

Transcript – Class of 1981 25th Reunion

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Jane Lancaster: My name is Jane Lancaster. It's the 27th of May, 2006, and I am talking to some members of Brown, class of 1981. Let's get that right. It's their 25th reunion, and these women are going to talk, I hope, about their experiences at Brown and since. Let's start off with – anyone can chip in, but remember to introduce yourself first. Why did you come to Brown? Who'd like to start?

Marie-Armide Storey: I'll start. My name is Mimi Storey, and I was – found Brown appealing because of its liberal bent, and flexible curriculum, and it was a very natural lead from [00:01:00] my high school, which had a similar characteristics.

Kathryn Streator: I'm K.K. Streator, I came to Brown because the *New York Times* magazine had an article on the black students taking over the president's office like in 1976 or something, and I thought, “Cool, that's the kind of place I want to go.” And my father wanted me to apply to Harvard, so of course I wasn't going to do that, so it was therefore a natural – it seemed like a natural place. And the liberal thing, absolutely, like no – open curriculum, no requirements, it was a very appealing idea, yeah.

Claire Boerschlein-Hare: Claire Boerschlein-Hare. I came to Brown, I guess I was looking specifically for a strong computer science and math department at the time, and so that sort of appealed to me, believe it or not. But I mean, at the same time, like it was, you know, surprising to find that it was, you know, a friendly, nice place to be as well. But that was the initial sort of gist.

JL: How did you know that it was a strong computer science department?

CBH: Because I think I had done sort of a – at that time, in fact, [00:02:00] computer science was just starting out then, there was still the big IBM computers with the cards that you put in, and then one of my neighbors was doing sort of a project, he was a math teacher at a local private school, and he went and did sort of a go through it and put in criteria of you want in a college with size, and what interests you have, and it sort of spews out all these different colleges, and Brown was there. So it was sort of a random thing.

Suzanne Curley: I'm Suzanne Curley, hi. I was interested in Brown because they had a strong premed curriculum, and also they had a women's ice hockey team. So back then, women's ice hockey wasn't like it is today, and so I played for my four years on the women's ice hockey team. And so –

Virginia McQueen: And I was a track – my name is Ginny McQueen, Ginny Tortolani McQueen, and both my parents went to Brown, so right then and there, I have sort of familiar, comfortable feeling about the school, and I would help out with the Pops concert, they were involved in setting that up initially. But what attracted me to Brown was again, the premed program. I thought I wanted to go into that program, [00:03:00] I had been volunteering at the hospital as candy striper back then and I thought this is what I want to do. I've since changed my mind, and I was glad that I was at Brown, because there were so many other things that Brown offered that appealed to me. So, but that's what got me in the door.

Alice Wheelwright: I'm Alice Wheelwright, and I am a double legacy, although I think my father flunked out, and my mother graduated with honors, so I figured it's sort of a 50/50 chance maybe of getting in. But I was first, when we came back to do a tour of colleges in the east, I grew up in California, in Santa Barbara, and I love to travel, so I thought going to the east for school would be a great experience, because it would show me another culture, and in fact, it was indeed that. Yesterday when there was that film that they were showing some of the African-American women who came here, and how shocked they were by the culture, I experienced

some of that myself. I could not believe my freshman year how some of the young ladies from New York City could by someone's literally knowing exactly [00:04:00] where they lived, tell you probably what school they went to, what their father and mother did, and their socioeconomic strata, I'd never been exposed to anything like that. So, that was interesting. But I came back to my mother's – what was her 20th then, when we were touring colleges, and I just thought her classmates were so cool. So I decided to apply. And I was lucky enough to get in.

JL: And so, when you got here, did it live up to what you hoped it would be? You know, this nice liberal place with people revolting and good computers?

AW: Gosh, I think – well I remember our freshman year, you remember there was that huge snowstorm?

MS: The blizzard of '78.

AW: The blizzard of '78. And so, that was my first impression, I was thinking what did I get myself into? All my friends are in east LA, they're all down at the beach, and I'm sitting here with snow in the back of Appleby, you know, because – but I thought the people were incredible, and so that connection to my mother's classmates and how cool they had been, [00:05:00] I thought it really lived up to that. I went to a public high school also, so I found academically, I mean I just studied so hard, because I was so afraid I was going to flunk out. And I got straight A's my first semester, and chilled out, started to have a good time. But yeah, it really lived up to my expectations, I don't know about you guys.

KS: I was surprised, I felt a little bit like everyone had gone to the same prep school that I hadn't gone to. It seemed like there was a huge number of people who all knew each other from whatever tennis camp they'd gone to, or whatever .

AW: That Northeast thing.

KS: Yeah. And I'm from the Northeast, but I went to public schools too, and I remember feeling out of the loop on that. And the same things that attracted me to Brown, the lack of any structure or adult supervision, or anything, you know, was actually a drawback for me the first year. I thought – I really felt kind of adrift and lost. And it would have been helpful to have had – I mean, I was just, I said to a friend of mine this morning, I had no adult – basically no adult contact, personal contact, [00:06:00] the entire time I was here. I didn't know any of my professors really. And, you know, some of that's my fault, I guess. But I didn't know, I just didn't. I mean, we were kind of like, here you are, go, run, run, run, sink or swim.

AW: And our – I didn't find that the dorm proctors – they were doing their own thing. They really weren't there, so to speak.

CBH: And I think the advisory system was quite weak. I mean it was really not a very strong relationship with the students. And I think given that they had the curriculum where you could take any classes you wanted to, that was sort of a deficit for the school. Because I think many people got to their junior year, and they were sort of struggling like what am I going to major in?

AW: How many courses do I have, which major can I –

MS: I would have to second that. I felt that I needed more – and I would have benefited from more guidance. There was so much freedom, and of course, and I think I ended up graduating with more than 50% of my credits in history, because I'd actually done a junior year abroad that was 100% history, and I look back and I think, goodness, how – I mean that was wonderful, I loved history, but wow, I missed out on a lot of other things. And I think a mentor would have been useful. [00:07:00]

SC: Yeah, I had come from a small town, and small school system, and no one in my family had gone to college before I went. And so, when I got here, I thought I wanted to be premed, so I took all these science courses. And I think I would have benefited more from a – not the open curriculum at the time, or some sort of an advisor that would have helped me, because I might have found an area that I really liked more than the science, but I was going down this science

track. So, I think I might have taken two English courses and one history course, or whatever I needed to.

MS: Yeah, I did the opposite. I mean, I took one science, I didn't take any language, I didn't take math, and I had been very precocious with math in high school, but I was just – no one told me to, I was like, oh, I don't have to. I was like wow, I don't have to?

KS: I got out of here without ever taking math or science. And then I got my MBA.

MS: So it's funny, what attracted me to Brown was probably not necessarily what I needed, so much freedom. I'm glad I didn't go to a school that had so many distribution requirements that I didn't have choices. I loved having the choices, [00:08:00] and I liked being allowed to make mistakes, I mean I think that's one thing, I didn't end up taking any courses pass/fail, but I liked knowing that I could. And I did do one thing that Brown – I made a mistake and Brown forgave that. You know, you could fail a course, drop a course, and it wouldn't show up on your transcript. I did a thesis my senior year, and fell in love with somebody who was living down in Virginia, and I researched it, and I never finished it, I didn't hand it in. And so, it looks like I took three courses, but it – and it was something that I was a – something I regretted, and felt really badly about it, but it was internal, it didn't have to be sort of a scarlet letter on my transcript. It wasn't something I carried with me, except inside, my sort of feeling like I let myself down, you know? Gosh, and it wasn't even the man I married, you know? [laughter] Blew my thesis. So I've been making up for it ever since. And now – But it allowed you make those kind of [00:09:00] mistakes without carrying the curse for the rest of your life.

CBH: And that being said, I think that's the beauty of the core curriculum now, I think that it actually is, it is very valuable. We all thought at the time that we were sort of navigating this on our own, and we really didn't know what we were doing. But today, we were just talking about this earlier, there's so much focus on these children's lives, and we preplan everything, that they're almost – they don't actually learn the opportunities, to make mistakes, or to like, try to navigate their own way. Which I think in retrospect, looking back, and I took a lot of math, and I took a lot of art history classes, and I did other classes in English, and I ended up using that, like

I worked for an art gallery for 10 years, and then I've been investment banking. So I think some of that has actually helped, I think, later on, being able to go into different areas and not feel like you're set on one path. And probably because we had those choices. And I feel able to do that, I mean, I feel like I don't have like, lack the confidence, like oh, I can't go off and just do something else.

KS: To do anything.

AW: Did you guys take advantage of the modes of thoughts courses? Because I did a number of those, and I thought those were –

KS: What were those?

AW: They [00:10:00] were special seminars that a (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) and then there were some later in our later years, they had another series, but they were usually very high, senior professors, and it was a great opportunity, there were usually no more than 20 people who were in these small classes. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CBH: I did not, no. Yeah.

AW: I had one with, who was the guy who did all of the – oh God, he did all of the Socratic teaching. He's since retired, but –

CBH: [Visor?]?

AW: Yes. Yeah, I had a modes of thought with Visor. Oh my God, he was scary. Oh. And imagine being in his class with 15 people like him. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). Trust me, I never missed a class, and I never missed not doing his stuff, but he was probably the closest thing I ever had to someone who did kind of advise me my freshman year, because he did take real ownership over the 15 of us. And he was going to make sure [00:11:00] that none of us failed. Scary as that is.

CBH: But that's good, that's good, yeah.

AW: It was, it was great.

VM: Do you remember the name of the class, or that subject area? Because –

AW: Oh god. It was something in – it was something around the rule of law, actually. And –

VM: Because that was his main primary course.

AW: And the big thing that we were discussing, what was so fascinating about that was, is it was when all the laws around ADA access were in Congress, and it was all being discussed, and of course, the big question was, is it was going to cost, and has cost our country billions to enact all of that. And so, we were arguing back and forth whether or not that was going to be a worthwhile expenditure for our country. And it was just fascinating, so.

VM: I had an advisor freshman year, I'm trying to remember his name, you'll probably remember him, he climbed the Himalayas, he was very – he was a geologist. But almost like intimidating, because he had this reputation before, we were assigned someone, weren't we assigned someone? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) And again, but I couldn't really relate to him because he was [00:12:00] –

AW: I definitely don't remember my advisor's name.

VM: Nice guy, but just intimidating, he had, you know, all these, you know, stories behind him that I heard before I met him, and so anyway, I couldn't relate to him real well, but I was very lucky in that I was in a dorm freshman year with a lot of sophomore women who had been through freshman year, obviously. And they were great with their advice, and across the hall, I had – my advisor was Mary McGuire, who's become a TV personality locally, and she was very instrumental and very helpful, and we're still in touch. But again, helped with the whole no core

requirement, you know, I was able to take a variety of courses, because I decided pre-med wasn't where I wanted to go after freshman year, and so I would say that the advising system did work for me, but not the way that Brown probably had intended it to. So, by putting me in an environment with women who, you know, were helpful with us lowly freshmen, nine of us.

JL: I'm interested in the mention of some of the [00:13:00] professors. I haven't heard any women professors being mentioned, were there any?

VM: Oh, there was a fabulous – did anyone take Barbara Tanenbaum's classes? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). She was amazing, she was history. Obviously much younger when we were there, she was probably in her mid-twenties. And I've since actually gone to a session with her on public speaking and communications, and she speaks around the world, and works with CEOs and politicians, and helps them polish their act, you know, how to stand, how to speak. And so she made a huge impression on me back, you know, when I was 18.

JL: What did she do?

VM: She helped with independent studies. And so, if you wanted to take a course off campus, Brown did allow you to do that, but they wanted you to have an advisor, and she was my advisor. And I still remember her, and I just saw her a couple of months ago, and told her what a great impression she made on me. So that's – she was my favorite woman professor.

JL: What was the course you did off campus?

VM: [00:14:00] Oh, I worked at a radio station, I did programming for them. In terms of their music selection, they were changing their format from country to –

JL: Rock?

VM: Not rock, just sort of almost easy listening. So I helped them research the kind of music that they should be playing. And that was great, I loved that.

KS: Oh that sounds fascinating.

AW: I had one art history female professor, was – I didn't, it was a large class, so I never really got to know her. But I don't remember a lot of women professors. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CBH: – history and English departments, I don't remember having a woman.

AW: I had some remarkably boring male professors.

JL: We can talk about that.

SC: In the psychology department, Rosemary Sorrentino, did anyone have – she was the – well since I was a psych major, so she was pretty high up in the Brown faculty. And when you started mentioning yours, I think in my senior year, she was helping me with my senior thesis, and [00:15:00] she was very well known in the field of psychology. I feel like when you ask me to – us to do this, I'm like, I don't think I can remember anything that went on back there. It's not that I did drugs or anything, I just didn't remember.

KS: There were a few female deans. There was Harriet Sheridan. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

AW: Yes, very, yeah. And she was president of the university for a little bit. After Swearer died. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MS: That time, I do remember in the administration, when they had questions about, you know, studying abroad or whatever it was that there were women that I felt really comfortable with and trusted, but I don't remember in the classroom.

CBH: I had a women's study professor in that freshman modes of thought class who I think was affiliated with the Pembroke Center in some way. But that's the only person I can remember.

KS: Were there many women professors there when we were there?

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

– associate professor, Barbara Tanenbaum wasn't a full professor at that time. She was just a (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JL: [00:16:00] There were not many. We've already – well, tell me about some of the other courses you did with men, it must be with men.

[laughter]

MS: Just in terms of what was good, or?

JL: Well, anything you can remember about them. The class, the makeup of the class, you're all being taught with men. The atmosphere in the class, the – what you were expected to do. I don't know, anything that comes to mind.

AW: I thought most of our classes were pretty small, which I thought was great. And that's part of why I came to Brown, honestly. And we had a lot of direct professor engagement, which was also another significant plus. I remember all of us being pretty out there, and I don't remember bashful women, so this constant (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) somehow women become mousy when they're with guys, no, it didn't seem like that to me.

SC: Since I was doing the premed track for two years, most of my classes were huge. [00:17:00] You know, bio, chemistry, it was in the labs that, you know, the chem. lab Friday afternoon, I can remember that. That should have told me, I didn't want to do it anymore.

CBH: You're going to love to see that science's building when it goes up.

SC: I know.

CBH: (inaudible) crappy old labs that you guys used.

SC: Right. So – oh go ahead.

VM: I was going to say, the computer science, you probably, you don't remember that building, I passed on my way. It's no longer the computer science building. But I remember being there at two in the morning with my cards, and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) my computer program, error, error, error, error. Trying to do the elevate.

AW: Elevator, I did that as well. You had to program an elevator with Andy van Dam.

VM: Every time I go in these elevators, I start to like, get that pit in my stomach. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And it just wasn't making sense to me. And my – luckily, one of my roommates was brilliant in computer science, and she helped me through it. Again, 2:30 on the steps of that building in tears, you know? Because it was due the next day, and I just remember thinking that this isn't what I should be doing. [00:18:00] This is not my thing.

AW: Well, and we did all of our papers on Selectric typewriters. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) there were no PCs at that point, but we just missed it actually, the PCs literally started a year or two later.

VM: But they were still like this, they were thousands of dollars or something. Because (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MS: Or you'd pay people a dollar a page to type it.

VM: Right, right.

MS: And then you'd get it back and you'd realize you wanted to make changes. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

SC: But even – I went to grad school in '86, and I remember doing my thesis, it was someone I paid – it wasn't a computer, I mean. Oh wait, was it? Yeah, I think it was just starting though. But I thought back, how did people ever do theses way back? You know, when they had to type – if you had to retype and paginate everything, it just always baffled me. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MS: We didn't do as many drafts. You know, they kept saying you should do more revision, more revision, but not when you invested so much in typing it, so we would pretty much not do a polished product. We would just turn in our first draft, essentially. And now, even at the high school level, I see, you know, the multiple drafts [00:19:00] and you can always be reworking, reworking, which is much better (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

VM: It would've been much better to have this technology.

AW: Yeah, there's pluses and minuses though. Like when you're walking with your laptop into a major client presentation, and your CEO is still trying to change slides (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) there were some benefits to when the slides had to be done and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

KS: The idea of like writing a 20 page paper out by hand? I always used to write it out in long form and then you would type. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

SC: File cards, you had your, you know, thoughts, and then you put them around, that's – oh my gosh. The kids these days, they don't really know.

VM: The technology now is so different. I mean, I think the experience of going to college is so different, I was reading somewhere where it's almost not good in some ways. Because students

are always on their phone, and you're going down the street, you'd actually make eye contact with people when we were going to school and talk, and say hello, but most of the times, people are on their phones.

AW: That or they're doing the BlackBerry.

SC: She's on her phone and IM-ing. I said, I hope you're not talking to the same person you're IM-ing, [00:20:00] and on the phone with, because –

CBH: Or do they go to the library and study? I always think they're probably in their room on their computers, and having to go do research. And that was a very social element of our education. I remember the library more than I remember being in the classroom. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MS: The library, walking around the carrels and talking, or the breakout rooms, you know, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) do you want to have coffee? Someone would come and, "Oh, someone asked me for coffee."

SC: Did anybody go to brunch at the Ratty but go over to the Rock and drop their stuff so that they could get a jump on (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

MS: Get your good carrel. You'd put your stuff down and then go have breakfast.

SC: The minute it opened you'd put it down and then race over there.

MS: Yeah, absolutely. Especially during exam week, you know, it was always dibs the carrel.

VM: But the library's probably not used as much for reference materials. I mean, they probably go there to study, but I bet the stacks – and that's not really a key factor anymore. When I was touring schools with my son, that was, like, the question I kept thinking – well, I should ask how

many volumes are in the library? But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter anymore. You just want a good space for studying and that's about it.

SC: I still get nostalgic, going into a library [00:21:00] in a local town that has a card catalog in it. It's really nice. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: It's like being a kid in a camp where you see it and it's like, "Oh, so many resources!" You get that feeling, and it's a different, a different – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

KS: I know, but whatever book you wanted was never there. [laughter] Doing a research project it was never there. So you were like, "All right, well, there's some random book that looks like it might be on the same subject, so I'm sure I can find something in there."

SC: That's a good point. We can be nostalgic.

MS: Well, about the communications, cell phones and all that, John, Claire's husband, was pointing out that when we've – socially, we had to go out. You weren't – you didn't stay in your room. You had to sort of venture out, you know, to hope you'd run into someone you already knew, but chances are they wouldn't be there, so you'd make other connections. And I think now, because of the cell phone, IM-ing, there isn't that much random – you don't have to go outside of the box quite as much. I don't know if that's the case, but I (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

AW: Right. Maybe that last-ditch to ECDC –

MS: Yeah, any of the food.

SC: Right. It's no longer there, do you know that?

AW: Really? Where do those kids way out there eat then?

CBH: I don't know, if – [00:22:00] it's not there. It's some sort of a music – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) some other – it's with the music department. It's interesting, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

MS: And then if you didn't find anyone you'd sort of go back with your tail between your legs to your room, but –

JL: So tell me about life in the dorms.

MS: Rowdy. [laughter]

KS: I lived in West Andrews freshman year, and the all– the only all-girl dorm left at the time.

VM: Oh, no, I had one.

KS: You did too?

VM: Oh, go with your story then I'll tell you mine.

KS: Mine was, like, on West Andrews, and it was, like, full of, like, the oddest people. [laughter] And my roommate and I both requested coed housing, and – I had a couple good friends, we had – I ended up with a couple good friends from my floor, but they were truly, like, the strangest – they were just weird, odd ducks. So I was like – I was like, “My social life has been ruined before I even [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) you know, got here” – but it really did make it hard, though, actually. I mean, it was – especially the, you know, very first part of freshman year, it was odd.

AW: Well, the Pembroke campus was more isolated, too. You know, I never went over there [00:23:00] –

__: Right, you went to dinner over there –

KS: Yeah, we had our own dining hall.

VM: And they had good food there. You had good food there.

CBH: Was that Verney-Woolley?

KS: Verney-Woolley. Yes, right.

CBH: I don't know why that came to me, but –

KS: Well, I think there were certain – I know you said you lived in Appleby. And, you know, like Appleby, I think people in Appleby had kind of like a little core group, because you guys were way out.

__: I remember that, yeah.

KS: And Pembroke was somewhat similar in that way. But at the same time I was like, “Why can't I be in West Quad?”

MS: Well, I was in the West Quad in Everett House, with the room opening into the quad. So it was rowdy. And it was fun, but there were times, you know, where it was, you know, party all night long, and there'd be, you know, the football players yelling out of their windows, and, you know, you could not study in your room. You had – I mean, that just wasn't an option. So we were at the library all the time. But we had coed room by room.

__: Right, that's what we had at Appleby.

MS: The girls would be across the hall but then there'd be two boys across the hall.

__: That's very progressive.

MS: And then we had the – a vote, which I think it’s – funny to remember this: you could choose to make the bathroom on your hall coed, or you could decide to have it be single-gender and the other ones would – and we chose to make it coed. And I look back and I think, “How did that [00:24:00] work, you know, with showers and stuff?”

KS: We were talking about that last night.

MS: But it was like, you know, you reach out of the curtain and get your robe, but we did opt to make ours coed. And it was great. I mean, we talked – we still refer to, or did through the rest of our time there, the boys on our hall as our brothers, you know, bro. And, you know, even senior year you’d say “Bro!” because it was the guy who lived next door. And they sort of stuck up for you, and when there was some, you know, drunken heathen pounding on your door at 2:00 in the morning, it was the guys next door who would tell them to get lost, and I would just not have to come out of the room.

AW: Yeah, those that were on our floor – we were in the basement of Appleby, and there was only one bathroom, because it was a half floor. And so we voted the same thing. And it was interesting, because you’d walk in, and the urinals, there was no protection at all. So – you know, and you’d just look the other way, and they were like your brothers. Because otherwise it would have been inappropriate, but it was – I don’t know, we just didn’t even – it wasn’t a big deal at all.

MS: It didn’t seem like such a big deal at all.

CBH: It didn’t seem like a big deal. Although then I was talking to a man last night who said – who I wouldn’t have expected, said [00:25:00] “I was really worried about that.” I thought, “You were?” And I don’t think we as females really felt that uncomfortable.

MS: Well, I think we also wanted – we were bi– you know, we were big, mature – I mean, we were babies, but I felt at the time that there was nothing I couldn't handle. You know, nothing fazed me. It was, you know, and I'm –

AW: Well, I trusted all of the guys on my floor implicitly, like you did. You know, it really was a family environment. And in the winter, you didn't want to have to walk up one floor, plus the women's room was down – so it was really going to be a long haul for us. So we were very much in agreement that as long as we could stay on the same floor, then we were willing to –

VM: It was fine.

SC: I had a slightly different – I was in the overflow that went into this – there were 18 of us in one house – German house it is now; it was Dyer House, right next to Perkins. So we were in triples or quads with one bathroom, so there'd be two rooms with two women out and two women inside and a bathroom, and I was in a triple. And it was – everyone thought, “Wow, you have your own bathroom, and it's great.” But, you know, [00:26:00] I don't think a triple dynamic works really well freshman year, because I had one very good roommate and one kind of crazy psycho roommate, who shall remain nameless. [laughter] But so – at least that's how I felt. She's probably fine now. But we met a lot of people from Perkins, because our laundry room would never work. So that's how I met one of my best friends freshman week in the laundry that I'm still close friends with now. So it was – you know, it was fun having that kind of space, and we had a living room, and – but it was different too, because I didn't feel like I had that same freshman that the people who lived in Wriston Quad experienced.

MS: Yeah, your hall – yeah, we did have a big – we had your hall identity and then you'd go to a party in another hall and you'd sort of get to know their identity. It was – you very much connected to it.

CBH: Is it still called the zoo?

MS: I don't know. I'm sure they do it. It's sort of set up for that.

KS: So where you were in a dorm was very important freshman year. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) [00:27:00]

SC: I lived in Buxton sophomore year, which was an all-women's placement.

MS: I was in Buxton.

SC: Oh, you were?

MS: Yeah, that's why I think we – I was on the second floor, looking out towards the west quad, with Sue Steinberg.

SC: Oh. We were right inside the firewall. I was with Sue Burns, outside – yeah.

MS: Right, yeah, yeah. You were right there.

SC: Do you remember what – we were talking last night, when Delta Tau stole our toilet seats?
[laughter]

MS: Well, didn't they also, like, dismantle their can and threw it out the window?

AW: I remember that.

CBH: I remember that too.

MS: Yeah, there was – I mean, that was an odd thing, Buxton, because it was built to be a male fraternity, but it became an all-girls sophomore dorm. But it was right there in the –

SC: You had to walk by all the male dorms.

MS: – Wriston Quad, yeah. But, I mean, it was the ideal location. You had to have a really high lottery number to get there, because you were right in the center of things, and –

AW: I think I had my first mint julep on that patio.

SC: Oh, with – during the Kentucky Derby? What was her name, Kathy Frank?

AW: Kathy Frank, yes. She was from the South, and –

SC: And she had a derby party.

KS: She was stuck in my weird hall (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

SC: I remember, that's –

___: She wasn't weird.

SC: [00:28:00] And derby pies. I remember that. That was my first introduction to the Kentucky Derby.

MS: But it's interesting that we opted, all of us who'd been in, like, the West Quad with the coed, for an all-girls dorm sophomore year. But it was all about location, location. And there were nice big rooms right in the center of things. But it was –

VM: And I had that my freshman year. As I said, I was in Littlefield, which is an overflow, and there were – like, I think nine of us that were freshmen and all the rest were sophomores – who all kind of knew each other. I think they all had planned to be in Littlefield, and they were somehow connected to the hockey team. They were all girlfriends, or maybe they were hockey players too, but again, I learned a lot from them. That was the year that *Saturday Night Live* was really big. So we would have parties – they would be gatoring, which I had never seen before,

and then they would be doing the pretzel and the – these dances, again, that – I learned a lot from these sophomore women. [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

SC: What frat was that that had the pool?

VM: Oh, right in the front, a plastic pool. [00:29:00] Was it Sigma Phi?

AW: Sigma Phi. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

CBH: But I was in Appleby also that year. That was interesting, because it was – and it was the coed bathrooms, but I thought that – I agree with you, there was a lot of cohesiveness amongst the men and the women as brothers. But there was also – I mean, there were so many drugs on the floor. I remember freshman year I was just astounded how much marijuana they were smoking, on my floor. Which I thought, wow. You know, that was just – they would sit in the hallway –

KS: I used to come over to your floor to smoke dope, I think.

CBH: They would sit in the hallway and just – against the walls and just walk down the hall and everybody was sitting against the walls smoking. And I thought – it was just mind-boggling. But nobody really – there was no pressure to, like, conform to that. It was just like, you either did or you didn't and no one really cared.

VM: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) those mushrooms. Do you remember the mushrooms growing in the hallway at Appleby?

CBH: Yeah. Oh, that's right. [laughter]

VM: Under the carpet, the little seeds from those.

AW: Oh, that's disgusting.

VM: It is disgusting. It's so disgusting. And I just remember thinking – I was there in sophomore year.

__: That's right, I do remember that now.

KS: The dorms – the quality of the dorms was nasty when we were here in general. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AW: Yeah, I think they're still pretty – we're staying in the dorm. It's awful. [00:30:00]

MS: My children – We came to the 20th and we stayed in a dorm and both my kids were saying, “So this is college life? I think I'm going to go to Harvard, Mom.” Because it was – [laughter] you know, the single lightbulb in the ceiling, the linoleum floor that kind of smelled, because it was in Wriston Quad again where we stayed.

VM: But the rooms are so bare when the kids aren't there. I mean, they dress them up –

MS: Right. I thought it was great when we were there. You know, you went out and you bought a nine-by-twelve ugly rug, and, you know, some Walmart – well, we didn't have Walmart – some curtains –

KS: Don't you think people's expectations are different today? Like, I took a run this morning, and I couldn't with how nice all the cars were. Like, A, there were just a lot of cars, and I thought –

__: We didn't have cars.

KS: Most of them, we were mostly – it was a really – I don't think we were allowed to.

MS: No, they were, because there was a freshman with a BMW. I forget her name, but I remember being really impressed.

KS: But most people had, like – [laughter] My friend Judy Feldston had, like, a mustard-yellow Pinto, the ones that explode when hit from behind. [laughter] That was – she was – that was a cool thing that she had.

MS: Well, you got a car senior year. That was very cool.

KS: My senior – junior or senior year.

CBH: I don't think anyone had one before.

KS: [00:31:00] But very few people – very few people.

SC: Who had like a Honda – a mini-Honda Civic. Margaret Skang – did you know her? Anyone know her?

__: No. My roommate had an old Honda.

SC: I remember we went up to Medieval Manor in Boston and there were, like, eight of us in that car coming back, and I just could not believe – you know, I wasn't a real partier, but in this day and age, if I had kids, I think I'd – you know, I feel lucky to have escaped unharmed in that day and age.

AW: Would you remember that we – our senior year, that week before this week, right, we – senior week, I mean, we had all those parties in Newport, we had the party that was in List – do you remember, where it was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

KS: We threw (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) – my roommates and I, and we had it at her grandmother’s house, and we invited, like – I’m sure you were probably all there, because we were like, “Hey, you should come to the party.”

MS: Yeah, that was a great party.

KS: And there were four or five roommates, and I swear to God, we all chipped in \$50, and we thought we’d be –

MS: That was a lot of money back then.

KS: – well, so we had \$250, and we thought, we threw – we thought we threw this party. Now, in retrospect, we had it at her grandmother’s, like, mansion in Newport. In retrospect – there were police there, there were caterers, I mean, her grandmother obviously paid for this. But we truly thought – you know, we went to, like, whatever the bargain [00:32:00] co-op and bought, like, 28 pounds of cheddar cheese and we chopped it up. I think we might have driven to New Hampshire to go to the cheap little liquor store, and bought gallons of vodka.

AW: But think of how – we drank and drove all the time. We didn’t even think about it.

MS: Yes. We drank a lot. I think – I don’t remember the dope being as big as the liquor.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

SC: I wonder how it is here, drinking – later on –

JL: One at a time.

SC: Sorry. Does drinking still go on? I wonder, even though the drinking age is 21, is it less – is it –?

AW: Well, Brown’s been in the news for it, so I think (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

KS: But there's more driving – I think there's more driving now than when we were here. Because I get what you're saying – people didn't really have cars. We didn't really have – most people didn't have cars. So other than the occasional –

MS: Right. There was a lot of drinking. I mean, I remember we had friends who had serious drinking problems, the kind where you were, you know, pumping out the stomach kind of issues. I mean, there was – and it was a – just all over the place. And you didn't go out – I mean, you'd have drinks in the room before you went to the party, and then you'd drink at the party, and then you'd be up at four in the morning, still drinking. I don't know how we survived it. [00:33:00]

VM: But I think it's so normal. And there's – again, having done – gone through this whole process with my son, there's this website called campusdirt.com, and you go into it, and you can look at schools and you can look at the social life, and it's all drinking. It's just, kids just – everywhere.

KS: Also, the drinking age, remember, when we were –

MS: Because we were legal.

KS: – they kept fluctuating. Because it was 18 at one point –

MS: But I think we were grandfathered, weren't we? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: We weren't legal in Massachusetts. I know we weren't, because I had a fake ID I used in Massachusetts, like, for the summers. So we were always on Martha's Vineyard, and they'd raised it to 21, or 20, I think, in Massachusetts at the time, and –

AW: See, I was in California, so it was always 21 for me. But they didn't really card you still. If you just dressed the part and went out, they always wanted an attractive woman to be amongst

these guys in the bars, so – and I always looked older than I was, so I was able to get away with it.

MS: Yeah, I only remember one time in my whole teen years being turned away from a bar. And it was just –

KS: Massachusetts, they carded a lot.

MS: Maybe – and it was in Massachusetts, you know, that I hadn't – [00:34:00] but I think I was even of age then or something, but I didn't – but it was the only time. Otherwise, yeah, you just walked in and there was very little –

VM: And now our bodies can't take it. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: They obviously still drink, but now, I mean, it is illegal.

__: They have to be careful.

MS: And the school can't sponsor the parties. It seemed to be – these were all school-sponsored events. I mean, it was –

CBH: Right. That's why the school – yeah, a lot of them were. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Spring Weekend. Bonnie Raitt, do you remember Bonnie Raitt (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

SC: Spring Weekend was just a big boozefest too.

MS: That was great. Oh, that was great.

VM: And the Hegeman party with the red punch, I mean, that was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

CBH: Yes, all of the grain alcohol (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

AW: No, that was Hegeman, so it was actually the dorm. And they did their own Spring Weekend party.

SC: Yes, I remember that.

AW: We even had – Huey Lewis and the News came one year. I mean –

VM: Yeah, it was fun, we had some great concerts.

MS: Bob Marley – it was his last live performance before he died. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: I remember Littlefeet. That was fun.

AW: And the B-52s came, do you remember that? They were in Alumni Hall. So we had a lot of (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

VM: And Mary Chapin Carpenter would [00:35:00] have her little, you know, fireside, you know, we didn't even know, coffeeshouse kind of – but she's so huge now, and we were so lucky to have her performing at that Fireside Lounge. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

__: She was at the Grad Center. Also, did she sometimes play (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –?

SC: She was in our class.

KS: She used Chapin, she went by – didn't she?

AW: She went by Chapin, yeah.

MS: She grew up as Mary Chapin, but she sort of added that, and she just became Chapin here, and then she reverted back to her – huh.

JL: So there's a lot of drinking. A lot of partying. A lot of drugs.

VM: I didn't see that much drugs. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

SC: I think it was mostly freshman year, and it was probably pot.

CBH: Particularly pot.

KS: I'm obviously the only drug addict that – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: There was a lot in grad school for me, but there was less so –

KS: I think there was a lot of pot, and people did mushrooms a lot, I thought.

MS: Yeah, there was a lot of pot.

KS: I abused drugs in high school – I was done by the time I got here. [00:36:00] But – there was sometimes cocaine around, that was always –

__: Not till later, I thought.

MS: Well, there – yeah, there was speed and cocaine. Speed, I mean, it's like, what was up with that? I remember that being –

SC: I wasn't really into – you know, I barely drank when I was in school. I was more like, I don't know –

KS: But you know what's interesting, I thought, it was like – well, by the time we were seniors I thought there was cocaine.

CBH: That's what I was going to say. I thought it was later.

KS: Around.

MS: It was expensive. It was – somebody's boyfriend from another school who might have showed up with it or something.

KS: But, you know, I said – I had a competition this morning with a friend of mine, a guy – Brian McCarthy, who was saying that one of the interesting things about Brown was, like, you didn't really have any idea of people's socioeconomic status. Like, you didn't know – like, other than, there was, like, like the Eurotrash contingent who were obviously really rich –

MS: And the Iranians.

KS: The Iranians. That's what they were, the Iranians.

__: They were very wealthy.

KS: But other than that, you really –

AW: And the princess that we knew – and who was here? One of the Iranian princesses was here, and –

CBH: Right, right. She was so beautiful.

SC: Did anyone work on campus? I worked in the Ratty. I was a student manager, and so –

AW: I worked for Fenton, and I ran into him yesterday. [00:37:00] It was so wild, yeah. I was his first female employee at College Hill Travel. And then Jules Schreiber was the second. And I just happened to run into him. He was actually coming out of whatever the dorm is that's behind the John Hay.

__: That's Littlefield.

AW: Oh, Littlefield. He was coming kind of out of that exit there.

KS: Wasn't he a pedophile? [laughter] Strange, strange guy.

AW: It was bizarre. I couldn't believe he was alive, actually.

KS: I always thought he was a pedophile, personally.

AW: Oh, for sure, yeah. You know, anyway, it was –

SC: She's going to have to bleep out names on this. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AW: Well, that was how I got to know all the guys at Sigma Chi, because they all worked – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: But didn't you find that you didn't really classify – people didn't really – I didn't really have any idea what people's social status was or if they were wealthy or not.

AW: Well, the reason I worked there was – right.

MS: I think that's actually true. I think that's really –

AW: I was fortunate, because my parents didn't expect me to work, but I loved to travel, and so I really worked there so I could get the tickets and travel on vacations, so.

MS: I worked not for the tuition but for spending money, because I didn't have much of an allowance. So I did catering [00:38:00] through the Ratty and stuff – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Yeah, we did a lot of catering. And then there was an off-campus caterer that –

VM: Yes, [Dyla Moffrey?].

MS: Yes, yes.

VM: Remember he worked for (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

MS: Yes, yes, and we did a lot of work there too.

VM: I used to work at the pool. I used to lifeguard at the pool.

MS: Oh, yeah, you did a lot – so you could – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) choose the hours, you know, and you could turn down jobs if you weren't available. And you'd try to take the jobs your friends were also doing. And that was funny. There was food. Because if there were leftovers, because we were – we had such tiny budgets when we were living off-campus, you know.

KS: Bisquick. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: You would – exactly. Everything, I – [laughter] And we thought it was really great.

KS: They had like 8,000 recipes for Bisquick. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: [laughter] Made with milk.

KS: But no wonder we all gained, like, you all gained –

MS: Yeah, we all, like, gained, like, 50 pounds. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) But we had no money, and so then we'd go do these catering jobs and bring home, like, these hors d'oeuvres that were left over from a wedding or something, and that would be our food for the week. Yeah, it was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

AW: That's the one thing that's changed here, is the food.

VM: Oh, really? Is it much better? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AW: Well, you just look at the different little cafes and things – oh, my God. I mean, the food here was just atrocious. I actually lost weight freshman year.

SC: Well, the Ratty food wasn't so bad. At the time I think it was good.

VM: I've been to other schools that were much worse than ours. I remember thinking, "I'm so lucky to be able to come back and have a salad bar, and the soft ice cream machine, and, you know, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) And different omelets every – you know, it was – I thought, you know, for the time it was probably pretty good.

SC: Yeah, I worked breakfasts at the Ratty, so, I mean, we had –

___: Oh, breakfast was great.

SC: Yeah, breakfast was always great. And with the omelets you could get – there were three egg stations.

AW: If you got up early enough. I think I probably only went to breakfast (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

KS: I don't think I ever went to the Ratty for breakfast.

MS: Maybe – I hardly ever went.

CBH: But they did have all those great options at the gate. Remember the gate had ice cream and –

KS: Right, you could trade in your meal (inaudible) and –

MS: What was below the Ratty? Is that –

CBH: The Ivy Room.

MS: The Ivy Room, yeah, and I remember I rowed freshman year, so we were always too late for the regular dinners, so you'd only get to go to the Ivy Room. And that's where we all gained weight. Our coach – and the rowing coach was always like, "Oh, you're supposed to be more of a lightweight," you know. Because they would just go – with all the jocks, and everyone would be loading up their plates, so I was like, yes.

SC: I'd go to the gate. Because we had hockey practice from [00:40:00] 6:30 to 8:30, so you couldn't go to dinner before and then after. So, yeah, that was tough.

JL: So there wasn't a PE requirement anymore.

All: No.

JL: But did you all do some?

AW: No.

VM: I was cross-country and did some tennis, and that was – and that's good, because the running was great around here.

MS: I used to run. I used to run.

CBH: Going out jogging, that was really nice, because there were some beautiful long boulevards and things – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

VM: Because the hills were always there. You'd have to do a real quick workout up and down those hills.

AW: I had ran competitively all through my childhood and into high school, and I was so burned out that I decided not to go out for track here. And I just became a bum. I didn't do anything. And I – I still – at that point in time I could eat anything under the sun and I didn't gain any weight, but now I couldn't possibly think – I mean, this weekend, it's hard enough for me to go two, three days without working out.

VM: Right. Right, but there was no exercise, like – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: And there were no intramural sports.

SC: There weren't many facilities. It's so amazing here now. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: Well, you had been a swimmer. [00:41:00]

CBH: Right, and I used to swim at the pool, but just (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) – and I didn't swim here, though. I swam recreationally.

MS: But you did a lot of laps. I mean, you were disciplined about it.

CBH: Yeah, yeah, and I would also run, you know, and do – like, you know, just around campus. But I didn't participate on a team.

MS: Well, I was not a jock at all, and I just got recruited in the freshman week, you know – “oh, how about rowing?” And I thought, “Well, that sounds great.” And I only did it for about a year and a half, but I loved the team – the camaraderie. And it was the older girls, you know, and it was –

KS: That would have been fun. And going to the other schools.

MS: Yeah, it was – I loved it.

KS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Did you run here, Ginny?

VM: Yup, yup, yup.

CBH: And hockey team, though, didn't it start, like, our junior year? I thought it started –

SC: No, I was – Katherine joined our junior year, but I played from freshman year. And no, it's the oldest women's ice hockey in the country, so it's in the '60s.

CBH: But I always think it's so interesting to think that – yeah, when we were here, like, we could have all just walked on the women's ice hockey team, which is amazing. You could never do that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

SC: No, which never made (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CBH: And I think of all the lost opportunities that we gave up, which is unfortunate.

VM: That's all Title IX.

CBH: I know.

JL: You were before Title IX?

VM: We missed it. We missed Title IX. I mean, life is so different for women here. [00:42:00]
It's better. It's better.

AW: It absolutely is better.

JL: Yeah, that's what I was going to ask, is, you know, what it was like being a female at Brown at that time because Pembroke had been folded into it. And I'm just wondering whether you felt – what identity you felt as females at Brown.

KS: I didn't even think about it.

CBH: Yeah, I think we felt really totally, like –

KS: Equal, yeah.

CBH: – you know, part of the school. I never felt like I was, you know, substandard.

KS: But if we look at it in terms of sports, yes, there were no – there were almost zero sports opportunities for women. There was a lot more for men, and I knew a lot of – I had a lot of male friends who played on various sports teams.

MS: But I think it was the same – we'd come out of high schools where the men had more attention in that area and stuff, so I don't think it was dif – we didn't have anything to compare it to that made it feel –

AW: And it was different for me, because in California, women had a lot of sports, going way, way back.

KS: Probably because you had good weather all the time.

AW: Well, yeah, I'm sure it was. And I didn't even realize until actually a girlfriend of mine through the Women's Food Service Forum, she grew up in [00:43:00] Colorado. And we were talking one day, we're the same age, and she said, "You mean you got to do AAU track when you were eight and nine years old?" And I said, "Oh, yeah." "And then you had a high school team?" I said, "Absolutely." And we used to ride with the boys, and we would have – you know, they would run one girls' heat and then they'd run a boys' heat, and – but I didn't realize how extraordinary that experience was until this woman pointed that out to me, and then I realized, it is true for Title IX, and I'm just so excited about these young women now. And I think it's – Title IX has done more for, I think, women's liberation in this country, because now you've got all these dads who are our peers, right, who want the same for their daughters as they would ever want for any of their sons. And I think that has completely changed the landscape of women's fight, you know, for equality.

SC: And sometimes I feel like, boy, we missed out. Because I was into sports, and I've coached my nieces, you know, since they were five to ten in soccer, then they got too good – [00:44:00] their skill set was greater than my skill set. But I think they don't know what it was like. I mean, not that I – you know, I think playing hockey was unusual; you probably didn't know many people, and I had to go to a different town, but it was kind of, like, trendsetting at the time, who would have known. But – and I met Danny Santonello last night, he was a hockey player, and he said, "We should have come to your games and supported you more." You know, and I was like – it was a lot of fun. But I look back and, oh, if I could have been in this time, I would have loved all the opportunities.

MS: Although these days you have to work, you have to be an expert by the time you get to college. So there were options for walk-on in our day, which was –

__: That's right.

MS: And I wouldn't have ever had the opportunity, because I wasn't – even now, going back over again, I wouldn't have been a jock, even with all the opportunity. So to be able to walk, it was – Brown offered a lot of things like that, that you could try something and –

KS: But don't they have more intramural teams today?

VM: I think so. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) when I was in graduate school – I was at Dartmouth [00:45:00] for grad school, and the undergrad students had a ton – there was tons of intramural – like, I – they had ice hockey there, but there's tons of intramural ice hockey teams and all sorts of soccer teams and –

SC: Right. It was probably just the era, too, that I bet a lot of schools didn't have intramurals. Well, maybe, but there was a PE requirement, I guess. You had to.

AW: It's interesting, Sue, that you mention, though, about this kind of "from whence we came" piece. And I just stepped down as the chair of the Women's Food Service Forum, which is a 3,000-member nonprofit dedicated to the development and advancement in women leaders for the food service and hospitality industry. And my company loaned me, in essence, for two years to be that – the chairman of the board at that organization. And in my parting speech, I talked about three women that I thought had – well, they had all died in the last six months, and that I thought had really passed the torch to us. And that was Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott-King, and Betty Friedan. And I talked about those women not for us and for my peers, [00:46:00] but for these younger women who are coming into corporate America, and they don't understand from whence they came. And I'm not even sure that they are realistic about the barriers that are still in front of them. They – and I think there's some positive aspects of that, but when they start hitting them, then they're going to have a shocking realization. So it is interesting that I think it's incumbent upon us and through things like this to tell the story so that those women that come behind us understand that we come from a long, long history of women who have been trailblazers.

VM: And yet those barriers still exist.

AW: Oh, sure they do.

VM: You know, so it's almost like, what do you do? How do you –?

AW: We have very few female CEOs in this country, very few women who sit on boards of directors of Fortune 500 companies, and we still have a long, long, long way to go before we have gender parity. And we've done – the WFF did some fascinating research with the Gallup organization where, interestingly, they've got thousands of data points, right? They do research [00:47:00] with all sorts of different kinds of groups, and no one had ever asked them to look at all their information by gender. And we paid them to do that. And what they found out was that, one, women are more engaged in the workplace than men – that probably doesn't surprise anyone around this table – but what was so cool was we found out that when you have 50/50 gender-diverse teams, both women and men feel more engaged and more included in the workplace. And that has given us a whole new hook to go out and talk to these CEOs about why you should have more women on your senior teams and on all of your teams, you know, represented in the workplace. But I think that these younger women, to some extent – I mean, I love that they're not kind of burdened with some of the stuff that we knew coming out of the women's lib era, but on the other hand, they still need to fight.

MS: Well, I think we – in a way, we came a little bit after. We came after the '60s, you know, so that I felt a little entitled – it's like, “Well, they've done the hard work, and I'm here to enjoy it.” I think I didn't anticipate [00:48:00] when I was in college that there was still work to be done. I didn't feel like – and I was aware of it. You know, I have four older sisters, and I felt like, you know, I came at just the right time, where they'd done all the hard work and I was reaping the benefits. And it was only – you know, when you're trying to mix family and work and you realize the glass ceiling and all of that, and that came later for me, the realization.

SC: Getting back to what Alice was saying, I think, you know, I've worked in the pharmaceutical industry, research, for, you know, the last 15 years, pretty much. And I still see women, at least in that environment, when they are in leadership roles, they're in the HR, you know, head of human resources or investor relations. There's still not a lot of women in the –

like, the scientific and the management aspects, at least in my industry and what I've experienced. And so I think I'd like to see that beefed up more, because usually if they say, "Oh, we have a vice-president who's a woman here," they're vice-president of HR and not, you know, scientific –

AW: I hate to say it, but that doesn't count in my mind.

SC: Right, I know, I know. [00:49:00]

AW: You know, they need to be in line jobs.

CBH: But I felt like when we were here, I felt that we thought that we were sort of the ones that could do anything. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) When I graduated, I never thought –

AW: We could have it all.

CBH: – that anything was a problem. And I think we really tried hard – and, like, I was in investment banking, and I know legal fields or whatever fields everyone was in, I think – and I think we did more, and what I hear is happening today with these younger women, they're sort of saying, well, we saw this group try to get there, and then have all these complications with, you know, later, like, in their –

AW: Fertility issues and –

CBH: – thirties with, like, trying to struggle with a family. And then I think these women today –

AW: They're opting out.

CBH: – they're 25, they're saying, "We're not even going to do that, because we've already see that they couldn't do it." So they don't seem to have quite that –

KS: But maybe they're doing more entrepreneurial things. It's like, "I don't want to deal with the whole Fortune 500 crap."

CBH: Well, whatever they're doing – no, I'm not saying necessarily just in that – you know, just trying to do it by profession. But I just think in general, I think a lot of the rest of them are opting out, like, "Oh, that's too hard," and, you know, they're going a little bit – I think it's ratcheting back a little.

AW: I don't know, it's interesting. I've read, and I don't know the statistics, but I have read that a lot of women who are graduating from business school and law school are deciding to just stay home with their kids. [00:50:00] And nothing wrong with that, but to your point, I think –

KS: The number of women I know in business schools has dropped since I went. Because I think when I was there, like, 25% of our class was female, and it's down. And that was at Dart– you know, that was a top business school. And they're all – if you look at all the business schools, the number of females has dropped in the last 10, 15, 20 years.

MS: I just went to my twentieth business and law school reunions – so I have a JD/MBA, and I just went in the past several weeks. And it – particularly in the – law school, a number of women are still working, but in the business school, most of the women who came back, a vast majority were not working. And felt a little defensive about that – they talk about the board work and everything. And I took 10 years off; I worked for five years, took 10 years off, and now I'm back at work. But it was – I think in the workplace, it's tough to reconcile, you know, the women's need, desire to be home raising their children and advancing up the corporate ladder. And you get someone like – I, you know, after 10 years off, I've come back at a fairly junior level. [00:51:00] I'm not a partner in my law firm, you know. I'm doing sophisticated work, but I haven't paid my dues, so to speak. And it's tough, you know, and you don't have – like my business school classmates, who are sharp as tacks, but they opted out, because you can't have both. And –

KS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) It's hard to do it well.

AW: Yeah. I think our, you know, working for a corporation, and I talk to my CEO all the time about this, we've got to figure out how to have these on-road – you know, on-ramps and off-ramps, not only for women but for men. The younger men, your – I mean, those of you that have sons, they don't – they want to spend time with the kids too. And that's wonderful, except we've got to find a way to be more flexible, because we're not going to have enough people to take all the jobs that –

MS: I met somebody last night –

AW: So that we can retire. [laughter]

CBH: That's true.

MS: – one of our classmates talking about a new program that someone's proposing for women who are re- or any, men and women reenter the workplace. And, you know, something like a 30-day program to get people back up to speed. And also, you know, the camaraderie, [00:52:00] or the sharing of stories, so that people feel that they're not the only one. I mean, I think a lot of the inertia from me, getting back, was this feeling of “Can I do it? You know, I've been out of it –” feeling that you wear your mommy hat, and how can you turn that into a professional hat again. And so having those transition programs, I think would be key.

VM: And yet, you know, while you were wearing that mommy hat, and, you know, there's so many volunteer opportunities out there that we've been able to take advantage of as mommies, you know, with the PTOs and, you know, the number of fundraisers, and – there's so many skills that I still feel like we probably have; certainly communications, technical skills. So we're not really that far off, I mean, I think –

CBH: And certainly as organizations we're benefiting amazingly with all of this (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MS: If it weren't for the non-working moms running the place – I mean, that's when I realized that I was – my volunteer work was more than 40 hours a week, that I thought, "You know what? I need to start getting paid for this." And that's when I went back to work.

VM: Right, right. And yet the corporations don't recognize – we can really jump right back in, and probably be even better than [00:53:00] we were when we left. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Always chop-chop, you know, doing –

MS: And you're hungrier. You want to prove that –

VM: – ten different things at once. And many people can't do that.

CBH: They can't do that.

VM: But, you know, we're always thinking and working, and I think that I could probably do – you know, work 25 hours a week, or 30 hours a week.

__ : And be more efficient than you were at 25, exactly.

VM: And be more efficient, and be able to get home in time for the kids' games, and make sure that, you know, just everything else is running efficiently.

MS: You know, when I go into work, I'm working from the minute I get there to the minute I get home. And there are a lot of people who never took time off who do a lot of glad-handing, they're moving around, they're just kind of – they're comfortable. And, you know, I need to drop off my son at school, work, you know, until 7:00 at night, get home – and it all has to be like clockwork, and there's no downtime, so –

VM: But it's too bad you can't work less than that and still be, like, on the partner track.

MS: I know, I know.

VM: Can't they recognize that you're that valuable, that once your children are in college you're probably going to be able to put in those hours, but to keep you there and on the track with fewer hours.

MS: Right, and that wasn't an option when I went – [00:54:00] I went back part-time in-house in a corporation, and – but when I went back to the law firm it was, I knew – you know, I had to –

VM: Right. Billable hours, yeah

MS: It's all billable hours, and you have to prove yourself and you have to, you know, stay –

KS: That's pretty archaic.

VM: Right. Corporations can recognize how valuable that workforce is, even if it's only a part-time workforce. That they have a really bright future, and they're probably more productive in those part-time hours, because they know that this is a great thing, that they're able to have that balance and get the best of both worlds, and they appreciate that.

MS: Well, in a way, we're setting the example. I mean, we're the first group of women who may have – you know, professionally, we have advanced degrees and so on. We've worked, taken time off, but we're now going back. So I don't think – this hasn't happened before.

__: I agree, yeah.

MS: And now – so they're learning, I think, to take advantage of it. And it'll be interesting to see for – you know, I have a 15-year-old daughter, how it will work for her. I mean, I keep telling her, “You have to have choices. You know, you want to be able to get the skills, have the credentials, and then set it up so that you have the option, you know, to change your track as you move forward, and – [00:55:00]

AW: Well, and things like, you know, the technology now, you're never not, you know –

___: Online.

AW: If someone really needs to get you –

MS: Oh, absolutely. When I'm commuting, I've got my BlackBerry. When I get home, I've got – you know, the computer's on, I've always got my desktop up, so I can see the emails as they come in. And I feel that's liberating. Some people at work say they refuse to get a BlackBerry on principle. I say, "You know what? It's the most liberating thing for me, because otherwise I'd be chained to my desk." I feel I can get out in the community and – if I'm at, you know, a soccer game, and I'm –

SC: Well, you can have it with you.

MS: – if there's a deal happening, I'm right there.

AW: Well, for me, I love it, because when those wheels go down, I turn that thing on, and by the time I'm at the gate, I can have 10 or 15 emails done. Versus I used to, you know, by the time you'd get done, you'd be at a customer meeting, whatever, go out, take them out to dinner, you'd get back to the hotel room, log on, you're like, well, you know, 150 emails, like, oh, my God. You know, you're tired, so I agree with you. I think it's – but I think that's got to give more flexibility, if people want it, to do their thing.

MS: And, but we do – I mean, I feel that I need [00:56:00] to prove myself. And as I've been in this current job for a year, I feel that I have – that I'm willing to take more time out. You know, I'll take the day off, or I'll work from home, because they don't get nervous anymore that I'm not there, because they know the work's getting done anyway. And you don't have – it's not just about face time. But I think until you demonstrate your reliability in any workplace, you know –

and so our generation is having to demonstrate that this is possible, and then I think it'll be easier for the next.

SC: I know. I'm an advocate of a nice work/life balance, and I don't always do the personal life balance, but [laughter] but I think that companies should recognize what you're saying – you know, work from home – I can get more done when I work from home, because one, I'm like, I want to make sure I get my work done, and they know that I'm not wasting time. So I just wish in my environment there was more of that flexibility, [00:57:00] because like you said, with the BlackBerry and online, you can be reachable and cover everything.

AW: I think it's – the demographics are going to take us there, as there just aren't enough people to fill all the jobs that we're going to have if we're going to continue to have a growing economy. But to your point, we're going to have to push that envelope, and –

VM: You know, recognize that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) we're really valuable. That they need us.

MS: Yeah, we have to persuade them, though. I mean, I was not – I was an unlikely candidate, you know, they needed somebody at my level and they looked at all these people and they thought, “Well, do we take a chance on this sort of middle-aged, you know, tired-looking woman?”

CBH: And to your point, I mean, there's companies, like I worked at McKinsey for awhile – they're gathering a list right now of, like, women in their late 40s that have worked there and that want to come back.

MS: Right. They're ready to go.

CBH: They're trying to figure out how to get them back into the firm. So you realize –

AW: Well, you're part of that great group of McKinsey grad – what's the –

CBH: Oh, there's another Goldman-Sachs group.

AW: Oh, Goldman group.

CBH: Which is a great networking group. So a lot of these companies realize the value of the workers, and I think they know that these women that are out there have the skills, still, and they have now this added maturity. So you can take them into a client meeting [00:58:00] probably within two weeks, where you couldn't do that when they were 25. So I think they're trying to figure it out. But I think it's that part-time thing that's complicated.

AW: Well, God knows McDonald's figured it out, so everybody else ought to be able to figure it out, you know. So when I was working on our K business and we'd be – the store managers love hiring some of the retired folks, because they were so reliable. And they were easy to teach, whereas – and they would generally then teach the younger kids who came in, and half the time they wouldn't even show up for shifts, and – so if McDonald's can figure it out, I think –

SC: Corporate America can.

VM: WalMart figured it out too.

AW: Yeah, exactly.

JL: So I think it's almost time we should start the wrapping-up part of this. I'd like you just reflect a little bit on – given what you've all been talking about now, and all the conflicts of being professional women and in the sort of middle part of your careers, and combining this with everything else, how you think being at Brown helped or didn't help, or contributed to [00:59:00] where you are now.

AW: You want to start there, and we'll –?

JL: Sure.

CBH: I mean, I guess I talked about it a little earlier – I think just having a range of different courses available, I think that core curriculum really does prepare you well to try to move in and out of the workforce and to take on different positions in different industries or areas. I think that's a big thing. I also think that, you know, when you sit here with all of us, and you realize that all of us are very competent, bright women, I think being around those types of people equips you later in life to deal with, you know, most individuals – I mean, I've met other women that have said, "Oh, how could you work in a situation with all men, or weren't you intimidated?" And it never really bothered me. But I think partly, you know, I don't know if it was really Brown that did that, but in some way, now that I'm sitting with all of you, it probably had some impact on, you know, how you actually, you know, operate today as a person. You know, I would assume it does. You know, all of my roommates were always very competent, independent people. And so I never thought that I couldn't be like that. [01:00:00]

AW: I get very clearly from us that we all feel very empowered. And always have.

MS: Right. And I wonder if – looking back, I think Brown attracted that sort of person. They – it was a – it attracted independent, strong, self-reliant – you know, that – and I think our advisers who steered us towards Brown thought, "Well, this is somebody in my high school that I think would really thrive in that kind of environment." So you take a group of kids who are ready for that environment and then they reinforce each other. Yeah, I never – I've always felt there isn't anything I couldn't do. I'm just very self-confident, and never shy or hesitant about my place in the bigger world, so that's –

JL: But we started off this conversation with you all saying how, once you got here, a lot of you felt rather lost.

KS: Adrift. But that was – that's a – (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MS: But it – I mean, it was adrift in the sense that we maybe, looking back as our mature selves, thought, “Boy, we really didn’t take advantage of the opportunities here, because there was nobody [01:01:00] kind of giving us advice.” But at the time, I think I thought I had it all together.

CBH: I think also in terms of just the way that they had set up, like, the adviser system, in terms of guiding us through our courses – I think otherwise I didn’t feel so adrift.

SC: For me, looking back on what I gained at Brown that’s helped me in my life here, it’s not so much the academics, because I really struggled with the pre-med. It’s the – for me it was the multitasking. I had to work to put myself through college, and I ended up owing money, even when we graduated, that I didn’t get my diploma for five years after. But –

__: Are you kidding?

SC: Yeah, yeah, because I had a student loan and regular, just owed them, like, \$3,000 still.

__: And then they held the diploma? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

SC: Yeah, they didn’t give.

AW: Oh, yeah. I ran into a mother who said, “I’ve got to go pay the 30 bucks, otherwise my child’s not going to get their diploma.” And I said, “You should go do that, because actually they do hold that.”

SC: It was when I wanted to go to grad school.

KS: Oh, that’s appalling.

SC: I had to – yeah, because they wouldn’t release transcripts, even.

MS: Well, I hope they don't do that anymore. Do you know? That is so awful.

AW: No, they do. No, they do. [01:02:00] You gotta go pay your bill.

SC: So – but anyways, but it was – you know, I worked at the Ratty, I was in a management role there, I played a sport. And I just –

KS: You were a busy girl.

SC: – I'm more sociable, so I had a network of friends that have been friends since, you know, I was here. More so than my hometown high school. Because there you're lumped in with everybody: you know, I grew up with the same 100 kids that I went kindergarten through high school with. And here you could kind of select friends in different areas. So I really think back that the skill set I learned there, and just the – being able to feel comfortable with all different levels of people, that's helped me out – you know, be successful in the working world, so – and just with my life in general. And I'm so excited to be back for our reunion. [laughter]

AW: This was fun.

JL: KK, we missed you out.

KS: I think the strengths of Brown, or the weaknesses were also their strengths. I think the fact that we did have to sort of navigate the system [01:03:00] on our own – and I'm glad that that has changed. They don't – you know, a little help is a good thing. But I think the fact that you did have to navigate the system on your own made it – did empower you. And you were like, you know, absolutely. I never for a second thought I couldn't conquer the world if I wanted to. It was if I chose to.

CBH: Or move to a city and –

KS: And do anything.

AW: Yeah, there were no shrinking violets. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) If there were they might have left Brown. You know, they left.

KS: And I still find my friends from Brown are still amongst the most interesting and unique people that I know. And I find – and as I said, I’m comparing this to my Dartmouth experience. I really think they are – Brown and Dartmouth are like yin and yang. And I had totally enjoyed both of them, but a lot of my friends are surprised by how many good friends I still have from college.

AW: You still wearing green undies, or –?

KS: Neither green nor brown. But a lot of my friends are – I have a – one of my best friends right now – I write now, and [01:04:00] my writing partner is like, she’s like, “How many roommates do you have from Brown?” [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) And she’s like, “You already had the worst person to live with (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)” But I do have a lot of – I still keep in close touch with a number of my friends from college, which is unusual. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Many people don’t have – don’t keep in touch with their friends from college.

SC: When I was talking about the reunion, people at work or that I know that didn’t go to Brown – “you’re going to a reunion? You know, why are you so excited? I’ve never gone back to my college reunion.” So I think that, you know, Brown helped foster that camaraderie and –

VM: Yeah, no, Brown – I mean, we sort of all say the same things. I mean, it’s the interesting people that you meet, it’s, you know, the socioeconomic differences, the geographic differences. My roommate freshman year was from California – her name was Countess, and I was like, whoa. On the first day, it was – my eyes were so open, because she was from Berkeley, and she just had such a different –

KS: Someone was just asking if she was coming. Is she coming to this reunion?

VM: I don't know. I got to look at the list. But, you know, from day one, my eyes were wide open. [01:05:00] I came from a public school in a town that's just very, very similar. Everybody's sort of the same –

__: Homogeneous.

VM: Yeah. So I really appreciated that. And I'm still actually pulling a lot from Brown, because I live here, and I'm involved with the Brown club. I go to lectures, faculty lectures, with Barbara Tanenbaum and Ken Miller, who's an eminent biologist who writes all the biology books – he's speaking at our annual dinner. So I am still learning from Brown and still benefiting in this because of where I live. And oftentimes I'll be doing something and I'll think back on Brown, and – so I'm still pulling, again, from my experiences every day. And it's, you know, an experience that I hope that these kids are having, also, that are here today.

AW: I think – you know, I hadn't thought about it till you asked the question, but I think that my experience here has enabled me to always be the feminist that I was born to be. Honestly.
[01:06:00]

CBH: And to that point, I was thinking also, it's interesting how – you know, with people that have spouses, I find that my friends and roommates from Brown, and I'm sure it's true of all of you, they're never, like – I have not seen anyone, like, act as though their husband is, like, above them or – I mean, they definitely feel like they at least dominate the partnership. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) – all my friends from Brown that are married, and I'm sure in your case too, they're never, you know, at the whim of a man. I mean, sort of like – I remember a friend the other day saying to me –

__: Quite to the contrary.

CBH: – “we’re not going to church because my husband doesn’t like the church,” and I go, “Who cares what your husband thinks? What do you think?” And it’s like, no one would ever say that, any woman that I’ve ever met at school.

MS: And that’s interesting, because the women in my community, I live in a small town, and there’s a lot of diversity. And a lot of women haven’t gone to college, or, you know, their husbands haven’t. And it’s – you know, when they see – I think some of the men look at my husband like, “What did you get –” you know, that woman is a little too strong. But in our circle, everyone we knew [01:07:00] was like that.

CBH: Yeah, when we came to this reunion, my husband was saying to my boys, said, “I think your mom’s just going to desert us and go off with her girlfriends, so don’t expect to see her the whole weekend.” [laughter] Which is kind of how we’ve always been. And maybe that says something about – you know, we got that from Brown. I don’t know. It must have been those coed bathrooms. [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: I think it was the times more – I mean –

CBH: It could be.

KS: – it was the times plus the school.

CBH: It could be.

VM: And the type of people the school attracted and accepted and found. Because that way they probably – I don’t know whether they – because I think the acceptance rate was probably around 20% or 15%, so they really knew who was going to fit in here.

MS: I mean, the girls who went to UVA undergrad or Vanderbilt I think had a different experience. I mean, in terms of the male/female hierarchy and –

CBH: But even – I was at a lacrosse game the other night, and a woman whose daughter’s at Deerfield and is applying to college, she said – she got waitlisted at Brown, and she said, “But I’m glad she didn’t get in, because I don’t think she would have found another woman like herself at Brown.” And I thought it was such an odd comment.

KS: Sour grapes.

CBH: And she was going to Georgetown, and –

KS: She didn’t get in. [laughter]

CBH: Well, that – yeah, that could be, but I just thought the way that – I just thought, [01:08:00] well, I just thought, there’s not one type of woman at Brown. I mean, I’m sure she would have found –

MS: Except maybe a self-confident, self-reliant (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

CBH: Yeah, but it sounded like this woman was probably fairly self-confident. I mean, I’m not really sure, but I just thought it was an odd, you know, comment to make.

AW: So just out of curiosity, you have children –

CBH: I have children, three boys.

AW: And do you –?

KS: I have two little boys.

AW: Okay. And I know you do.

SC: I’m single.

AW: Okay, and –

VM: And I have two boys.

AW: And I am married but no kids. So, interesting.

KS: I think our kids range in age from college to – I probably have the – I have the seven-year-old, that's probably the youngest.

VM: One of – did anyone know Terry Murphy from our class? Terry Firestone now? She lives out in San Francisco. She has a three- or a four-year-old, so.

AW: We had Jane – oh, gosh – [Shichidit?], who lives up in Boston. She never got married, and she finally decided that she really wanted to have a child, and so she went and had artificial insemination, and she has a one-year-old that she's bringing to the field day. So it's cool.
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KS: Do you know Julie Rothhouse? Someone told me Julie Rothhouse is pregnant. [01:09:00]

AW: Oh, really? Wow. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

JL: So I think we should probably stop this. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

CBH: So it's nice to know when we're 47 or 46 that we're still having –

SC: We want to know, how does the 25th year compare to the type of conversations the 50th had?

KS: Probably didn't talk about the drugs.

JL: Well, there weren't so many drugs, but there was an awful lot of drinking in the '50s.

AW: Oh, right. My mother was in that class, and was one – yeah. She has wonderful stories about how – you might remember they used to be all those – before they – there were a lot of bushes and things that were right below Andrews there, and that was where they would make out. So that the – because they had the kind of den mothers or whatever that lived in the dorms, and so that was where they’d make out before they had to go in for their curfew.

MS: So the difference is you just moved in with your boyfriend at Brown.

AW: Exactly.

MS: I didn’t have a freshman roommate because she moved in with the RA down the hall. [laughter] He was supposed to be supervising, and he identified her freshman week, and she just literally moved her clothes down there, and I had to [01:10:00] always say to her father, “Um, she’s not here right now. She’s in the library.” [laughter] Wink-wink.

SC: See, nowadays they can just have the cell phone and just say, “Yup, um,” (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) – so no bushes necessary.

KS: In the ’50s, they still – did – was Brown one of those schools where they had incoming freshmen girls had to take their clothes off and be photographed naked?

JL: Yup.

__: Oh, you’re kidding.

__: What?

KS: Like, what perv old guy came up with that one? For years. Oh, yeah.

__: Why? What’s up with that?

SC: You're the historian. Tell us the background.

JL: Well, they told them it was for scoliosis, but what it almost certainly was was one of these big eugenics projects. They were looking at sort of educated women, and –

__: Their body types?

JL: – their body types.

SC: That is so fascinating.

JL: And it was done at a lot of the Ivy League schools and some of the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

KS: Some men, too. There was a big scandal a couple years ago. Someone found a bunch of the photos had been thrown out in the trash, and there were, like – it might have been at Wellesley. Oh, I think (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Harvard.

JL: Somebody wrote a book about it two or three years ago. And I went and checked in the Hay and they said they don't have them anymore. [01:11:00]

KS: But imagine women just putting up with that.

VM: They're in some box somewhere.

JL: But they did. They had to strip off and be photographed.

SC: Wow, my God.

VM: Maybe the guy from College Hill Travel got a hold of them. [laughter]

JL: Certainly into the '60s.

KS: Because I have friends who are, like, 55, and they had to do it.

JL: Yeah.

KS: Fascinating.

JL: It went on into the '60s.

AW: My mother never told me about that.

CBH: Well, see, we wouldn't have stood for that. I mean, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) –

JL: Anyway, I think we should stop. Or else we could probably talk all day.

VM: We probably could.

JL: This was terrific. Thank you so much.

CBH: Oh, thank you.

SC: Before we leave, I want her to get a picture of all of us.

JL: Thank you very much.

VM: Thanks, guys.

SC: Thanks, guys.

JL: Thank you.

SC: Because I want to put it on the website (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JL: So before – you can switch it off, (inaudible).

- END -