

Transcript – Class of 1989 25th Reunion

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Wendy Korwin: Today is Saturday of May 24, 2014. My name is Wendy Korwin, and I'm the Pembroke Center's Archivist, and I'm here with the following members of the Class of 1989.

Karen Jason: Okay. I'm Karen Jason. I live now in the suburbs of New York City. I majored in – I double-majored in international relations and French literature at Brown then went to law school. And now work in the Federal Court House in White Plains, New York clerking for a federal magistrate judge.

Kimberly Weisul: My name is Kimberly Weisul. I also live just outside New York City in Montclair in New Jersey. I studied development studies while I was here at Brown. I'm now a writer and journalist. What else am I supposed to say?

WK: Anything else that is personally or [00:01:00] professionally –

KW: Yeah. Oh man, I have two young children, and –

WK: Okay.

Carolyn Ou: I'm Carolyn Ou. I live in Chicago now, and I majored in – double majored in renaissance studies and comparative lit. while I was here at Brown. And I also went to get my MBA from Indiana University. And now after a squiggly career path I run my own executive and career coaching practice, coaching people nationwide, and I'm a fiddler and keyboardist in a kids' band, of which I'm very proud. [laughter]

Karen Brown: I'm Karen Brown. I had a double major, concentration in women's studies and public policy. I have a master's in public and non-profit administration from NYU: from the Graduate School of Public Service. I live in Norwalk, Connecticut, and for the last 15 years I've been working at a community [00:02:00] foundation that provides grants to non-profits in southern Connecticut, and I also help wealthy individuals with their local philanthropy. And I have two boys.

Marlena Schoenberg Fejzo: I'm Marlena Schoenberg Fejzo, and I was an applied math major at Brown. I did a Ph.D. at Harvard in genetics, and now I am a researcher at UCLA and I work on trying to find the cause of severe nausea in pregnancy, and I'm also working on ovarian cancer. And I have three kids and one of whom is going to apply and I hope come. [laughter]

Brunilda Amarillis: My name is Brunilda Amarillis. One of my favorites, I got called by my second name Amarillis. My concentration was Russian Language and Literature. I went on and got my doctorate in Slavic languages and literature [00:03:00] at the University of Washington in Seattle. There I picked up the doctorate, (inaudible), and a husband [laughter]. Moved out of DC, with the two kids who are now part of our baggage.

Karen Schiff: My name is Karen Schiff. Here at Brown I concentrated in comparative lit. and I actually did a master's in English at the same time. It was a dual degree program. I think there were three people in my year who did that. But all along I was interested also in – a concentration in visual arts, studio art, and that sort of got buried as a dream for 20 years after which I went back for an MFA. In between I actually got a Ph.D. in comparative literature and literary theory at Penn. And then taught on the tenure track at Clemson University, and left that to go back to art school at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts connected with Tufts [00:04:00] University. And I've been an artist in New York since 2008, I moved there. And also do editing, curating, teaching. I actually teach art students how to write.

F: That's important. [laughter] That's really important.

Angela Brown: I'm Angela Brown. I live in Atlanta, Georgia. While I was at Brown I studied psychology. I dabbled in drama, but couldn't really do it because I ran track, which was another full-time degree. I went to the University of San Diego for law school, and I'm currently a traffic court judge in DeKalb County in Georgia. Married, I have the proud volleyball mom of a 12-year-old. A proud, Lego-playing mom of a five-year-old, and I'm doing everything that I wanted to in my career, so I'm pretty happy.

Stephanie Sanchez: Hi. [00:05:00] Stephanie Sanchez. And when I was here at Brown I was a literature and society major, which is now part of MCM or Modern Media and Culture. And I also played sports, so I understand that conflict about – the time was never your own. We – I don't think I had a dinner here my first year that I got here, which was sophomore year. Freshman was – my first year at Brown: I transferred here from Cambridge University in England. My mom is English, so I wanted part of my education there. And then, now, most recently I live in Boston. I settled down there after going to the Kennedy School of Government, so I'm very interested in politics. I've been an elected official in Connecticut, and now I'm helping other people with political organizing and running for office. And Boston seems to be very active place to do that.

WK: Okay. Well you're all back on campus to mark your twenty-fifth reunion, so 25 years since you graduated from Brown, and then almost 29 [00:06:00] since you first set foot on this campus as a student. And I want to start by asking you if any of you remember sort of your very first impressions that you had of Brown when you got here or even before.

KW: I remember going on sort of my college tours as a high school junior and we went to Harvard, and it's probably not their fault, they probably had just planted the grass, but all over the green there were these "Do Not Walk on the Grass" signs. [laughter] And that, like, as far as extracurriculars in high school I had done a lot of backpacking, and I had done like canoe and kayak racing and all of sudden all these "Do Not Walk on the Grass" signs, and then I came to Brown and everyone was playing ultimate Frisbee on the green. I was like, "Okay. I'm going to go here." [laughter]

KJ: My brother is – he’s three years older than me, he also went to Brown, so I had been going to visit for a [00:07:00] few years, and I just – the thing about Brown that I always loved is that it was very relaxed in the atmosphere. I felt like when I went to other schools, I don’t know why, they just exuded more of a feeling of, you know, everything is very formal and we’re very serious and people didn’t look happy. And then I went to Brown and you know people generally look happy, they’re hanging out, they’re relaxed, they’re enjoying themselves, and I thought, “Well that’s kind of more the environment I want to be in for college.” So that was sort of why I was very happy to come back.

KS: That relaxation I felt in the architecture and the design of campus because I grew up outside New Haven, so I was used to the Yale campus where every green space was enclosed almost, and toward the end of my growing up you actually also had to key into the spaces, and so coming to Brown felt like everything was open. And that also translated into how I ended [00:08:00] up feeling about knowledge here. You know? Like, just go where you want to go. Things interconnect.

AB: For me Brown was my choice, and me taking control of my situation. I ran track in high school and I had a lot of track scholarships to Penn State, I had a lot out in California, and everyone who had gone before me from track told me it’s a job, so you never actually get to enjoy education. You have your job. You go in the morning to your job, you may go to some classes, and then you go in the afternoon to your job. And every weekend you had to perform and if you don’t perform they take your scholarship away. So Bob Rothenberg called me out of the blue – I lived in Philadelphia – and this guy from Brown, I didn’t even know anything about Brown, I didn’t know anything about Ivy League schools, I’m only one of two [00:09:00] people in my family that actually had gone to college before anyone else, and so they sent me a brochure, and he said, “Listen. We don’t give track scholarships. You have to make it in academically. And if you can – I think you can do it. I’ve looked at everything. If you make it in you know you don’t have worry about anyone ever taking your scholarship.” And that sold me. I opened up the, you know, the brochure, and it was beautiful, and just like something just like out of a dream, which is completely different from the area of Philadelphia that I lived in. So I was like, “If I get in, that’s where I’m going because then I can decide who I want to be. I can decide

what classes I want to take, and if I get hurt no one can take that education away from me.” So that’s why.

SS: I took the relaxed atmosphere coming in as a sophomore to be more like, “Oh, I don’t understand what’s going on. People are picking their course catalogues by alphabetically, like in this book. What is going on? Don’t people care?” And then I realized that this is [00:10:00] supposed to be so rigorous and then I realized that it was the shopping period. So it took a little bit of getting used to, but people were also just coming out of their freshman units, so they were like, “Oh, who’s around?” People were very welcoming and very accepting. And I also had an initial take on the school coming in as I did on the diversity, and I thought, “Gosh, that’s such a buzzword here. I don’t – I’m not seeing it. I don’t get it.” Like I thought it would be ethnic diversity. I thought it would be very obvious, and when I came to appreciate my education and learning from other people it was about their interests that were so diverse. I mean you could get every valedictorian of every high school here, but what they were doing was so incredibly interesting. I thought only Brown. And ever since I’ve been so proud to be involved with the school as an alum. because I just think – I’m amazed with what people are doing. I mean just sitting around this table it’s incredible. It’s such a great example of what the school brings out of people in terms of their interests.

KB: I feel the [00:11:01] same way. That I – there were a bunch of students in – who went to Brown from my high school and I really liked them and I really saw them as role models and that made a big difference to me in thinking about college. I also wanted to go to a college where public service was important, and I had done that – a lot of the community service, non-profit work in high school, and it was really important to me and I wanted to go to a university where that was a very strong value, and I certainly found that to be true at Brown. I was involved at the Swearer Center for Public Service in its very early days, and I’m amazed to see how many people who are alums are in politics and non-profit, working for city government, working for foundations. Everything that I thought was true, so, about the commitment to public service both at the undergraduate and alumni level. So –

BA: I look at [0:12:00] Brown because my social studies teacher told me to. [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) I moved to Massachusetts when I was 13, so my parents like they couldn't tell one school from the other. So my social studies teachers just took me under their wings and said, "Go look here." So I came and my high school visit I went and I sat in on a Russian class because I went to school around south Boston at the time; I was taking Russian. I thought, "Okay. I think I'm interested in this Russian thing." And they just – I was just part of the class. The TA was like, "Okay. And go." And I was like, "Okay!" And I – so that kind of was the start of the three parties my (inaudible) took me to. [laughter] I'm kind of overinflating the percentage of parties you can go to. [laughter] So that was actually pretty fun, and then what really actually did it for me actually was I came from the Third World Transition Program. And that [00:13:00] was amazing because being Puerto Rican in that sort of upper-middle class Massachusetts school meant my family was kind of it. So it was kind of cool just meeting other people of different backgrounds that were engaging in such intense intellectual pursuit. I now teach at Howard University in DC, which is a historically black university, and that is just kind of the big battle to get people who understand that, you know, passionate about intellectual pursuit. It's not a bad thing. So that was pretty – especially when all of sudden you're all dispersing yourselves. Like I did Russian, other people pre-med, you know other people did engineering, but that really gave a good foundation so that we knew we were there. We only saw each other once or twice per semester. So that was fun.

WK: And were there – [00:14:00] I'd be interested to hear a little bit more about the Third World Transition Program or other centers or programs that helped you feel anchored at Brown. Like early on in your student career. How did you establish a sense of place or belonging once you were on campus?

CO: That was – I feel like that was very hard for me. Having come from a very structured, you know, life outside of DC, my parents had a very structured way of raising us, and then I came here and I felt like I was just cut loose in this very free and open space. Open curriculum – new curriculum, you didn't have to take a lot of requirements, so – and I think I had a hard time finding that structure. So for me I knew that one of my goals would be to – well I started out pre-med here, and I quickly dropped that. So then [laughter] for various reasons I think it was – I

realized it was not a good fit for me. So then I became very [00:15:00] unmoored and I think that what I decided to do while I was here was really filling my gaps in knowledge. And so one area I had always been curious about was music. Like rock and roll. I grew up a classical musician, and I knew nothing about like pop music, so I ended working at BRU. It's not like Third World Transition Program but I said, "You know what? I'm going to learn about this rock and roll world, and I'm also going to learn to talk." Because I was pretty shy. So I went there and that became – I called them my tribe. You know I grew up there. It was a group of folk who were all there for certain reasons: loving music, news, learning the business. And that kept me anchored throughout my entire time here. So thank goodness. Everyone needs some kind of anchor in this kind of space. So –

AB: And for me – I did the Third World Program, the transition program. It was just hard [00:16:00] for me coming because I grew up in a really bad neighborhood, part of Philadelphia, and I knew nothing but black people. There was no – you know, I knew there were other races, but my little sphere, that was all I knew, and I had aspirations to become a doctor, and I got into the program where you come in early on and do the three years at Brown and then go to medical school. And as part of that Dr. Levi, who's no longer here, they had a program before Third World where you would come in as freshmen and you would go to like different internships with different doctors who were graduates of the medical school, and it sort of was this small compactment of people. The village, you know? It's just wherever you start out, that seems to be the anchor, the people that you meet. Because those people in that program I'm still friends with now. They're all doctors; I'm not. I quickly realized [00:17:00] that a lot of blood and me do not get along. So after fainting and all of that [laughter] – But I knew from that summer program that I was not going to be a doctor and had always had in my mind that I'm going to be a doctor. I'm going to get out of Philadelphia. And when that was gone I was just lost. And the Third World Transition Program was just a way for other people to be like, "Hey! You're not lost. We're lost too! So let's just figure this thing out." [laughter] And then we sort branched from there, but those programs were really, just even the freshmen program, to come in somewhere and then at least if you only know one other person from the program you'll have that person all of first year. You know freshman year and being able to branch out and to always be able to come back to that. So that's – those two programs were important for me because it always felt like I had

people I could come back to and say “I don’t know what I’m doing.” or, “What do you all think about this?” And then when you feel strong with an anchor then you start to branch [00:18:00] a little bit more: take other classes, look at other things on campus.

KW: I didn’t go to any like particular program coming in. And there was some one person from my high school who’s here two years ahead of me and we had both been involved in the drama club in high school, and he was still doing it here, so he introduced me to a lot of people at the various different drama workshops. And I thought that was going to sort of be my thing, and frankly I found it very competitive and unwelcoming, and very like unlike everything else that I did at Brown, because I did it as a fun hobby and they were going to do it as a career. So they did not have room to be giving me experience to do this because they were looking at it as something that would like go on their resume. And I found that frankly, also with the broadcasting that – there was a startup T.V. station here at the time – and I found that same attitude there as well. But I was fortunately in that I was – one of the reasons I wanted to come here is because I knew it was open. I could pick my own classes, so it wasn’t really like intimidated [00:19:00] or worried about that because I was on a very strict college track high school problem. I just called it a problem. That will tell you something. [laughter] You know it worked, obviously. It got me here, but I really was ready for – I really chaffed at it. But I was really lucky our freshmen floor was really tight, and that – those are still my closest friends: the people that I met those first six weeks. But I did kind of look for other like networks or support groups and it never really happened. Although I left here with a number of close friends, but in terms of like organized groups, I did try a couple of times, and it didn’t work out.

RM: For me it was the Third World Center. Where would I go several times a week? I would go to Third World Center. I was actually part of the Catholic Choir, so that was another little bubble. Thursday nights choir rehearsal, you know, Saturday Mass, and the debate club, actually. [00:20:00] That was a blast. The debate union. And just going to other schools and learning how to speak for yourself in front of other people. That was –

KJ: It’s funny. I agree with Kim in terms of the people might meet the first few weeks are so – it’s so crazy but those are some of my closest friends still. And one of the things, I have to just

mention now that we're 25 years out, they changed the quad so that you cannot now roam all the hallways endlessly, which I have to say was one of the most amazing things freshman year. Because my freshman roommate and I were like, "Oh, we're so excited to be here! Keep the door open. Maybe someone will come walk in and say, 'Hi!'" And my two roommates like a bunch of my roommates my senior year, that's how I met them. The first day they're like, "Hi! How are you?" You know, they introduce themselves and that was just great. But I also made a lot of friends – I worked at the Ratty – [00:21:00] I worked in food services as my job, and I find that over the years I made a lot of friends that way too. You know you become kind of tight when you're sweating it out cleaning the ice cream dispensary machine when it's really disgusting.

F: Dish line! Dish line!

Karen Jason: Yes! Dish line! Yes, in the morning. [laughter] Yes, so yeah.

BA: Closing shift at the Gate. [laughter]

Multiple people: I was at ECDC! (overlapping audio; inaudible)

KW: I tried working at the dining hall at Emery-Woolley. Those can be like be – I had like a work-study job. And you know I didn't – I had no idea how college life works, so it's Columbus Day weekend, so I go home and then I come back on Monday and people are like eating in the dining hall, and I was like, "Oh. Shoot. That's my shift they're eating." It just didn't occur to me. I'm like, "It's a holiday." And then I came back and they're like, "Well now you're ineligible for a raise because you had an unexcused [00:22:00] absence." And I'm like – I mean I'm actually quite responsible but – I ended up getting a different job on campus because I was like, "All right. I'm never going (inaudible). This is clearly a sign." [laughter]

WK: Were there other hard lessons?

CO: So you know, I have one. So I started out pre-med and after my first biology test I got like a D minus, minus, minus. Like almost failing. And I'm this straight A student and really good at science, and I was traumatized. So I went to talk to the faculty advisor, and this is not the most wonderful story about Brown, but I did learn something from her. And she said to me, "You know what? Maybe you want to switch into the Biology for Poets class." [00:23:00] And so – and I was like – I was infuriated. I was like – that's not the solution I wanted. So it made me so mad that I said I'm going to show her and then I applied myself and I reached out to my TAs and talked to them, and by the end I had pulled that D minus, minus, minus, up to an A minus, minus, minus. I remember just thinking, "Well, this is not a supportive environment." But you know what I'm going to show them that I can do it and I can – and then it allowed me to learn how to reach out to the other people. Like to my TAs and to not give up. Because I would say my former self would've just given up. Like this authority figure has just told me to switch to – "Okay. I'll just do what she says." So I think here is where I really had to learn to think for myself and stand up for myself.

KB: I – for me the freshman year the really significant thing that happened was that we lost a student, Kate Brodsky, and she lived on our – [00:24:00] on the same hallway and died of a peanut allergy, and this incredibly weird thing. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BA: I still use that story because I've been classroom mom, and there are some moms that don't get – I'm like, look.

KB: And I think for me it was, first of all, I think the resident advisors at Brown handled it remarkably well. They just swarmed in and they were there the night that it happened and we were all in the lounge and it was – it was for being – we were 18 years old and when something like this happened, it sort of – you know your 18-year-old brain couldn't get around it. And being away from home also was really hard. And I just remember just being really affected by it. We were all – and I remember seeing her parents come up to take all of – You know? We all went to her funeral. There was a bus that Brown [00:25:01] provided. But it was really hard. And you know I think about Kate because she was honored – well there's a – the Squash Center is named after her because she was a squash player, but having something like that happen was in

your – it made sort of like a vulnerable time freshman year just so much more shaky for me, at least. Although, I do say that Brown handled it really well. We have amazing resident advisors who I think never would've thought this would have happened to them on their first RA, you know, assignment. So –

AB: Didn't we have like some – we had like a gathering or something. Didn't we have something the night before?

KB: Yeah, yeah.

AB: I kind of remember all of us being in the quad the night before, and the next days they're like, "Kate just died. She went to Montana's and died." And we were like, "What?" [00:26:00] Yeah, it was just really difficult.

KB: One of those things. But, you know, I think your mortality starts to – you start to see that really bad things can happen to good people, and they can come out of the blue, and they can happen at any point. But very hard to do when you're vulnerable. You know to experience it when you're a freshman. Sorry to – [laughter] when you just said, "What was hard?"

F: Yeah

KB: And I was like, "That was really hard!" And really horrible.

BA: I mean, I wasn't in [Reed?], but I remember just –.

KS: It's interesting – I was on the Pembroke Campus and I have severe food allergies for which I carry epinephrine like, I think, she must have. I don't know. So it struck me in a sort of distant way. Not only because I wasn't living near her, but also because my mom flipped out. I was used to this risk, [00:27:00] but it felt like what it translated into was part of the college project of being independent and self-reliant and sort of not letting parental anxiety rule the roost.

AB: One of the other hard things for me was the fact that Brown made you take a stand. Like, “What do you really believe in?” It just seemed like there were so many things happening that was the apartheid movement, there were a lot of things going on with protests on the Green, and before I never had to take a stand on anything. I just kind of blended in the background. But my friends – like Reggie would be in everything. Eric Santos would be like, “Hey! You got to – this is wrong. What are you going to do? Where do you stand on this?” “And you’re like, “Wait a minute, okay.” It was really hard in one way and it was pretty [00:28:00] awesome in another way now that, you know, look back on it. Because it just forced you to have these conversations with people who you probably never would have had conversations with. And it forces you to think about all of these different ideas, and what type of person I wanted to be, and what type of world I wanted to live in. And what was I going to do to get that world to where I want it to be? You know? I didn’t have to think about that before.

KW: I remember feeling that there was a lot of good discussion like that, but sometimes I felt like it was all like the converted preaching to the converted. Like I had a counselor on my hall freshman year who like everyone knew he was very conservative politically, and I felt like, well – I mean I mostly disagree with that, but I was like, even when I was 17, “Well, when do we hear from his side.” You know? Because it seemed like we sort of never did. Which is maybe just because we were all young. [laughter] I felt like there was a lot of discussion going really deep into like one side of an issue, but I [00:29:00] felt like it was almost taken for granted, “Well those people are wrong, so we don’t need to talk about that so much. We need to talk about what we’re going to do about those people. “

MSF: I remember there was, I guess, some conference where either – I think maybe it was like a Gay and Lesbian Conference, but this was also the time when AIDS had come out and ’85 – yeah – was when they really didn’t know the cause yet, and so there was so much crazy fear. I remember they took us all to ask us if we were okay with these people coming and being in our dorms, and there was so much – a lot of the boys they didn’t want to shower with the other boys and there was a lot of discussion about all that.

KS: And I remember discussion about adding *B* and *T* to the GLBT. And *Q* and the question mark. You know there is just questions about how to [00:30:00] grapple with –

KB: I think that now that I read about sort of a lot of mental health – I do some funding in the mental health area – I think that, you know, college age, the age when you're in college, is so formative to your identity that I'm not surprised that so much of this happened at college because this is like the pivotal time where you're trying to figure out who you are, what you stand for, you know, and I think Brown kind of helped people with that in its own way. So –

BA: Going back to the idea of what did I do that was hard. [laughter] Actually I studied abroad in Leningrad (inaudible). And I remember being very self-conscious because this was the Soviet Union. And, yes, they did have KGB trained agents in training as our roommates. Yes, we stood in the international dormitory with all the Latin American [00:31:00] revolutionary [laughter] two floors down from me. And all that separated me from them was a crappy elevator that didn't work three quarters of the time. I remember that was the first time I very self-consciously crafted myself as not Puerto Rican, not a word, not a single –

F: No Spanish.

BA: I'm just like – I got these guys four years away from anything that's not male and that doesn't speak Spanish. "I'm just going to go back up and hang out with the kids from the UK for a while." And that was really fascinating. I also encountered, you know, more obvious propagandistic brainwashing going in our social studies class here at the university, but that was – and also just the whole going away process for a semester. Because as a Puerto Rican student, you know, I was still like less [00:32:00] than eight years separated from having moved from Puerto Rico so it was already like, Massachusetts! Yeah. One big cultural adjustment: Russia? What was I thinking? I could've gone to Barcelona and had tapas every night. I go to Russia! [laughter] On January 1st. In (inaudible) this far away from the polar circle. What was I thinking? I was thinking like a Brown student. [laughter]

KJ: I had a difficult experience, but different from Carolyn in terms of how I dealt with it, sadly, but – So I had taken computer science classes in high school and so I thought, “Oh. Great, I’m going to get to Brown and I’m going to take computer science.” And especially because there’s the little feminist part of me that’s like, “Yeah! Rah-rah!” You know, “Computer science! And I’m doing (inaudible).” So I signed up for CS-11 the infamous CS-11 with Andy van Dam. Well you’ll hear that I did not survive [00:33:00] CS-11 [laughter]. Sad to say. So you know I started out, as we all did, we went to high school and we obviously all did well, so you feel sort of invisible in a way. Like, “I can take any class, and if I work hard I’m going to do well.” Because, you know, you’re like on autopilot coming out of high school. I just – I am student and I am going to just do well. Well, with each assignment my grade went down. And it went down. And it went down. And finally I got some assignment where I practically failed, and same thing, I go to the Dean of Freshmen, and she says to me, “Well, do you really – do you like this? Do you want to keep on doing this? You know, maybe this isn’t for you. Maybe you should just – you can drop it and you’ll still have enough credits to graduate and keep on going.” And I ended up dropping it. And I sort of refocused on – like, “I’m going to redouble my efforts and ace [00:34:00] my other classes.” And I don’t remember if I did or not. But I remember feeling very upset and disappointed. It was the first time I sort of felt like a failure. You know? I remember calling my mom like all upset, and you know, “Are you OK? Are you happy there? Are you sure you’re in the right place?” [laughter] “I’m in the right place! I’m fine, I’m just–” you know. It just felt so – I was so heartbroken because I thought like, “Oh, my gosh! I have never felt like I couldn’t academically achieve.” But I survived.

CO: I dropped that class, too. [laughter] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KW: I was the fourth lowest passing grade in that class, and I knew the other three people really well, because we were all in the computer science lab at the same time. And I was not as [00:35:00] smart as you because I went on to take three more computer science classes. The only thing I did right was that I took them Pass/Fail. [laughter] As I did with my art classes – I took them Pass/Fail, so I wasn’t like totally dense. But what was so frustrating to me, and I also did really badly in French, is that – which is sort of related – is that I couldn’t – like my code was horrible. Like the syntax was horrible. It wouldn’t even compile sometimes, never mind, like, do

what it was supposed to do. And it was so frustrating to me because it was – half of the grade was on your coding and half of it was on tests: there’s a written test. And I always would ace the test because I understood the algorithms of how it was supposed to happen. Like if someone said to me, “What’s the most efficient sort?” I could work that out. And I wasn’t like great at math per se, but I understood the logic behind it and I appreciated when something was really elegant and when it really wasn’t. But I just couldn’t write the code. You know? Even know – it was like three or four years ago I changed jobs and I had some time in between because I was home with my younger daughter, and I was like, “You know, when she goes to [00:36:00] daycare. I’m going to write an iPhone app,” like it’s still not out of my head. And I finally – [laughter] I started downloading like all the materials from Harvard’s Introduction to Computer Science class available online and I downloaded them all and it’s the same stuff! It’s the same stuff! And it’s like, this isn’t fair! You guys have to have found an easier way to do this so that I can do it. But I still – I can’t speak French and I can’t code. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

SO: I can help you with the coding. I’m sorry to be so late. My name is Suzy Ort. I’m an assistant principal at a small school in East Harlem and I’m starting a coding project.

KW: I would be your worst student. Any time you need to like bring the curve down I’m there for you. [laughter]

KS: I’ll take this in the opposite direction. I didn’t understand all the terms that you just used because of the new curriculum. I never took a CS class [00:37:00] and I actually want to try and answer a few of your questions at once by saying that the new curriculum brought be me here. I don’t remember – it’s been a quarter century – if the three people I just talked about were dual-degree people or – I was one of three people who took everything SNC because I just loved the opportunity of being free of the system of grading. And I think that it allowed me to develop or maybe just continue this strategy of feeling at home being anomalous. And that was something at Brown. Not only did I, like, take everything SNC or I joined a co-ed literary fraternity, which felt like a home but it was like an island of misfit toys [laughter] or I joined an interfaith discussion group at the chaplains, but interfaith really meant all kinds of denominations of Christianity except me. It [00:38:00] just felt like that became a way of navigating that Brown encourages.

You know? It's not just take a stand and where do you stand on particular issues, but how do you think your way through life? I mean that's kind of the same thing, but it's like, how do you want to think about anything? And so it's kind of uncomfortable and a home at the same time.

BA: I just wanted to make a little historical note here. Now teaching at, you know, at a certain undergraduate level that part of it – of our experience – was the beauty of the curriculum and a big part of our experience was the much lower level of technology. I have students that are texting their moms every five minutes.

F: In your class?

BA: And I have had parents, like, send me a note saying, “Little Joey needs his grade changed. Is there anything we can do?” [00:39:00] I like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). This – there's a real change in the student's expectation of what constitutes sort of “independence.” The fact that my parents only could reach me through that little phone jack in my room and when I was away from class, when I away from choir, when I was away for debate tournaments, if I didn't bring a calling card with me, well, too bad so sad. I'll call you a little later in the week. I'm not going to engage in my regular two hours conversation because I'm coming back from Vassar. That is a big shift in, sort of, undergraduate mentalities. So I don't know, as you move into the younger classes that one thing that you may want to try and tease out is how has this technology affected how do you see, perceive, your independence? Especially coming, say, from a place like [00:40:00] Philadelphia, right? That once you left you didn't have Facebook to remind you every thirty seconds of where you came from.

Group: Right.

BA: It's – I have reconnected with all my old Puerto Rican TV stations through Facebook and it's [laughter]

AB: I think too with the – I have a 12-year-old who lives on the phone. And my five-year-old can use my phone better than me. And there's also like this – she has this heightened access to

everything right away, and so there's always the teachable moments where you have to work for stuff. You can't – it's not all going to come like this. When you were saying that's what I was thinking of because when my mom and dad dropped me off – my mom's a schoolteacher, my dad was a Tuskegee airman – and there was this sense of pride. Like, "We are giving you to this university. Now you go out there and you do the very best that you can." And it was like, "Okay. I have got to work [00:41:00] really hard and make sure that I do something, not just, "Oh, okay." And then I was also thinking – funny about the computer lab because it's a walking computer here. I literally remember waiting in line –

Group: Yes!

AB: Like the paper due! Can you all hurry up and print?

Group: Right.

AB: Old stack. And typing it and not realizing how to work it. And instead of saving it was gone.

KJ: Oh yes! The little bomb icon that comes up. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AB: It's just so different.

BA: And that was one of the big study changes for me. My freshman year I typed all my papers.

Group: Right.

BA: Senior year the Apple labs were up, the computer lab was running. Socializing radically transformed as you start hooking up at the lab. [00:42:00] [laughter] It happens when you're there together in two in the morning [laughter]

KB: There's a story in there somewhere. [laughter]

KW: I wanted just – you know what Karen had said about being ready to just explore things, you know? I used to have when I was a kid these arguments with my father, and he'd say anything worth doing is worth doing well. You know? And that was sort of his motto. It's all about excellence and achievement and I completely see that, but after a couple of years at Brown I had this big argument where I said, "No. Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." Because I learned to do things just more for my own intellectual curiosity and not really care – like when I was nearly failing computer science I didn't talk to anyone about it. I mean, maybe I should have and I would've done better. But like I didn't really care because I thought it was interesting and I was taking it Pass/Fail, so it didn't mean I had to go be a scientist as long as I was still doing okay in my major. I just kept doing it. You know? And I found that a really positive experience. Same thing like my art class [00:43:00] and my photography class, I didn't do very well but I didn't care. You know? I got to do it and I wouldn't have had the opportunity to try it and to continue that frankly very selfish interest anywhere else. And I'm always really thankful for that.

MSF: Yeah. I feel like I got the best education because I would just – I knew I wanted to take math every semester, so I was a math major. And then the rest of the courses that I took – I was actually a bachelor of arts in math, which I don't think you can do anywhere else [laughter] – so all my other classes I just asked people what were the best professors and the best classes. I took all the best classes. I took that amazing art history class with that famous professor, took African drumming and dance, so many German film, all these courses that, at any other place, I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity.

SS: I like your experience of coming in so dedicated [00:44:00] and knowing what you wanted out of Brown, feeling "Oh, I'm going to be a great student," because I obviously came in much more haphazard. You know what I mean? And so random, so I'm still figuring my way out and I got asked to play ice hockey, so I was like, "All right." So I was walk up and made varsity ice hockey, which I was like great but I didn't play all the time because you're a walk up. So it's like, "Yeah, we're happy to have you, and we're glad you're playing," but, really, you know, I got minimal ice time. And this was something we did every night. We couldn't eat dinner, as I said. It was just such a commitment. The guys had great ice time and we had the worst. And I remember one time my friend lent me his motorcycle to go to practice, and I was so tired after

practice the bike fell over, I couldn't pick it up, and I was like, "All right. This isn't worth it. Like this is just not what I'm meant to be doing here. This is too much of a time commitment." And they asked me to do riding: horseback riding. Equestrian. And I was like, "What is that here?" [laughter] Like are you kidding? But I heard that [00:45:00] they went to some barn, and I was like, "Oh, that sounds much more up my alley." I had ridden. And I said, "That would be great to have back in my life." And it turns out that I had one of those conversations with my mom, too, in terms of I made it, as a club sport, I made it to the national championship, so I called my mom and I was like, "Should I go to the national championship or should I get my honors thesis done?" I was like, "I really don't have time to do all of this. This is a bit much." And she said, "Well, what are you going to remember when you graduate from Brown?" And I was like, "Huh. That's a great point." I said, "I'm not going to remember getting honors. If the horse show goes well, I'll remember that." She says "Then go to the horse show." Thanks for the good advice mom! And now I did – I won the national championship and now Brown has an equestrian team that's a varsity sport.

Group: Oh, my gosh! Wow.

SS: Dave Zucconi called me after I graduated and said, "Oh, you can get a horse donated. This is so exciting." I said, "David, it's not really. Don't do it. Like [laughter] go to a barn, [00:46:00] have lessons, don't buy horses. So it's now it's a loan. I could actually still ride if I wanted to compete for Brown in the alumna class.

Group: Wow.

SS: That would be the most random thing, but it's just still fun to have and know that there's this legacy when you leave, and it came about by the most random experience. So I think it was a good life lesson, and a good learning experience, and it sounds like what turned into, a difficulty initially, having to give up something, became just another blessing. So it's sort of a nice, you know, turning a hardship into something that was so unexpected but great.

WK: I'm curious about other ways or specific moments or experiences after your time at Brown where you're able to look back and connect it back here to something you learned, or you gained, or a person, an academic experience, [00:47:00] like what would be some of the key accomplishment or memory?

CO: You know, when I was here I was really bad at writing. So I took a class with Professor Newman. Karen Newman. It was a Shakespeare, intro to Shakespeare class. And I did it because I wanted to learn to write and to love writing, and she had this wonderful way of allowing you to keep writing the papers until you got the grade that you wanted. And so – which can sometimes take a long time. [laughter] But I was so inspired by her in so many ways: how she taught, how she was supportive of the students, she even would let me nap for five minutes in class because it just fell during nap time – I spoke with her very honestly. I said, "I'm very sorry. I cannot help that I fall asleep between 2:10 and 2:15." I said, "Just don't call on me and then when I wake up I'll be with you." And she was so understanding and [00:48:00] supportive. [laughter] So there's just so much support in that way. And – but the fact that she allowed me to keep writing those papers – and now I write a lot as part of my work, and I actually help people craft their messages, so that skill – I didn't even think I had that skill when I got here, and I didn't realize how much I loved it. But she gave me the chance to not have it associated with something that would like be a mark with a grade. She allowed me to learn the art of it. So that stayed with me forever, and I continued to develop that.

SO: I took a class sophomore year: ED-100 with Professor Sizer and I – that class, you know, hands down changed my life, it's why I went into education. I became a high school social studies teacher, and now assistant principal. I helped start a school. Everything stems [00:49:00] from that class for me, and now the lessons that he taught us about creating a small community, supporting kids, taking risks, things I think about every single day, and you know are just foundational for what I learned here.

KS: I'm remembering a moment when I didn't understand a reading – I don't know if it was from a feminist theory class or from an intro to literary theory class. But I went to talk to the director of the Sarah Doyle Center, and there was this epiphany of understanding the difference

between biological essentialism and constructivism, like I'm not remembering the exact terms, but basically different ways about thinking about identity. And I [00:50:00] feel like as I moved through life that's been something – or not even just personal life, but professional, like, academic life, that these paradigms, or how to think about history and social fabrics and heritage and all of these different threads that weave the fabric of who we are, and that's something that I feel like was always part of the conversation at Brown. And that has been so useful and important in navigating everything.

KB: I had a paper or a portion of a paper published in one of the student journals in my senior year, and I remember thinking, "Oh, my god. This is the best thing." Because it was student-peer reviewed, and we had this amazing woman who was in our class who ended up becoming [00:51:00] a very big women's studies professor – [Elise Waynback?]. I remember her. But getting that published and seeing what I wrote could be worthy of being in print. At that point, print was everything. [laughter] And how hard it was to get – but I started doing – writing that was related to my jobs after I graduated from Brown, and I got some of it published. You know, not in any big thing, but I think that it made me realize that I could write, I could do a journalistic piece on support of housing in New York City, and then I can try and shop it around and get it published, and so I never would've thought of doing that if I hadn't had that experience senior year. It was just like, "Well, sure, I can get this published. I had it published at Brown." But I think those student journals are very important in whatever field they're in. And I still see them – they're still around. [00:52:00] There are still hard copies. I saw a bunch that were in Faunce House, so I think that's an awesome part of Brown.

MSF: I took a genetics class my junior year. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and that was one of those recommended classes by other people. I was told Doctor [Hyggy?] was amazing, and he was. And that was it – I decided to become a geneticist. So I got to decide my third year what I wanted to do.

F: That's great.

BA: I'm teaching Russian at a historically black university.

Group: Yeah, that's great.

AB: I think for me Brown has just kind of instilled that there's always the traditional way to do something, but that's not the only way, and if you open up yourself to nontraditional ways it's like water. If there's a barrier the water will find a nontraditional way to go around that barrier. And I think that's probably [00:53:00] what I've taken most from Brown. Yeah, I had the classes and I had great friends, but just the idea that life is not just from Point A to Point B, there's always other, different things, and you can really pursue whatever you want. You know? My biggest memories are – I actually stopped running track in junior year and hung out with this female a cappella group. I got in the group, their big thing that they love to do was just sitting on the Green, reading books, and I thought, you know, "I'm not a big reader." But I started reading books – it's something that I love to do even now. Find just a little quiet spot. You know? Just little things, you know, that bring back memories like, "Wow. I was really – I was really blessed to come to Brown." And I don't think I realized how blessed I was until I started talking to other people later in life. And talking to, you know, we have to go out and talk [00:54:00] to middle school, high school kids about what they want to do, and they're just so impressed with Brown. And you're just like, you know, to me it's, like, it's just school. But you don't realize the impact of it, and the impact of that new curriculum because, I don't know for you all, but nowhere else have I had the opportunity just to take just whatever I want to take because I wanted to learn about it. You know? You go to law school, you have to take these courses or even if you have "electives" there are still courses that you've got to take. And even with continuing education – you can take continuing education as long as it relates to law or judicial section. You can't, you know, learn about anthropology. I have to do it on my own. And the fact that I feel like, "Hey!" I want to go to culinary school or I want to a course in theology but not get a theology degree, that I can do that, that comes from that Brown [00:55:00] atmosphere of saying, "Okay. Yeah, I'm a psychology major, but I'm going to take this course. Oh, that course sounds interesting. I'm going to do that." And it sort of branches out, but that's the thing that I remember feeling just, "Wow. This is an awesome time." There is just no other time where you can just follow all of our pursuits or just think of everything – anything that you want to do. If you can fit it into a schedule, you can do it.

KW: I was lucky, I guess, because I picked up some of that attitude from my parents. But what was different from me is that this was the first place that I came to that I was not so extremely the oddball. You know? Like I was a very accomplished student in high school, and my parents were like, “You’re getting into an Ivy League school or we’re not paying.” So it was very clear what I was supposed to do from a pretty young age. And I was fortunate that I was able to do it, but this was the first place [00:56:00] that I came to where it was like okay to be that academically focused, I guess, and where I really learned the joy of being surrounded by people who were way smarter than me. Or maybe they were the same, you know, the same “amount” of smart as me, but this person is brilliant at math. You know? Or this person is brilliant at writing. You know? And kind of learn that there were all these different ways of being intelligent, as opposed to the way of being intelligent that gets you a great score on your SATs. And I think that that has really stayed with me as frankly one of the reasons I’ve been in journalism for so long, because I’ve kind of dabbled in other kinds of writing and there’s like no other place where I’m so consistently surrounded by people who are so much smarter than I am. And once you get to experience that and appreciate it, you kind of don’t want to do anything else. Even if career-wise it’s not the best choice, and financially it might not make any sense. [laughter] You know, it really – I count on my hands the number of days that I’ve dreaded going to [00:57:00] work. You know? Because I’m around those people, and Brown was the first place where I had that. And it really is kind of addictive.

BA: And, structurally, that new curriculum structure helps so much for us, but also the faculty. The faculty doesn’t take your body for granted. When you – now that I teach at a school with a heavy, highly-structured core curriculum – like, you’ve got to pass your two years of language, end of story, and you have to take your hard science requirement, you’ve got to take – you know. When I sit down and I talk to my students who are taking Russian and they want to do it more broadly, I start “You can do this, you can do that.” “I can’t do that. One, I don’t have enough space because I have this major I have to fulfill, and two I have a scholarship that rides on my GPA.” [00:58:00] You know, it’s – But at the same time there professors who teach, like, intro to biology and they’re mostly laissez about the body that’s there because, you know, I don’t pass them they don’t graduate. So – you know? I say, “Jump.” you say, “How high? How fast?” You

know, the fact that it's this symbiotic relationship where you don't take the knowledge for granted; neither do the professors take that for granted. It creates more of this, yeah, it's a little bit idealized: partnership mentality in the classroom.

KJ: But also I think the way the curriculum is and the SNC, like, possibility with every course made it just a much more cooperative environment among the students.

BA: Yes.

KJ: I mean, I had great study groups in all my classes. I mean, it was so supportive. People would tell me, I can remember this: going to the library to get your print out of readings or whatever, "Oh, it's such and such college." They cut it out so no one could read it [00:59:00] once the first student has read it. Or no one studies with anyone else. They're all like cutthroat, and this and that. And Brown it's like, "You know what? There are no pluses or minuses. It's ABC." You know? Everyone is just going to do okay and so you just – you just help each other. And it's just so nice, especially because as you know, we went through high school where it was like, "You've got to do well, and you've got to get good grades." And people are always asking, "How'd you do? How'd you do?" And here it's just relaxed. You know? We're all in this together. And we're all going to help each other.

KW: People the grade grubbing at other schools. I had no idea what they were talking about.

Group: Yeah.

KW: No idea!

KJ: Yeah. Just wasn't like that here.

AB: Law school was a shocker. [laughter] Because you learn the hard lesson really quick that everyone is not trying to help everyone learn the law. People would be hiding books. They would do – it was crazy.

Group: Oh, my gosh. Wow.

MSF: Yeah, I think Brown definitely attracts a certain type of person that's [01:00:00] not pre-super smart but not pretentious, like everybody here. You can tell. Everybody is super smart but they're not pretentious.

KB: And also, I'm not out to, you know, compete in a really nasty way. I felt like we – I also had a lot of group projects, particularly in public policy. So I was one of the first Public Policy concentrations, and we did a lot of team projects at the Taubman Center. And, you know, that's preparation for the real world, you know, for work. And I think that was very pivotal for me was that I learned how to work in teams. It was something that was very valued at Brown, and it certainly has helped me in my career.

WK: Twenty-five years out, I'm curious how've stayed connected to Brown and what you see as the biggest changes that have taken place since you were students here.

KW: [01:01:00] Well, I am.

KJ: I was about say! [laughter] I stay connected through alumnae interviewing, and the biggest change is also sort of my biggest disappointment is how incredibly difficult it has become for students to get into this school.

F: None of my amazing kids has gotten in!

KJ: Yes. It's heartbreaking! I mean –

F: (inaudible) they were perfect.

KJ: Right. I've been interviewing for like over a dozen years, and no one – I think I had two students get in each of whom had a connection. One, his mother had gone, and the other one, his

aunt had gone. And no one else – and it just breaks my heart. I feel like if I had to apply today I would never get in.

KW: I feel the same way.

KJ: And, so, I enjoy the opportunity to interview because I feel like it's the only thing that sort of keeps my finger on the pulse of what's going on with today's high school teenager. But I feel like the students do way more in terms of academics and extracurriculars than I ever [01:02:00] remember doing, you know? I feel like, "How many hours in a day are there?" [laughter] I don't know how they fit it all in. But, you know, I do enjoy doing it, and I do feel like that gives me a nice connection to the university on an ongoing business.

KW: I stopped doing alumnae interviewing for just that reason. Like, all the kids that I thought were so impressive, especially because I used to do it in Jersey City before I moved to Montclair. So all these kids that I think just – and they were so nice, do you know what I mean? And smart, and great resumes, they would not get in. And then the two kids that I thought were just fakers and jerks got accepted. And after like four or five years of this I was like, "You know what? This is not – I'm not helping these kids, and it's not doing anything for my morale or my good feelings towards the school, so I just quit doing it."

CO: I have to admit that for many years after graduating I lost touch with the Brown community, I lost touch with the campus, I lost touch with a lot of my friends. And then when I [01:03:00] moved to Chicago, which is farther, it was where I actually got back in touch with the community through all the Brown club events in Chicago. And what's been wonderful – again, I feel like when I was here at Brown, I kind of had my little small group of friends. I didn't reach out as much to meet other people. I barely remember people from my classes, and I had my little tribe and that was it. And I had a boyfriend, so it was – I became very isolated. So now in Chicago, I've actually found that every time I go to a Brown event it's amazing! So over the past three years I've actually reconnected a lot, coming back to campus to speak a couple times. Speaking to alumni, speaking at different panels, and then reconnecting with, like, recent graduates or new graduates, and of course I am coaching a lot of Brown graduates as well. And

it's just – it's like you – because, you know, I work for myself, so that's how I get to surround [01:04:00] myself with people who are incredibly smart and inspiring. And you do feel that bond. I have some really close friends now in Chicago who I never knew at Brown. Who were a different class – lot of '94, '95, '96, and it's just this beautiful bond. So I'm so glad that I finally reconnected, because that was a huge missing piece for so many years, and I can only imagine what I would've gained in reconnecting sooner.

KS: I stay, I think in two ways, connected to Brown. One is through this co-ed literary fraternity. I actually had wanted to go to a school that had banned fraternities, and now turns out there's a list serve, and once I had an art show in Lincoln, Rhode Island, and I ended up staying at the house, which the only house outside of Wriston, speaking of island of misfit toys, to just have a base and then ending up meeting and enjoying a lot of the undergrads and keeping up with them over the years. But also, [01:05:00] when I come into town just for traveling, having dinner with old professors. And last night the [Waldrof's?]. He's retired but he still has an office. And, you know, it's just, yeah.

KJ: I feel like my closest friends – I mean, my base of friends in my adult life are my friends from Brown. Not, you know, not my friends from high school, certainly not people from law school, which is a social waste land, but – but definitely Brown. And yeah, you're right: you feel this instant karma when you meet people. Just the common sort of openness and warmth and I don't know – yeah, it's something shared. You don't have to say anything.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

KW: I've been a little out of touch, [01:06:00] partly because I had kids later, and so they're still really young, and I'm really still, like, in the weeds with them. And I know everyone says it's beautiful and I'll miss it later. [laughter]

KJ: No you won't!

KW: But I mostly –

KF: Trust me!

KW: Right now I mostly miss sleep. But when I start to think about my social life and, like, “Oh, I miss this person. I miss that person.” And I meet lots of people through my kid’s schools. But when I think about who am I going to be friends with going forward, like, the people I find myself contacting are the people from Brown that I’ve kind of fallen out of touch with a little, as opposed to the new people who are in my town, because I sort of feel like, you know, the odds of becoming, like, real friends, you know, not just friendly and like volunteering with someone, real friends with someone, are so slim. And here’s this group of people that I already know that I like. [laughter] I just haven’t been able to overcome the difference that they live in Westchester and I live in New Jersey. [laughter] And, like, you know, in the scheme of things that’s pretty darn minor. So, you know? So when I look at my kids getting [01:07:00] a little older, and me being able to sort of be a little bit more social, I kind of think of, “Well, who are these people from Brown that I was friends with?” You know, like, I’ve seen a couple of them at reunions since I’ve been here. That it’s like, these kind of are my friends. We’ve just kind of haven’t been in touch for a long time. So it’s that nice kind of feeling.

AB: And the great thing is, even if you haven’t been in touch, as soon as you get in touch it’s like you’re back on the quad.

KW: Yes. I’ve called them free friends. Like, you don’t have to do the work.

AB: I’ve found that after Brown I kind of dropped off for a while, and I really didn’t get back involved heavily until maybe, like, five or six year ago. So it’s been interviewing. I’ve never had anyone that I interviewed get in. But, I loved interviewing. And then, one day, I just decided, I wonder what Nicole’s doing. I wonder where she is. And I went on Facebook and found her. And then I thought, “Oh, let me find everybody.” I sang in Voices of Inspiration while I was here. Let me see [01:08:00] if I can find Greg and Michelle. So –

F: [inaudible]

AB: No, I'm like, they're still in Boston. You know, my ten core friends, I have nine of them, because one passed, but we're all through Facebook, we've been able to get back in touch, find out where everyone lives, and, you know, every now and then you get to see someone or, like, I unfortunately drove from Atlanta because my kids were going to come and then they decided they weren't going to come.

F: Oh, no!

AB: So, you know, out of our group of friends everyone is here except for Reggie. So I said, "Hey, Reggie, I got to drive through New Jersey anyway. So on the way back let's get together." And he said, "Great!" And then, you know, it's just – there's just that commonality where it's like, "Yeah! What's going on? What have you been into?" And you know, there's that bond there that really never goes away. And it doesn't matter if you haven't seen a person in a week or you haven't seen [01:09:00] them in a couple years. It's still there. Just because you've gone through so much together, it's just, "Oh, yeah! That's my friend!" Free friends, I like it.
[laughter]

SS: Yeah. I think my experience is more like 30,000 (inaudible). I got involved in the alumni association right after school. So when said your meeting people now from Chicago from all sorts of years, and that was a great introduction, and you were able to do that. I actually ran the Brown Club in New York, as you know, '91, so you know, a couple years after we graduated. And then I got to meet all the board members, and then the movers and shakers that would come through New York. Brown, you know, has had such a bigger impact on me just in terms of the people out there in the real world, and meeting and hearing what they're doing, and then, for me now, it's a continuity of seeing this university thrive. I mean, when we were here the Providence we know was a dump. Right? And that has changed. The campus [01:10:00] has changed constantly. So I love seeing, you know, where they're going in the vision of today, and the students are a major part of that. Whether we would've gotten in is sort of incidental, but [laughter] (inaudible). I'm just hoping that we're graduating great students. I'm assuming that the admissions committee, even though they're not picking our students, are doing their job,

because otherwise I would fear for my life that we were sort of missing the point and missing the boat with the recent grads. But I think Brown still has such a unique place. And I love, you know, what it's trying to do, and the 250th celebration is such a cool time that we'll always have – you know, [01:11:00] I just love to see the big picture of the university. Not so much my individual experience, but to experience it through the alums in a bigger way through the university. And I love to have had, you know, female presidents now at the university. (inaudible) to know end.

KB: We had Ruth Simmons speak as our keynote speaker at Funds for Women and Girls event. We have a fund for women and girls at our community foundation. So that was, like, such a huge honor. It's like, you know, she's the president of Brown. She wasn't when I was there. So that – connecting through some of the faculty and certainly somebody like Ruth Simmons that keeps you connected to Brown. I also recently met, through my work, a Brown graduate from class of '83 – '82 or '83. And he's involved in social enterprise, so he brought me back to the Social Enterprise Conference that's in Rhode Island. But that was at Brown, and was very connected to Brown with a lot of faculty. And that was a month ago. So I feel like in the last month I've been at campus twice, which never would've happened before. So I think finding ways to reconnect to bring you back, you know, whether it's an alumni event or a Brown club or doing [01:12:00] something with a fellow alum. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AB: That nostalgia of how special a place this is makes me want to do more, made me want to get involved more, so that it continues to be. Because, I mean, yeah I haven't found any other place that's just like this. I try to push my kid toward Brown. She doesn't want to go. [Laughter] The fact that it is so special that you want to do something to let other people know, "Hey, this is a really special place, and even if you weren't thinking about it, you go, it will change your life forever." You know? That sort of, "You got to just try it!" [laughter]

KW: I have friends – a couple of friends whose daughters have come here, and they haven't liked it. And I don't even, like, know what to say. Do you know what I mean? It makes me really appreciate how much it is, [01:13:00] as much as I love Brown, it really makes me appreciate how much it is about this school fits this person.

Group: Right.

KW: And I was, when I was in high school, I was – just wanted to spread my wings. And I was like lucky to land in a place where you could completely, completely do it. You know? But these kids, it's not what they wanted. You know? And they came here and they're sort of like, "What am I supposed to do with myself?" So I think – I mean, I continue to think it's a really, really special place, but I don't think I appreciated the difference between it and other universities until I saw these other young people have a different experience. You know? And it makes me realize, "Well, maybe that's part of the reason I feel like an affinity for other Brown grads."

WK: Well, thank you all so much.

Group: Thank you.

WK: Yeah. It's been great. I think Field Day is now.

Group: Yes. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BA: [01:14:00] Do we have a list of everyone in case we want to keep in touch?

Group: Yeah, that would be great. [laughter]

WK: Absolutely. I'll circulate your names and emails to each other. And I'll be able to send you guys DVD copies of this.

Group: Oh, great. Thank you! Wonderful. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

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