

Transcript – Kim A. Taylor-Thompson, Class of 1977

Narrator: Kim A. Taylor-Thompson

Interviewer: Mary Murphy, Nancy L. Buc '65 Pembroke Center Archivist

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Mary Murphy (MM): Okay so my name is Mary Murphy and I am the Nancy L. Buc Pembroke Center archivist. I am here today with a member of the Brown University Alumnae community who is back on campus for the all-class black alumnae reunion. It's September 21<sup>st</sup> 2018 and this interview is taking place in Pembroke Hall on the second floor. So if you would, please introduce yourself as we begin our conversation.

Kim Taylor-Thompson (KTT): My name is Kim Taylor-Thompson and I graduated in 1977, which is hard for me to say. Um, and I'm currently a law professor at New York University School of Law.

MM: Okay. So why don't we just begin with the basics as I mentioned. Talk to us about, a little bit about your upbringing, and maybe plant the seed, where does your life begin to intersect with Brown University?

KTT: Right. So, I grew up in Harlem in New York and—until I was 10 and then my parents moved to the Bronx. My dad was a jazz pianist and my mom was a stay-at-home mom. And I had an older brother. And it was really because of my older brother that I thought about Brown. He was four years older than me and had gone on a college tour with my mom and dad, and had really come away impressed with Brown. He never went here but there was something about the school that stuck out for him, and influenced my decision four years later when I was thinking about applying that made me say, "I've gotta look at Brown." So Brown was planted in my head somewhere around age 13. But in terms of my upbringing, Harlem was just a great place to grow up. It was at a time when there were lots of things going on in the country that were focused on racial equity issues, economic equity issues, very much part of the Civil Rights era. I grew up in that era. And it affected how I saw the world, as a kid I mentioned that my dad was a jazz musician—he was an MC at an outdoor concert in nineteen-sixty...I wanna say mid - sixties, I'm not sure exactly what year it was. Maybe about '65. And at the outdoor concert, it was a concert that was actually designed to bring people together to donate money to Dr. King, and all the work that was being done around the Montgomery Bus Boycott, all of the civil rights actions that were going on. And at age 10 I got to go to this concert, and I—but I had no sense of what the concert was for, really didn't have a sense at that point yet, about what the civil rights struggle was all about. I had a vague sense of it, but didn't really know the players. And I was a 10 year-old kid who had grown up in the city, and this was our chance to be out in the, what felt like the country. We were in Upstate New York and it there were lots of trees and

brooks and things that I had never seen. So I'm running around behind my brother, who I mentioned is 4 years older than me. So he's about 14. So I'm running around and he could make an adventure out of anything, so I'm running with him. And at some point he gets tired of having his kid sister tag along, so he sort of deposits me back with my mom. And my mom says "okay, you have to sit here next to me on this chair, and just don't go anywhere". Which was like a fate worse than death for a 10 year-old, right? But at some point she took pity on me and she said, "okay you can wander but just make sure that I can still see you". So I noticed that there was this crowd of people kind of forming a circle around a person. I didn't know who it was or what was going on, but being the 1 year old that I was, I walked up to the circle and right into the middle of the circle. And there was this man there who was holding everybody's attention, everybody was paying attention to him, and of course when this 10 year old comes right into the middle where he is, he stops everything, he focused on me, asked me what my name was, and I told him. He asked me what I'd been doing and I told him what I was doing. You know I had his attention and everyone else's attention, so it was just great fun. And it turns out that that man was Dr. Martin Luther King Junior (laughs). I had no clue! No clue whatsoever!

MM: Pardon, (5:00) but that's unbelievable!

KTT: Isn't it? Isn't it—but what happened was he made me feel like I was the most important person on the planet—you know, obviously all that was going on with him, I clearly wasn't. But he had a way of focusing, and a way of just kind of making you feel like what you said was important, and he was present. He was like fully present.

MM: Do you remember anything that he said to you?

KTT: I just remember him being nice to me and asking me questions. You know, he had children so he knew how to talk with children. And what ended up happening was he just kind of held my hand the rest of the day so I kind of hung out with him. And he had to leave me when he went to make a speech (laughs), but it was just remarkable. You know, to have that as part of my upbringing. But again, I was 10, it's probably only in retrospect that I appreciate how significant it was, but I do remember to this day how it felt. You know, the kind of person he was and the way that he could really make you feel that you were somebody in a country that was really intent on making you feel like you weren't somebody. So, it was really quite special. But anyway, so as I grew up in Harlem and my parents made a decision that they wanted to send me to a school downtown which was predominantly white. I was the third black student in the school, I went in third grade and I stayed from third grade through twelfth grade. And it was a really isolating experience, coming in from sort of a rich environment, an environment that really made me feel included to a place where I felt somewhat excluded and different. And it was hard to kind of feel like I fit in. And so I kind of learned how to navigate spaces at that time, that were really, you know very much American spaces in lots of ways. Less inclusive spaces and I had to try to figure out how to find my voice in a place that really wasn't encouraging my voice, and there weren't a lot of people who looked like me. Not even as classmates and there certainly weren't a lot of people who looked like me at the front of a classroom. So, when I was

making the decision to go to college, I wanted to go to a place where—and it was very small the private school that I went to, there were, in my graduating class, I think there were like 35 all girls. 35 girls. And there were maybe at that time, five other black students in the class. So, by the time I graduated, more students were coming. And so, going to, picking a college, I wanted to make sure I went to a place where there were many more students of color so I could feel like I had a community. And Brown felt that way to me. It probably wasn't until I got here that I realized that even though the community felt big to me given where I had been, that it wasn't as big as it needed to be. And so I recognized that once I got here. But initially it just felt so welcoming, and I could see people who looked like me, I could hang out with people who looked like me, I could have meals with people who look like me, and I could have classes taught by people who looked like me. And that was just exactly what I needed at exactly the right time.

MM: What is your first memory of being on campus? Do you have a...a beginning moment?

KTT: Yeah, I think so...I came up to visit before I actually was accepted, and spent some time on the green and talked to some students, and got one of those tours. And it felt like... I think it felt and looked like what I had expected school to look like. And so there was something about being on the green that, and with people walking around and gathering together and talking that made me say, "Oh I love this!" This was just like so what I wanted to do. But once I got on campus, once I was accepted, I guess the thing that stood out for me is, again this community of folks who—black folks and brown folks—who didn't know each other, but if you saw another face of color, you always said hello. It was a place that made you feel like there's a community here. And so that—my first impressions were, I would be (10:00) walking down across the green and not know this person, but see somebody and say, "Hi, how are you?" And they'd say, "Hi, how are you?" And then maybe a conversation would start. So it was welcoming, that's what I remember. Initially.

MM: That's interesting coming from the class of 1968. We just did an interview with black women for (?) so it really, so that's 1968. So by the time you entered Brown—

KTT: '73

MM: '73, what an interesting difference—

KTT: It is.

MM: --in such a small amount of time.

KTT: It is.

MM: At least in your recollection.

KTT: Yeah. And you had—I think we were about 10 percent of the student body, so about 500 students of color. And so that felt like a big number for me coming from where I was. When you actually look at it, and break it down class by class, it's not a big number, but it felt like a big number to me initially. And so that, that was a really important experience for me, and it made this place feel like it was my place. Like I had a place in the world.

MM: So let's talk about, let's talk about highlights of your time.

KTT: Yeah.

MM: On campus.

KTT: Yeah. So, I guess there are a couple of highlights that I would identify. I mentioned having professors of color who taught me. There was one professor in particular, Professor Charles Nichols, he was in the English Department. And I was a double major: English and Poly-Sci. And I did the honors program in English. And so you had to write a thesis. And he was my thesis advisor. And so, I loved American literature, that was what my focus was, and I loved—there's this concept in American literature, it's called the Picaresque. It's a narrative form where you have a character, a Picaro, a character who kind of lives by his wits, and manages when all sorts of things are happening to him to actually survive them and be resilient. And so, if you look at work by Mark Twain for example, it's that character in Mark Twain. There are lots of other American writers who use that style. And what I liked was finding that style in Black literature. Folks like Ralph Ellison, it's about how he comes to grips—the main character—comes to grips with his race and has to deal with oppression and live by his wits, and actually survive. And so I wanted to write about that Picaresque in Black literature. And I remember—and Professor Nichols loved it, “Oh yes you've got to do that!” He said, “but you know you need to go back. You're starting at, starting by looking at fiction. And what you really need to think about is how that fiction was a way of telling a real-life story. And so you need to trace that narrative back to the slave narratives. So I want you to read some of these slave narratives and see how that ability to sort of live through struggle, to actually resist the struggle, and then to be resilient, is really a common trope in the slave narratives. And then trace it through to fiction.” And I had never had anybody first of all, direct me to read about my history in that way. And when I read the slave narratives, they were so hard to read. You really, in first-person, get a sense of what it was like to be objectified, dehumanized, treated like worse than an animal, less than a person. And the fact that people survived that and still found some measure of hope and resilience is just remarkable. And so I read those largely at his direction, largely because it was part of the thesis, but it fundamentally changed who I am, I think, just by tying back to my own history and understanding it. It made me realize the power of voice, the power of narrative, the power of helping people understand that truth, that painful truth that we lived through. And wanting to find a way to give voice to that. So that fundamentally affected me (15:00), so I think if you think about a highlight, I'm not sure I would've described it as a highlight, but it was something that really changed kind of how I saw myself, and how I saw my connection to history. And how even in the process of writing a thesis about American literature, I could find part of my story. And so that was really important to me.

MM: Can I ask a librarian question?

KTT: Sure.

MM: Do you remember where you got those resources?

KTT: You know, I'm trying to remember. It's so funny—I actually think that he had them in his collection. Yeah, because he, this was his area of research. So, I'm almost sure that he gave me some copies of things, and I think—but I also think I found some in the library.

MM: The library.

KTT: So, yeah. So I think so. And then I'm sure that I did some research back home at the, in New York, at the Schomburg Collection.

MM: At the Schomburg. That's a fantastic collection.

KTT: I'm sure I did that too. But, yeah I think he directed me, so I think he had some things for me to read.

MM: It's a really important memory. Tell us more. Other highlights.

KTT: Yeah so I guess the other highlight for me probably would be the '75 takeover.

MM: Please.

KTT: So, the process of getting the entire student body of students of color together to sort of recognize that this was something that we needed to do, was pretty deliberate and painstaking. We had students who made a point of talking to every student of color on campus and saying "here's what the landscape looks like: there are too few students of color coming to this campus, there are too few opportunities for financial aid, even though we have black administrators and black faculty. If you look at the overall numbers and percentages, they are nowhere near what they should be. And you know, we need to do something to bring attention to this." And so the conversation in these small settings-- I remember these two students coming to talk to my roommate and I, and having a conversation saying that we're thinking we need to, not only do a strike, but that we need to take over a building. And we were listening and asking questions, and then I remember when the two students left that my roommate and I said, "you know they did that in the 60s" (laughs). "What are they thinking about, this is 1975! Nobody takes over a building anymore, are they crazy?" And so it wasn't something that people kind of gravitated towards, even when we saw the context, you know, there's gotta be a different way, I'm not sure that that's the right way.

MM: Can I stop you right there? So you, you said as you came to campus it was actually a moment where you were thinking, Oh this is better! But then can you tell me –

KTT: When that shifted?

MM:--when that shifted.

KTT: Yeah. I think that, so coming from a situation where there are five students of color in your class, anything that's bigger than that feels like you've arrived at the Promised Land. But you know, as you start to really get a sense of the landscape and realizing how few we actually were, and that our percentage was a little under 10 percent actually, that you realize that no there's just something wrong with that. And particularly given the 60s, given what people had done to try to make change and make this a more diverse place, we were not making the kind of head way that we should have made. And we were certainly not at the raw numbers that we should've been at given all the things that had been promised, and the kinds of things that had been expected. And as I recall, one of the things that the president of Brown—so there were some financial issues that were going on with Brown, that the Board of Trustees and the university president were trying to grapple with. And one of the things that they were looking to cut was financial aid because that was certainly a big-ticket item, and they thought that well we can do that. And so it was really when we recognized that that was the strategic choice that they were making to actually cut back (20:00) on what was already not sufficiently large numbers, that we started saying, “no something has to be done, we have to make our voices heard, we have to let him know that he can't make that particular strategic decision because it's ultimately the wrong way to go”. You can't build this place by cutting out a critical part of it. And so that was I think what motivated a lot of the organizers around this, and it was part of the story that we were telling. And so it was a fundamental change. So you know there was a lot of conversation going back and forth, and then I remember a huge meeting at Churchill house where we all came together, all the students of color were brought into a room, and the organizers were talking about the pros and cons of taking over the building. And the conversation was around taking over University Hall. And one of the things that most of us wanted to know, was what would happen if we did this, would there be criminal consequences. Would we get arrested. Because we were all pre-something, right? Pre-med, pre-law, pre-something. And our parents had really struggled to get us here, and we understood that when you are pushing an envelope and pushing for racial equity, social justice issues, it's not without consequence. And it's not—it just doesn't, they don't give that to you. And so, you have to fight for it, and you can lose something. And so, we wanted to know, okay if we're making this decision, what might we be losing? So, they brought a lawyer in to talk to us, and to tell us what possible charges we might be facing. And I actually tell this story now—you know I teach criminal law, and I tell this story to my students because it was done in quite a masterful way. So, the lawyer at the front of the room is saying “Okay. So here's what you could face: if you go into the building and it's locked and you go into the building, you could be charged with burglary.” We're all like oh, murmuring in the room. “If somebody is in the building, and you don't let them out, you could be charged with kidnapping or false imprisonment.” Oh no, more murmuring.

MM: That sounds terrible.

KTT: Yeah, it's all scary right? (Laughs) You know, "if the police come to arrest you, if you resist in any way, obviously you can be charged with the resistance. If you're carrying an umbrella, it could be armed resistance because that could be interpreted as a weapon." Everything is mumbling and nobody wants to do it. But he said, "But I should tell you, under Rhode Island Law, you're already guilty of conspiracy because you are in this room, conspiring to take over a building. And so you actually are already guilty of the felony of conspiracy." And we went, "Well if we're guilty of something already, we might as well go the whole way." So it actually was a probably not planned, but it worked. The murmuring stopped and people said "okay, we're willing to go." And so what it turned out was, we were gonna go the next day. We were actually—they didn't want to give us too much notice ahead of time because they didn't want it to leak out. So they said "Okay tomorrow morning we want half of you, those of you who live on the Brown side of campus, will go to this part in the west quad, those of you on the Pembroke side will go to this place in Churchill house." And I and my roommate were the lookouts. I was on Student Government, so I had a key to the Student Government office which actually overlooked the green. And so, they had me on the phone with one group, I think I had the group in Churchill House, and my roommate was on the phone with—

MM: Landlines.

KTT: --landlines, because that was all there was. On the phone with the folks in the West quad. And our job was to look out the window and let them know when the door was unlocked. When security came around and unlocked it so that we wouldn't be charged with burglary. We might be charged with unlawful entry, but not burglary, the more serious crime. And we could actually get into the building so people could get in and seize it. So, we were looking out, and all of this—you know we haven't told our parents, we haven't told anybody—and we're all panicked. I had a close friend (25:00) who—I decided not to go in the building, I was just going to be occupying outside, but a close friend was going in the building, and that night he was up throwing up. I mean we were petrified about what the potential consequences would be, we didn't know how the police would react, we didn't know how other students on the campus would react, so we were scared. But we're on the phone and letting them know that it's not open yet, and then we see security go and open up the doors and unlock the doors, and so both of us said, "Okay you can move out." And what we saw that morning was just—I can still remember and it still gives me goosebumps—you had this crowd of people entering the green from the Pembroke side and a crowd of folks quietly—it was rainy and misty—quietly entering from the west quad side. And then just kind of going around the building, couple of people went inside the building, and I remember my roommate and I said, "we've gotta get down there!" So we went down, and then it began. And we held the building for 72 hours—

MM: Oh okay, longer than I thought.

KTT: --slept in Manning chapel. And really came together in ways I think that supported each other, because we were scared, supported each other because we were tired, and we felt like a cohesive group and it was powerful and wonderful. We had a couple of people, Vince McNight, J.J. Jackson—Vince is now a lawyer in DC, a partner in a firm, J.J. Jackson, William Jackson, is a federal judge—they were our media spokespeople. And they were also negotiating with the President to meet our demands, and our demands were around financial aid, putting that back into the budget, and increasing it, making sure that you increase the number of students of color admitted, making sure that you increase the number of administrators and faculty, and so we had demands and those demands were met. They agreed to our demands. So, it was an opportunity—the thing I sort of take away from it is that when something matters, you have to put something, a lot on the line and be willing to do that. It doesn't always work out the way this one did, but the fact that it did work out gives you the hope that it can work out again, and so realizing that it's important just to take a stand and to stand up for what you believe. You know when other people sit down and you've got to stand up and do something. So that stands out for me, and I guess sort of the—there are two follow-ups that stand out for me. So, I told you, you're not allowed to tell your parents that you're about to engage in a conspiracy. So, the way my mother and father found out that I had taken over a building was that they were flying out to California to visit my brother, the good child. And they open up Time Magazine and there's this thing that says, "Blacks take over a building at Brown". And there's my picture (laughs)! And so my mom was like, "Oh my god there's Kim! We've got to go back!"

(Overlapping audio and laughter)

KTT: And my dad who was completely accustomed—I had been, I did Vietnam War protests in High school, it was part of who I was—he just said, "Oh that's just Kim, she'll figure her way out of it, we're not going back, she'll be fine." So that's how my parents found out about it.

MM: That is funny.

KTT: Yes. And then once we had given the building back, I had a paper that was due during the time of the takeover, and so I had to file something for an extension for the paper afterwards, after the fact. And so they ask you your reason, you know, "why are you asking for an extension on this?" And I wrote that I was taking over a building, and it was approved. And so, I just thought that that said a lot about what Brown was, that there was a recognition that you're here to learn, but you're here to learn in lots of different dimensions. And so that's one of the most powerful pieces that I take away from the experience, that not only were we able to do it and we found a way to kind of get out collective voice heard, but it was valued in some ways. And so those are my takeaways.

MM: Well I'd like to move on (30:00) with questions... carrying that activism—well first of all, I'd like to ask about women's rights in your life—

KTT: Yeah.



MM: If you carried a feminism with you, or if you identified with the women's movement as it was really rolling by this point—

KTT: Yeah.

MM: If you could speak to that, maybe while you were at Brown or as you begin to transition out of Brown...

KTT: Yeah. So, I um, while I was at Brown, I found that the women's movement in lots of ways did speak to who I was, and how I saw myself. Certainly in terms of the struggle for pay equity, the struggle to be recognized as a fully contributing person, I saw the issues around gender as critical issues that meant something to me. I think in later years, so after Brown, I saw that in some ways the women's movement did not speak as clearly to women of color and that our voices got silenced a bit, but I didn't feel that as I was coming up at Brown. But I found that over time the women's movement, for me, lost a little of its appeal because it didn't recognize the intersectionality, the sort of double burden of race and gender that created a more difficult path for women of color. It was just women, and not thinking about those dimensions. But that said, I found that in lots of ways it spoke to my heart because it suggested that we need to fight for ourselves, we needed to make ourselves heard, our voices were important, and it helped me find a voice in, certainly in a professional, a legal profession that was dominated by men, dominated by white men. It helped me find a sense of purpose, so gender issues were part of who I was, but probably race and gender more. And after I left, and went to law school, I went to Yale, we were tackling issues of, more issues of race around affirmative action, and the debate about whether or not students of color deserve to be at places like Yale. So, a lot of our struggles were, again, more around racial equity issues, but one of the people who was in my class at Yale was Anita Hill. She was—was and is a close friend. And we spent time together, we were in classes together, and while we were in law school we struggled with all the same things that every other law student struggled with. And it was only, well I guess ten years or eleven years after that, that a lot of the gender issues and race issues came together when, in the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, Anita became a central figure in all of that. And what was interesting for me was that Anita had not told me about what Thomas had been doing to her sort of contemporaneously. And I remember in '91 saying to myself, "I wonder why it was that she didn't." I mean, we were very close friends. Why she didn't tell me and we had another very close friend, there were three of us that were very close. And she didn't tell either one of us. And I think that what happened was, we were the kind of friends that said, "You gotta get out there, you gotta report him, you gotta—". We would've pushed her to do things that she wasn't ready to do.

MM: To take over the building.

KTT: Yes, exactly. And the person she told, Sue Hirschner, was a very different personality from Sonya Jarvis and myself. She was much calmer, she was someone who would've just said, "Do what it is that you need to do to be healthy and don't worry about him, focus on you." And that's who she told. And so, it said some things to be about who I was, that maybe my activism

in some (35:00) ways created a barrier, which it shouldn't have. But eventually, as I said it became clear that Anita was going to be the person who was going to be called to testify. So she called me, and said that this was going on and I said, "well you need counsel." I'm a lawyer at this point, but I'm actually about to start teaching at Stanford Law School. And I said, I recommended that she contact somebody I had practiced with, a public defender, Charles Ovaltree, who was a professor at Harvard Law School. And I said you know, "contact him." And she did, and they started getting the legal team together. And I sort of saw myself as just her friend in this process. Not as part of the legal team, but just somebody that she could talk to. And I remember—I would be on the calls and everything, the legal team calls—but I remember one time, it was actually right before she was about to have her first press conference, and we were just talking because I was checking in, "how are you doing?" Because it was crazy at that point, and she said she was doing fine, she said "I'm about to go do the press conference." And I said "okay, well are you feeling okay about it?" So, I'm just being a friend, supportive friend right? And so I said, "so have you talked to Charles Ovaltree", we called him Tree, and so I said "have you talked to Tree, your lawyer, about all of this?" And she said, "No, no, I'm just going to go do this." And I went, "Oh my god!" So immediately I take the friend hat off and put the lawyer hat on, and I'm like, "Okay, here are the kinds of questions that might come." And you know, I had to shift focus quickly to—even though she was my friend, I said "you've got to be protected legally, so let me just ask you this questions." There was no reason for me to ever have been worried because she was fine, but it was a weird dynamic for me to be friend and lawyer. And try to protect in lots of different ways—it was an odd occurrence. But she appreciated it, she was great, she did wonderful things in that press conference. So, when it came to the actual hearing, I was flown in, I flew in on a Red Eye, and I actually stayed with her over the weekend that the confirmation hearings were taking place—

MM: Oh my god.

KTT: --she had a hotel room and there was room, and so I stayed with her. So the morning of the hearings, the big moment where she's first appearing, she was ironing my clothes because my dress had gotten all wrinkled in the--(laughs). So, she was calmer than I was, she was focused on helping everybody around her. And—because that's kind of who she is—she had found a level of calm because all she had to do in her mind was tell what happened. And she did. But it was horrifying, it was...

MM: Do you think she knew what was coming?

KTT: Yeah, of course. We all knew. We just—you knew, you knew intellectually that it was going to be putting her on trial, it was going to be abusive, it was going to—they were going to belittle her, we knew all of that. But it was another thing to actually experience it. And what a lot of people at the time were saying, you must've been so annoyed with the Republican senators because they did all of it—Arlen Specter did the kinds of things that were, from his legal training, trying to attack her and confront her. But he did what I expected. The Republicans did what I expected. It was the Democrats I was most angry with. Biden was horrendous, Kennedy was so disabled by his own misconduct that he didn't know how to

engage. And so, they didn't know how to fight the partisan fight that needed to be fought, they had no idea how to protect her in that process. And so we felt like we were this little group of the bad news bearers, kind of up against this machinery, and it was crazy. It was just...an experience that you will never—that I will never ever forget. But in the midst of all of this, she was the rock in all of this. So, she testified wonderfully, her panel of experts testified. I was going to be part of a panel of character witnesses for her, but we ended up making the decision not to have me testify, and the other (40:00), Sonya Jarvis and one other person, testified as character witnesses. Because we thought she had done so well, we thought her panel had done well, and then she passed the polygraph. And so we just said, "we're just going to rest on that." And even with that, the strength of all of that, they confirmed this man who was clearly unqualified, and has proven himself to be that onto a lifetime appointment.

MM: And a serial perpetrator.

KTT: Absolutely. Absolutely.

MM: If you get—can I just say this, if you were Ms. Blasey-Ford—

KTT: Yeah, Dr. Ford, yeah.

MM: --who is now facing this, again... which to me is just a nightmare made more so by the evidenced trauma that Anita Hill endured—

KTT: Exactly.

MM: --she now knows, there's not even any—

KTT: There's not even a question that—

MM: --ignorance that can like—

(overlapping audio)

MM: What do you think, would you do it? Would you recommend for her to do it?

KTT: Um...

MM: Which you don't have to share—

KTT: No, no, it's the right question to ask, and I don't know is the answer. Um...I actually think that it is not going to make a difference. I think it's important to have the courage to stand up and say these things, but it's going to take a personal toll, it already has. She's getting death threats—I mean, we—Anita got ridiculous amounts of death threats, and even those of us in the periphery got investigated. It's got a really ugly ripple effect. And so, I would say if you're

going in, understand that this is going to happen. And if you feel like there is an objective here that's being advanced, one is to bring these issues out into the open, and it's worth it; another might be to perhaps affect the process going forward, then perhaps it's worth it. To give women behind you a sense that even when you put these barriers our way, we're still going to step up and do this, it's another objective. But if you chose to say, "I don't think that my testimony is going to have an impact," I'd support that whole-heartedly, I understand. My friend Sonya, I keep mentioning her, her aunt, the weekend that we were doing this, her aunt was watching the TV-- like every other person and every other family member of ours was glued to the TV—and she said the prayer that she kept saying was, she knew that we were, Sonya and I were going to be in the next panel, and she said, "if their testimony is going to help in some way, then give them the strength and let them do it. But if it's not going to help at all, please don't let them testify because I just don't want this to happen to them." And that's the feeling, I mean it's just, it is oppressive and it is manipulative, and the kinds of things that they say about you, the kind of character assassination that goes on, it's all part of the game to them. And so, it's difficult to come forward. You know, I think Dr. Ford is incredibly brave for having allowing her name to be used, for insisting that these issues be raised, she's correct to say that the FBI's job is to investigate, so they should've investigated, and this is part of the investigation that they should do, so there might be other witnesses identified and other bits of evidence if it's not just a he-said, she-said kind of thing. But if she said, "I don't want to do this," I think that that would be perfectly understandable. I hope she will.

MM: I think about the archive that's being created, I think about—I don't know if Anita has kept the mail that she got—

KTT: She has, she has.

MM: To think about the legacy of that. I'm sure she is, and now that woman will have that too. Her records will be in a digital collection because I'm sure that the social media is just unbelievable. So, I think...it's just unbelievable. It's really mind-blowing to me.

KTT: And the parallels are just stunning. That from 1991 'til now, there really hasn't been much movement, much of a change. You know as we watch the #MeToo Movement come forward again, it was great to see that, but a number of people have remarked, and I have too, that all these same comments were being made (45:00) when Anita raised them. It's only now that it's white women, wealthy white women who are saying this, that we're now saying "Oh my God!" But we were saying that back in '91. So I'm glad to see that that's getting some traction, but really?

MM: Is this what it...

KTT: Yeah.

MM: Um, I'd like to wrap up, we have just a few more minutes. If you would like to just share any final thoughts, and this can be of course on any subject—

KTT: Okay.

MM: Thoughts about Brown or your life, and whatnot.

KTT. Yeah, I think Brown—I look back on it incredibly fondly and I’m so excited to be back here this weekend. But it really was a place that I think I began to hone my skills around being active politically, being active around racial justice issues, I think it’s because of Brown that I made the decision to go to law school. I became a public defender in Washington D.C. so I did, I represented people charged with crime, largely people of color who looked like me but, for the grace of God go I, I could see myself in them. And they were caught up in a system that was intent on denying their voice and dehumanizing them, so my job was to stand up in front of a job and say, “this is a human being in front of you, not just a personification of his charge, not just a burglar or rapist, a murderer, this is John Jones and you’ve got to see him.” And I think that was largely because I found my voice here. When I made the decision to go into teaching, so I practiced for 10 years as a public defender, ultimately running that public defender office, and fighting lots of political battles at the local DC level and at the federal government, around funding and budget. I started to understand how to play in those spheres, but a lot of the things I learned here about getting a story out, getting a narrative going, started here. When I left running the public defender and I went into teaching at Stanford, I was at the law school, I was the first woman of color on their tenure track. And again—

MM: What year was that?

KTT: Yeah, ‘91. Isn’t that outrageous? So like a month into my first year was when all of the Anita Hill hearings happened. It’s funny, I’m now remembering that Anita had called me during the summer and was saying, you know, “Are you ready? Are you feeling ready for teaching” Because she was teaching then. And I said, “Yeah I think so.” And she said, “You know, I just really am envious of you beginning this thing that’s new.” You know, she was saying at the beginning of that summer. Because it’s such a wonderful moment when you’re starting to teach and it’s just so new. And she said, “You know, I’m gonna have to do something to kind of spice up my life. Maybe I’ll get my hair cut.” And I said, “Okay. “

MM: (laughs)

KTT: And so when all this happened in the fall, I said, you know “you should’ve just gotten your hair cut!” You know, you didn’t need to go to these extremes. But...

MM: I hope she laughed.

KTT: Oh she did. Oh god yeah. But I think Brown prepared me for a lot of the racial battles, the justice battles, the gender equity battles, and kind of helped me, not only be alert to those issues, but find that my voice could matter. And I think I trace that back to here.

MM: Well, thank you. I think that's a great place to end.

KTT: Okay.

MM: I'm going to turn off the recording now. It was lovely to sit with you for this hour.

[end]