *The New York Times* broke this story, I guess, after some posture pictures were found at a university, and ultimately determined that it was a Eugenics study. So that's good. So, you probably, I mean so, do you remember your posture pictures?

NC: Can I just say, I can't believe that I did it. [01:27:00] I mean, that I just went along like a sheep and say, oh, they want us to have these pictures taken? Oh, we take off, oh okay, fine! Oh, my hips higher than the other? Oh. I can't believe I did that.

LW: I don't remember them. Can somebody describe what they were?

PS: Oh, God, yeah. You had to go in –

[overlapping audio]

LD: It was in that building behind Pembroke Hall. And it was like a it's like a basement. Because I remember when, when I had to take, you, you had to take a sport a semester I took gymnastics. And they, we stripped down to our panties and we lined up, and they took pictures. And it was told, because I guess it was to see whether or not you had curvature of the spine, or some explanation. But you know, we had come from a society where we never questioned anything.

PS: And they said it was for a medic, they said it was for medical research, right? And then, if you failed your picture you had to take –

NC: You had to take gym if you didn't pass.

PS: You had to take freshman fundamentals.

NC: Yes. I did too.

PS: I always, or some kind of special gym class, and, and I had always prided [01:28:00] myself on never taking gym in high school because I was a flute player, I was in the band and didn't have to take gym, and here I had to take gym in college. I was just oh, God.

LD: Well, it was once a week, and each quarter you, you took a sport, so I did a scuba diving class once, which was horrible, and ski, which there was no snow in Rhode Island, and gymnastics, and –

PS: I took skiing.

LD: Yeah, but I mean that we went up to a Yawgoo in Cumberland, Rhode Island. And yeah –

PS: Yeah, exactly. Like a kiddie lift.

LD: Yeah, yeah, and we – it was night skiing.

NC: But the men were not required to take gym.

PS: Or posture pictures.

NC: We, we had – they didn't have to do the posture pictures, obviously. And yeah.

NP: Well, freshman year there were tons of differences between what was required of the men and the women. I mean, you mentioned parietals in the opening [01:29:00] things. I mean, it just, we weren't, we weren't the same, never mind equal, we, we were not the same. Separate rules, separate policies of all sorts governing your personal and social life. And the upper classmen, as I recall, kind of liked Pembroke and some of those rules. Like, I remember going to my first football game on campus and the upper class women were wearing like, tweed suits. I mean what what's wrong with you? You wear jeans and a sweatshirt to a football game. But they didn't, and they dressed up. And I mean so there were many, many changes, but those posture pictures, and I remember Hillary Clinton talking about it because they were hardly unique to Brown. I, I don't remember the exposes per se, but we, you were assigned to do certain things. And freshman year, early on it [01:30:00] included passing a swim test, fulfilling certain requirements, and I don't think any of us questioned it. That was, here is the policy it wasn't secret and hidden. This is it. And you abided. And if you were lucky enough you waited it out, and then all the policies changed, were waved. We had that funeral for Pembroke, and it was done away with.

[overlapping audio]

JD: Sorry. Go ahead.

MB: I was going to say, I thought they dropped the swim requirement because I failed 3 times.

NP: You did it for us.

LD: I can remember a, a gal on my floor absolutely refused to do it, and she said that you had until you were to a senior you could to go, and she says, “I hope they eliminate it by then.” But talking about parietals – our 20<sup>th</sup> reunion Ted Turner was a speaker, and he’d been kicked out of Brown for being in a girl’s room, and they gave him an honorary degree. And Jane Fonda was there [01:31:00] with him, and she actually spoke at a, at a, at a seminar, or something like that during that weekend. But yeah, he got kicked, he got kicked, well, and I think Jane Fonda’s son from her first marriage went to Brown.

JD: Those rules –

LD: I think he was graduating that year, as a matter of fact. Yeah.

JD: Those rules were certainly not something that everyone paid any attention to, because I remember friends, male friends, climbing in the first floor window at, you know, or climbing out. So, you know, that first year with, with what seems like a 1950 s set of rules and the tweed and the, you know, all the, all this stuff. The next year we were living in coed dorms. So again, that’s a really dramatic big change, and not everybody was, was comfortable, [01:32:00] you know, that, that that would be the living arrangement. But again, it was still just like a, a flip of a switch from one year to the next.

LD: That’s why I think that the Student Strike was, was probably, it caused such an upheaval. But I think that probably persist, precipitated a lot of the changes in next year. We just, you know, we just couldn’t go back to the way it was.

JD: Can I show one picture that includes three of us? This picture has Lucy Winner next to me in the front and Joan behind her, with Joel, husband to be, who also lived in our house at 382 Brook Street. So that that was the dress code those days.

NP: You know, you mentioned dress code. That was part of social change, minimizing [01:33:00] who had money, who came from prep schools, who came from old money, who joined fraternities. And we wore, you know, again, it may have started in California a year or two before, but the things we wore, t-shirts and ripped jeans. This was part of social change. It was we, we did not have, celebrate economic value and differences among people. So many things changed all at the same time for us.

LW: How many people changed clothing – speaking of clothing, how many people remember and had strike shirts? They were a strike shirt. They were actually created –

NC: I still have mine. I still have mine.

LW: I still have mine. They were created by a friend of mine who was at the Rhode Island School of Design. He had a, a silkscreen business there for, just for the strike. [01:34:00] And they were, the piece sign with –

NP: The peace sign.

LW: Right. And we all brought our favorite shirts to this silk screen studio, and we got these, and we all wore this, these strike shirts, those of us who stayed on campus.

MB: And they, the Black students at the same time that the white students were dressing down were enjoying the freedom of being able to dress up. And it was yeah, I, and, and to this day I mean, there's one of my friends who will, you know, that I've run into it reunions who each time said, "Your clothes still match." And not realizing that when I was growing up. my clothes didn't match and it was, it was part of my freedom to be able to have clothes that matched. [01:35:00]

LD: Well, it's funny you mentioned it because my high school class was the last one where the girls had to wear skirts.



PS: Right.

LD: And that was eliminated in the next year. But I that was the day when you had all these matchy sweaters and skirts. You know, you went to Pendleton, or in our case we went to Zaires, you know. And I brought, I took all the hems up two inches above the knee and brought them to Brown never wore them. I finally threw them away about three years ago.

NP: We're out of time, Amanda.

Ak: We are. We are about out of time. I, Lillian, posted in the chat, and it looks like almost everyone agrees. Lillian says, "The theme for our class should be that we learned to question what was assumed or taken for granted." And I think that's kind of a fantastic way to summarize all of the amazing memories that you have all shared tonight.

I cannot thank you enough for your honesty and openness, [01:36:00] and this is just going to be so huge for the historical record. This interview is going to go into a collection of almost 300 interviews with individuals and groups, and it's growing. So I just want to thank you all once again for participating tonight.

NC: A lot of fun.

PS: What a great group of women.

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