

Transcript—Gloria Elizabeth Del Papa, '46

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Track 1

Carol Fenimore: [00:00] – Gloria Del Papa, class of '48?

Gloria Elizabeth Del Papa: Forty-six.

CF: Forty-six. OK. And my name is [Carol Fenimore?]. It's the 2nd of December, 1985, and we're at Gloria Del Papa's home in Pawtucket. Tell me a little bit about your family background. Are you originally from this area?

GEDP: Well, I was born here in Pawtucket. My father was born in Italy – well, not actually in Italy. He was born in South America but of Italian parents. Came here at the age of sixteen to establish himself and sent for his family. But he lived in Worcester for a long time. But then he met my mother and lived in Pawtucket. She lived here, and he settled down and established his cement business which is what he had done in Italy as a small boy, as a matter of fact.

And my mother was a woman who had not – my father never was able to go to school past – I don't know. [01:00] I think he told me he was only about ten. And my mother had to go to work in the mills when she was twelve. She would tell me stories about going to the mill with a bow in her hair. They used to still wear the big ribbons.

But my father had a great respect for education and I think my father always felt the loss of having had an education. Because he used to say to me, "I think I could've been mayor if I'd been able to go to school." He was a very smart man. And what you'd call a self-made man. So, he was always very, very, very much wanting us to do well in school.

CF: Did you have a number of siblings, too?

GEDP: I had two brothers. And one brother, unfortunately, died at the age of sixteen in an accident. And I had another brother nine years older than I who went to Providence College, but he was not able to – he wasn't scholastically inclined. He tried to be, for my father's sake. See, my father had this vast urge to have his children [02:00] be educated and succeed in profession. So, he didn't continue that.

But then I came along and I did fairly well in school, and I think my father put all his eggs in this one basket, so to speak. And I think I disappointed him in a way because he wanted me to be a doctor. And I tried. When I first went to Pembroke, I started to major in biology. And that was not for me, I soon found out. And I switched to my real love which was English. And he never could really understand that. But he knew I was at a good school and he wanted me to have a good education, so he went along with it. He used to keep saying to me, "(inaudible) what do you want to be after you finish majoring in English?"

CF: Did he just suggest to you to apply to Pembroke or did you have some advisors in high school?

GEDP: Everyone knew – we all knew about Brown and Pembroke. Even in those days, it had a fine reputation. [03:00] And it was considered a wonderful school to go to, but my closest friends were going to Rhode Island College. At that time, it was called Rhode Island College of Education. It just simply educated teachers. So, I went along with them and made an application and was accepted. I don't think I ever said I wanted to go to Pembroke, but my father was the one who said, during my senior year, "I don't think I want you to go to that school. I'd like you to go to Brown. My daughter should go to Brown." And he could afford it, too, more so than my friends even though, if you can believe it, the tuition was about \$500 a year about. I think it was \$250 a half a year. It was some crazy sum.

CF: That's a lot of money, during wartime, especially.

GEDP: In those days, my friends came from similar backgrounds, but their fathers were not self-employed as my father was. [04:00] And for some reason or other, they couldn't afford to go there. So, I was a very obedient daughter and I said, "OK." But I really thought I would be happier going with my friends to RIC, but the best – RICE, it was called them. But, really, it was one of the best decisions my father ever made and I was glad I acquiesced. In those days, I was a typical Italian daughter who – father said, and then I would do. And it really was – I'm so grateful to him, always was, and told him so – that I went there because my association at Brown meant a great deal to me and still does. I give to the college. The college is in my will. I feel great affinity for the school. So, he, more or less, made the decision.

CF: That's very interesting. Your mother had no say?

GEDP: My mother? No, my mother was glad. She knew I did well in school and my mother went along and that was fine, whichever school. But she really didn't [05:00] voice any particular opinions.

CF: OK. Let's see. So, why don't we talk a little bit about your freshman year? Did you commute or did you –

GEDP: Yes. I was a city girl. I think one thing I'd like to mention is – I guess it isn't as bad now, but having taught, I know the agony that kids go through every April as to whether they're going to be accepted in the college of their choice. I guess – is that still –

CF: That's true. Very agonizing.

GEDP: Well, it was a very different situation in my day although I did have a very good background.

(break in audio)

GEDP: As I was saying, I think I was first in my class, valedictorian. And so I had a good record and I also was active. But when my father made the appointment with Miss Moore. She was Eva Moore then. I don't know whether her name has ever come up in the archive. Not dean.

CF: Is she [06:00] the admissions officer?

GEDP: She was the admissions officer, and she is a delightful woman. Oh, I just really – that was my first introduction to Pembroke, meeting her, and I thought, “Wow. If everybody's as wonderful as this woman is.”

But the point that I was trying to make is, she was so glad to see me and my father. She made me feel so welcome. And she even went to Pembroke Hall for the interview, and I can remember her coming out on the stairs and saying goodbye to us and saying to me, “I certainly hope that you'll consider Pembroke.” In other words, there wasn't that pressure that kids have today. I was almost being asked to please go there. And it wasn't because of finances or anything. Maybe the war had part of it, but I don't think so. There were plenty of girls applying. But there wasn't that kind of (rat-race?) situation that we have today. I felt I was assured of my place and never for a moment thought I wasn't going to [07:00] get in. So, that was kind of a nice way to start.

The only thing that wasn't nice about it was that it was wartime and it was, of course, a different kind of war than people like you know about. We all believed in it. But many of my classmates from high school had already gone, the boys, to war. In fact, by the time we graduated in June of 1943, one of our classmates had been killed. And that made for unhappiness although we were young and we just accepted it.

So, I was out of high school. Brown announced what was called an accelerated program. I think that's what they called it. Accelerated program. So, OK. If you want to start school in the summer – and my father said, “Fine. You've graduated from high school.” Now, some people, I'm sure, must have waited until the fall semester. [08:00] But I was out of high school in June. I think the following week –

CF: Was this June of 19–

GEDP: Forty-six. And the following week, I was in college.

CF: OK, wait.

GEDP: June of '43. Right. Right. It took me three years.

CF: So, about three years from –

GEDP: Yes, that's right. And it went by. I took off a semester. Otherwise, I would've finished in a two and a half years. Can you imagine?

CF: Well, I understand they had a trimester system then, so it was –

GEDP: Yes. If you went right through, you would graduate in about two and a half years. But somewhere along the way, I just decided – I must have had a little bit of wisdom – I just thought, "This is all going too fast for me." And although my father was very much for – my parents were, and they were paying the freight, of course – for going right through, I think I just balked about halfway through and said I wanted the summer off. What I wanted was to have my college experience last a little longer instead of flying by in the wink of an eye. Two and a half years isn't [09:00] very long when everyone else had gone for four years. So, I did take off a semester, a summer, the summer before I graduated. That would be the summer of – I graduated in '46. I must've taken off the summer of '45. And I worked and then I went back. And so I sort of had a full year that was more normal because the war was over and you could – it wasn't normal, exactly, but it was a little different.

CF: Tell me a little bit more about your freshman year. You said that you commuted.

GEDP: Yes, we commuted. And there was a large block of city girls. We were called city girls. There were the city girls and the dorm girls. But there was never any real distinction in – what should I say? That you felt that you weren't as good as the dorm girls. You just were city girls, that's all. And you commuted back and forth. And I met many friends, both amongst the dorm

girls [10:00] and city girls. As a matter of fact, I did live in at college for one year. By this time, my father had had a nervous breakdown and wasn't working anymore. So I asked permission to live in. These two girls that were in my freshman biology classes (inaudible) was my – I'm getting fuzzy in here, but I think it was somewhere in my sophomore and probably my junior year that I lived in, a year and a half. They asked me. They had a suite in one of the old fraternity houses.

That's another thing [you might be interested in?]. We lived in a fraternity house because of the war, you know. So, they asked me if I would live in. So I had that experience for about a year and a half. But then my last year, I remained home because my father wasn't that good and he didn't want me to live in. He wanted me at home. So, I went back to being a city girl.

CF: It's very interesting. What courses did you take? You said that you started in premed. How long did that last?

GEDP: Right. Well, that lasted [11:00] about – we had what was called distribution courses in those days, d-courses, they were called. And you had to take – some colleges have gone back to that, haven't they? You had to take a math course, a science course –

CF: Core curriculum.

GEDP: Now, I had taken what was called the English Proficiency Exam. When you went to Pembroke, that first week of entering Pembroke, I can remember because it was warm and we were in this – Sayles Hall, I think we were in. And we were all examined a whole solid week. Every morning, we were tested in everything. As I look back, they must have been – we didn't take college (inaudible). But this must have been – it was like an aptitude test. And also an achievement test. And I remember that if you passed this English Aptitude Test – you had to write a theme and so forth – you were excused from freshman English. And then I was. So then I didn't have to take that. [12:00]

But I know I took a basic biology course. Gee. I don't even know if I can remember what else I took that first year. I bet you I could find my old report card.

CF: The details aren't important. Just curious what course of studies –

GEDP: OK. I started out and was going to major in biology. I had loved biology in high school and my father thought I should be a doctor, so I thought, “Well, I'll combine on this.” So, at the beginning, it was good. Because at the beginning, biology is what I thought biology was from high school. But then I got into physiology and then I realized that biology just doesn't stay by itself in its nice little compartment. It becomes chemistry – oh, I took chemistry and nearly died in chemistry. I hated it. And physiology was a mixture of all this. And I realized I just wasn't able to do it. It wasn't for me.

So, I changed then, after telling my father [13:00] that I couldn't. And he kind of went along with it. And I remember going to Dean Moore about it. Not Moore. Dean Morriss. She was a wonderful woman.

CF: The dean of the college.

GEDP: You probably have heard of her or seen pictures. She looked like a very stern, regal woman, which she was, but she was also very warm. In fact, in my yearbook, she was favorite. There's a page there, Favorites, and she was – we all loved her. Of course, we called her Peggy Push. Not to her face.

CF: And what does that –

GEDP: Margaret Shove Morriss. Her middle name was S-H-O-V-E. See, shove? So, we used to – Margaret Shove, and she had a nickname Peggy Push. But not to her face would we call her that.

But I remember going into her in despair. Making an appointment and going in in despair because I was failing in chemistry and I had never failed anything in my life. And to me, it was the end of the world. And her being very kind to me, [14:00] but she would not let me drop the class. I wanted to drop the class and she would not allow it because she said, “If you drop the course, you drop it with this flat failure, and I know from your marks that you can at least pass it.” And that, again, was very wise advice because when I graduated, I graduated Phi Beta

Kappa, but I never could've done that with failure. See, I did make myself study and I think I did finally wind up with, like, a 75 which, later on, my marks balanced out, I guess. So, that was very wise advice because all I wanted to do was be out. She wouldn't let me out and I remember thinking how awful she was. But she was right. She was a very fine woman because although she was a head of a school, and I guess in those days, she was recognized. It was unusual. But she also was very warm and (inaudible) personal.

The other dean that I [15:00] knew, and knew well because I worked with her (inaudible) was Nancy Duke Lewis. I don't know whether you've heard that name. There are scholarship funds in her memory. I think there's a Nancy Duke Lewis chair, professorship.

She was from the south and she was the dean who took over after Dean Morriss and she was very nice. There was a closeness. We had a real closeness with the dean. I don't know whether that would be today because there are probably about twenty deans now. But she was our dean, the Dean of Pembroke College, and we were small. My class was, I think, in the end there was only about eighty-some of us in the end. And we were fragmented, so many graduating each time.

CF: Because of the accelerated program.

GEDP: Yes, so that we were a small group. We all got to know one another pretty well.

CF: So, then you said that you switched from biology to English. How'd you come to decide on English [16:00] because you didn't take the freshman English course?

GEDP: I had always loved it and I had been – because I passed the freshman English course, I had been invited to take honors in English. And, of course, I didn't have room for it, but I always took an English course. And I also worked on the – there was a news bureau in those days. I always had some little job or other. My father gave me an allowance. I think it was \$20 a month. I think it was \$5 a week. That was my allowance. And although I know it sounds like nothing, but I could stretch it.

I always liked to do a little something, so I worked at the news bureau which was a drudge job but they chose you for that job because you passed the English Proficiency, which is

kind of funny. What you did is, you got newspapers in, received newspapers, and – well, first, you would mailed out things about – for instance, if you received all As, they'd sent it to your hometown paper. [17:00] I'm sure they don't do that anymore. Then a little thing would appear in the paper, you know, Gloria Del Papa, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Del Papa – such-and-such a thing. And then you'd get copies of the newspapers back. You'd cut them out and you'd post them in the scrapbooks or something. Anyway, it was the news bureau and I worked there. And there, I met other people who were in English majors. And I thought they were having a swell time, and they were doing what I really wanted to do.

So, when I made the decision, again, I went to Dean Morriss in despair, and she gave me a note. And she sent me off to find Dr. Kapstein. He was a wonderful professor. His name was Israel J. Kapstein, K-A-P-S-T-E-I-N. He had written a novel which was more or less successful. He was the most marvelous teacher of literature and English that ever existed, as far as I'm concerned. And he was beloved by everybody. Brown men, [18:00] Pembroke girls.

And off I went with my little note. I met him in the Brown John Hay Library. At that time, *the* library. It was the John Hay. And he was in the smoking room and I appeared, this frightened person because I was fairly naïve in many ways, and informed him that I wanted to become an English major. And then and there in the smoking room, which was a little room up there, he made me out a schedule of what I should take. And you had to have approval. He became my advisor. That was it. I became an English major.

CF: That quick. Wow.

GEDP: That quick. And then I got to know him very well because I took all his courses. And I went on. But I majored, finally, in English. He was –

CF: And your father, he accepted it.

GEDP: He accepted it, I think primarily because he really didn't understand the whole thing. I can remember Dean Moore trying to explain to my father about what a liberal education was.

CF: And this is the – [19:00]

GEDP: Pembroke, yes, at the first interview. So, my father, more or less, felt...had the idea as an immigrant that you would go to college and you would become trained as something. "Well, doctor, OK. I can understand that you take premed." So, I can remember her doing the philosophy (inaudible) and I think he tried very hard to understand the philosophy. But he had a hard time with it because he felt, "Well, here you are. You're going to major in English. And when you come out, what are you going to do?" Well, I didn't know what I was going to do either. And I started out working at the telephone company of all places, which I didn't like. And after a year left, I became a teacher.

CF: So, what would you say was your most important influence at Brown?

GEDP: Do you mean an influence as far as what –

CF: As people that you've met, or perhaps a group of writers that you might have [20:00] met.

GEDP: Well, people. I guess it goes in different directions. Number one, and I think the girls that I met. I didn't meet many boys, or men, at that time. Number one, I was a heavy girl and my father, coming from the Italian background, dating was not allowed when you studied. Your job was – as a matter of fact, I remember when I moved into the dormitory, a [V12?], they were the sailors. They were all premed students, but they dressed in sailor uniforms. And they visited the girls, of course, in the dormitory but there were very strict rules. But when my father was moving me in, he saw what he thought was a sailor going into the dormitory, and he told me later, he was going to take me home and that was going to be it. But then he discovered that they weren't allowed above the first floor and all the crazy rules.

CF: Tell me some more about these crazy rules.

GEDP: Oh, well. Rules of the dormitory were, we could be visited. I think it was from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon [21:00] and from maybe 6:00 to 8:00 in the evening. But you entertained your friend in the living room of the dormitory. And all four feet had to be on the floor at all

times while you sat on the couch. I can remember the house mother saying that. I imagine – I never entertained any – but I imagined you could still I suppose, kiss and so forth, but you couldn't lift those feet up off the ground which I thought was a hilarious rule.

They were never allowed upstairs, of course, except on what was called "Open House," and then we'd all scrub up our rooms and open the doors and they were allowed to come up and visit.

And you couldn't have any liquor in your rooms at all. In fact, you would be expelled if you were found with liquor in your room other than medicinal purposes. I remember the girl across from me had brandy. That was because she had such terrible monthly cramps. She could have some brandy in her room. But other than that, [22:00] you'd be expelled.

You couldn't smoke in your rooms. And there was a smoking area. So, it was very strict. And at night, you had to say goodnight to your boyfriend outside the door. I can remember in the big dorms like Metcalf and Miller, I think they were there.

CF: Andrews wasn't there, right?

GEDP: No, Andrews was not built. (inaudible) Oh. You had to be in by a certain time and if you weren't, it was really considered ... – I think it was midnight, but it wasn't midnight all the time. You had so many late permissions a month. If you used them up – and I can't remember the details, but – and no one could let you in later either. We had the honor system. I mean for instance, you couldn't slip down and unlock the door for your friend because you were on the honor system not to do that, and there was a student board of disciplines. But it would be funny, in front of the doors, there would be all these couples saying goodnight to each other, all at the last minute, while the watchman was waiting to lock us all in again. It was [23:00] really funny. That was kind of a funny thing. But we didn't suffer for it. Those were the values of the day.

Imagine my father who thought he saw a sailor going in the first floor, if he ever knew about a (inaudible) or something like that, that would've been it. I mean, it just weren't thought of in those days.

CF: And you actually lived in a fraternity there.

GEDP: We lived in what was called a Delta Tau Delta, DTD house, and that was on Prospect Street. It was on a corner. It was a big old house with a nice rounded tower. I lived in a suite with two other girls. And I don't know how much that added to the bill. Probably another... maybe another \$400. So, maybe if you lived in the dorm, you paid \$1,000 a year.

And the reason that we were allowed in there was because the boys, there weren't enough boys. They were all off fighting. And they couldn't support the house. So, they must have made some arrangement with Pembroke to have girls in the house. [24:00] That's since been torn down, that house. It was right across from the church.

So, it was all girls and it was nice. That was a nice experience. I think it was warmer? than the big dormitories, than Metcalf/Miller. Although you had to wait. You were on a waiting list to get admitted in.

So, I was able to have both experiences. I think if I hadn't had that – you asked me about people who influenced me. Well, one was the girls. I made many, many good friends, some of whom are still my friends. And so I think that was a broadening experience for me because I met girls from all over. And I had sort of a more of a Catholic (inaudible) friendship than this paroch– you know, just knowing girls from (inaudible).

Professors had a profound influence on me. Not so much that any particular one became my friend except for Dr. Kapstein. I really had a case on him. But because they [25:00] were so – I thought they were good. Even though the best (inaudible). They were all off to war. I remember one, though. Professor Hunt, psychology professor. He was fairly young, and he was sort of in the reserves, but they allowed him to stay because he was doing important research that would have a bearing on the war, I guess.

So, our professors were older, but that didn't matter. Maybe I missed out. As I look back, think maybe I missed out on some of the younger. But these men were all very well established in their fields. They just were mindboggling to me because they opened the world of scholarship to me.

Professor Hastings was the Shakespearean scholar. Well, he was kind of dull in class sometimes, but he knew everything there was to know about Shakespeare. I wish I could think of the man's name who taught American Literature. It was forty years. But I remember really coming alive [26:00] to American Lit from him.

I can remember my biology professor, a woman. I only had one woman professor. See, I'm sure that's changed a lot. I can't remember her name, but we always used to laugh because she would – when it came lecture time to lecture on human reproduction, the story was that she would lower the blinds – she was embarrassed. And she was. And I guess she was a biologist, but she just couldn't –

CF: Was this a mixed class?

GEDP: This was all girls. No, the biology class was all girls. And so we couldn't wait for the reproduction lecture. And believe it or not – it sounds insane, but most of us didn't even know what a boy's anatomy looked like. I'm quite sure that that was my introduction, in these diagrams. We were really so sheltered in so many ways. I don't think I really understood. It wasn't until we got to talking with the girls in the dormitory that I learned. I actually really didn't know much about the [27:00] “facts of life.” One thing I learned at Pembroke along with everything else, between these discussions.

I remember Professor Kapstein, I think, was the one who had the most influence on me. He made me really love English and literature and writing and showed me what I could do. And I loved it, I critiqued it. I could say the one professor, he'd be the one that made the biggest influence.

Dean Lewis was very influential. I was active in several campus organizations.

CF: What organ– (inaudible)?

GEDP: Yeah. I was president of the city girls. I was on the Brun Mael staff. I was on – well, let's see. I was on several. I'm trying to – oh, I was on the newspaper. But then that stopped publication. [28:00] I was on the yearbook.

CF: Oh, the Pembroke – you were on the *Pembroke Record*?

GEDP: Yeah.

CF: And then when it merged –

GEDP: Yeah. I didn't –

CF: You didn't go on with it.

GEDP: I didn't go on with that. But it seemed to me I was always doing – in fact, I've got the Pembroke key from contributing. And I can't – maybe it was in there. I can't remember some of the organizations I belonged to, to tell you the truth. I know I was always into something. I was always active.

I remember the city girls, we established a mother/daughter banquet – no, tea – while I was there. That was one of our [inaugurations?]. So that the mothers of the city girls could come up and meet one another. Because it seemed like parents from out of town were always – when they came in, they always got these kinds of fancy things. I can't remember –

CF: Excuse me just a second. I want to make sure that the tape is still running. Oh, yep. It sure is.

GEDP: OK. Well, I can't really remem– I know that the yearbook took a lot of my time. The city girls organization took a lot. I was on student government. [29:00] There was a student government back then. I'm trying to think. I know I must have –

CF: It sounds like you were very, very busy.

GEDP: I was busy. Yeah. I loved it. I really loved college. In fact, I didn't want to leave, go out and face the world. That's why I wanted to postpone. The only I will say, going to school during the war was not the best experience. And I would wish that it had been otherwise, but that, you know. It wasn't a, what you'd call, normal college experience.

CF: Because of the need to – or the rationing and inability to travel?

GEDP: Well, the rationing didn't bother me. Now, that was – you had ration books and when you went to live at college, for example, you brought your ration book to the college. And some of the meals were terrible. We had hard boiled eggs with white sauce, it seems, more times – but that was unimportant to me at that time. I had enough and [30:00] that was not the thing.

The thing is that you'd get friendly with people and you felt that you never had a sense of, "This is my class." Because you would be friendly with someone, and they started with you, but then either they took a summer off or a winter off, or they went right through so that you never – you were always with different people. They weren't different in the sense that you knew you had all entered at the same time.

CF: There was no solidarity of graduating at the same time.

GEDP: No, but there was a nucleus of us, about ten or fifteen. They were very friendly. We kind of stayed together all the time. I think that was the salvation. It was very fragmented. For instance, if you look at the yearbook there, you'll see class of October. There's about 25 girls. They went in October. Then there's the class of February, another 30. And then June, there was the bulk of us, maybe 60 or 50.

But it's not normal. It's not good. And a couple of girls were married [31:00] because it was war years and some of them decided to get married. Now, I don't think that – at first, Pembroke – I don't think you could be married and go to Pembroke. So, I –

Track 2

GEDP: [00:00] – government association and that was more or less – well, as it says here, is the organization which bring about reforms and improvements at Pembroke. We were kind of like an overseeing board for all the things that went on social and club activities. But, again, if you look at these pictures, you'll see summer group, winter group in here. And they were different. Then there was the Question Club. See, that was made up – each girl is either the president of a major organization on campus or is the president of a senior semester. So you weren't even president of your senior year. You were president of a senior semester. I think I was president of my class, too, a few times, as I vaguely remember it.

So, here I am down here in the Spring board, the Spring Question Club. That was like, I suppose you'd call that the elite of the campus as far as activities. Elitists, you know. And then I didn't belong to the athletic association because I was a trial [01:00] to every – I was overweight and, what was her name?, Miss Rudd, Bessie Rudd – now, I should say, she had a great influence on me. And I detested her at first because when we went to Pembroke, they took these silhouette pictures of you. Do they still do that?

CF: No.

GEDP: You had to go and you stood in front of this sheet. On the back of this sheet, which was lighted, and the photographer on the other side. You didn't have anything on, alright? So, this silhouette of you appeared. Alright. Well, it'd be one front side. And this, I suppose, was to see what your posture and build was. And I can remember Miss Rudd throwing this thing – we had an interview there – throwing this thing on the desk and saying, “You realize that this would make two of any other girl at Pembroke College.” She was disgusted. She felt I was terrible overweight. Well, I was big, but I really wasn't an obese monstrosity. And she sent me to – put me on diets [02:00] constantly and sent me to the school psychiatrist – we used to have a school psychiatrist/psychologist – to see why I was overeating and all that. Because I never lost any weight. I just kept my merry way. So, there was a concerted effort to really make me lose weight.

CF: So, did you find that harmed you in any way or did you just kind of [hope they could just keep at and it would be better?]?

GEDP: Well, I don't think it harmed me then because I was too busy and I didn't find – I think the only thing it did was in social life. I think that's one benefit for me for going in the war years because there weren't enough men to go around anyway. So it didn't matter if you didn't date or you weren't popular in that way. But anyway, I was popular in my own way that mattered to me at the time. Doing my studies and belonging to these clubs and organizations, so it didn't bother me.

In fact, another thing that my father never could understand, nor could I, you were not allowed to graduate from Pembroke if you didn't pass the swimming test. [03:00] And the

swimming test consisted of four laps or something, up and down the pool. Well, I was not a swimmer. And they sent me down to the Plantations Club, and they made me take courses. Finally, at the very end, they let me do this mock test where Miss Rudd would turn around every once in a while and let me hang off the edge. Because I know what my father would've done if they'd ever said I couldn't graduate. "Would you rather have had a Phi Beta Kappa not graduating because she couldn't swim?" That's what they were threatening me with. Is it ludicrous? I think it's ludicrous.

CF: I think it's pretty silly. But you know they still, in a lot of colleges, they still have the requirement to pass a swimming test.

GEDP: Well, yes. I suppose it's for your own benefit. But I just wonder if it should go that far. And say, "No, I'm holding up your degree." Brun Mael was the yearbook and again, they weren't as nice as they could've been because in the war years, everything was stripped down, as you can see. Very few pictures and so forth. But it is a wonderful [04:00] record of years. I look back with real nostalgia. Dance Club, I didn't belong to any of those. City girls. Yeah, I was the President. That's – you can see I was big. You can see how a big person – I still am.

And this was the *Herald-Record*. I was only in on this at the beginning. But I just had too many things to do, so I came off this. And did you see here? This is interesting. During the war, they had a War Council. And then it went into – last year, it became the war into peace and that was just sort of studying international affairs and so forth. I didn't belong to that, but that was a nice, an interesting group (inaudible).

CF: I'm curious about the women who might've been married but kept it a secret.

GEDP: Well, we had this little ceremony at graduat– well, as I remember it. Now I could be foggy on this. I don't want to – you could not be married and remain at Pembroke. [05:00] You would have to leave. That was your choice. And so this Betty Brown – well, there was a ceremony that took place during the graduation. In fact, I think it was at that senior banquet that's in that newspaper there. You had a class flower – no, the flowers were – they weren't pressed ones. There were three flowers. There was a rose, and, I think, an iris, and a bachelor

button, I think. And I guess girls used to keep certain things a secret. I don't know. As I guess, it's a little misty, but I remember this big basket because I had to get the flowers for it.

If you were married – this was after they changed the rule that you could be married, you see? Now Betty was the one who kind of broke the ground, if I'm not mistaken. I think she became married and.. no...our senior year, she was married. So, somehow, they must've decided they had to change the rules for the war. Because [06:00] in my class, yeah, there were two, Sybil Kern, married, and I think they did because their husbands had gone to war, to service. So they did change that.

But anyway, to get back to these flowers, at this banquet, you'd pass this basket around and if you took – I'm trying to think. The bachelor buttons were for girls who had no boyfriends and weren't engaged and nothing. This is where you would announce your intentions, I guess. I guess you took a rose if you were engaged. I can't remember that. It was by the flowers and, oh, there'd be much oohing and ahing. Because that's how girls would announce their engagement, their plans to get married, I guess, by picking this flower. That's kind of foggy in my mind, but I remember.

And I think there was something in there if you were married. Because we learned that a couple of girls had been married the whole senior year, but we didn't know it – by what they picked. But someone else in my class would know better than I do. Don't remember it too well.

CF: Was there a ceremony like this [07:00] for the men?

GEDP: I'm sure not. I'm sure not. No. And the men, of course, were a much bigger class and, you know, there was also that, too, that feeling that we were Pembroke girls. And there was a little bit of looking down by the Brown men. And we were going over for the first time, all our classes over on the Brown campus. And that was something new. And the professors weren't really as used to that, a mixed class as –

CF: Was this recently – during – did this happen during the war years?

GEDP: During the war years. During the war years. And we'd walk across and they weren't – I had only class at Pembroke while, I think. And I think maybe the professors must have come.

And I don't remember whether or not the classes were – I think as undergraduates, you were more or less segregated. I think in your sophomore and freshman year, when you were taking your D-courses and things, I think probably they were mostly all-girl classes. [08:00] And when you got into specialization or into the sciences, you got off over into the other campus. This was before the war.

But then when the war came, everybody was all jumbled together. In fact, there was a room called the Blue Room in Faunce House. The Blue Room was really a lovely – like a lounge with nice easy chairs and a restaurant-type thing. And women had never been allowed in there until the war. And then once the war came, I guess in order to keep it afloat financially, the Pembroke girls were allowed to just walk in without a date. Until that time, you had to go in there with a date. So, where were we? I kind of lost the trend.

CF: So have I.

GEDP: I was going off on these things.

CF: Well, why don't we continue on with more – you were talking about people who've influenced you. I'm curious as to you had high regards for Professor Kapstein. Did he start advising you in career choices [09:00] or what did you start to consider –

GEDP: We didn't get much in the way of advisorship on career choices. There wasn't time, somehow. In fact, these advisors that you went to, I really – that's where I feel skimmed in my college. I'm sure now, people go to Brown – now, of course, they pick their own major, it seems. In those days, your major was pretty cut and dry. But you just kind of took the courses. You did well. You got to know your professors, but you didn't get that closeness that you might get now. You know what I mean? Have long conferences with them or lots of long, leisurely seminar courses. You just didn't have those. Had some classes with only ten in them.

George Anderson was another professor that I liked very much. He, in fact, had written a textbook, basic text on (inaudible) English Lit. He was a very fine man. And [Vin?] Brown, I was definitely afraid of. [10:00] My English professors made a great impression on me. They

were very literary men. They were all older. I think they were all extremely knowledgeable in their fields. And, to me, it was a first.

I'd had a sort of provincial, a small town high school education. Although I wasn't – I mean I was able to hold my own with girls from all over, so they must have done something for me. But each man was unique. They were all men, you'll notice. I didn't have a woman professor except for that who was in biology.

CF: So, once you were faced with graduation –

GEDP: Well, I had this problem. See, I had this real split, a real dichotomy pulling at me. My father, "OK, what are you going to do now," that type of thing. I think my father's mentality was, you graduate from college and you go to work. If you graduate Saturday, you go to work Monday. And in those days, it was the war. Not that many went on to Master's degrees. That's changed. I got a Master's degree [11:00] in Education later. But you mostly all just went off to either marry – many of the girls married, and that was that. And they raised families and some of them never had jobs. Some of my classmates went to working and maybe it was only about 20 years ago. One's an interior decorator now, but she had been married. She raised her children. Many of them did that in my day. A few of us who weren't married or going with anybody.

So, I was looking into – yeah. I didn't know what I was prepared to do. And for some reason, when I graduated, I wasn't interested in the teaching and I had always been. That's why I wanted to go to RICE at the beginning. And this job opening was sort of like a training program with the telephone company for managerial positions. You'd start out as a service representative, but the idea was that you had a college education and you were going to – it was like a management training. You could be a manager of some kind eventually.

But I didn't [12:00] like it. It wasn't for me. Although when I left, they wanted me to stay, but that's when I went to apply to be a teacher. And I started in elementary school because after the war, the men were coming back, and they had all the high school jobs. So, I taught in elementary school which, was hard, but I went to take my education classes and I loved it. I think teaching was what I really was destined to do. I don't regret a day of it. Eventually, I taught in high school and I was head of the English department at Shea High School.

CF: So, you started in elementary school and –

GEDP: Started in kindergarten. It was called “pre-primary,” and I really – that was very difficult for me. And, I’m sure, difficult for the children. I wasn’t a trained kindergarten person. They’d plunked me in there. But then I went on –

CF: Was this in the area?

GEDP: Right in Pawtucket. And then I went on and became an elementary teacher, and I loved it. I was going to go for principalship and then I decided no. I’d like to teach and I want [13:00] to tea– finally, there were openings in the high schools after about 15 years. I taught all the grades. Yeah, I taught all the grades.

Oh, yeah. There were no openings at all. I liked what I was doing, too, so I didn’t push it. I really liked teaching, I can honestly say. And I think that’s the case of a liberal background. I think the fact that I wasn’t just – didn’t go just to the school of education and learned all those methods courses, I was probably, I think, a better teacher. I took all those education courses afterwards. To me, half of them were worthless. And I think the fact that I had to have this, even though it was rushed – you know, restricted in some ways – I think the fact that I had the full – I agree with Dean Moore’s explanation to my father that this rounded education prepares you for what you’re going to do, whatever it is. And I think it did make me a better teacher. I really do.

And then eventually – but I said, I have all this English background. English is my first [14:00] love. So, I finally demanded a transfer and got one. And then I became head of the English department. So, I had both. It was nice. And I hope I affected a few changes and certainly was involved in getting some of my better students to go to Pembroke, trying to encourage them. I think I tried to be a good role model to them for a liberal education. I never put down any other kind, but I was always very proud of going to Brown. I liked the fact that I’m a Brown graduate. I liked my school, and as I said, it’s – and I don’t go back there all the time, either. But I don’t know whether you feel that way. I do feel – maybe it was because the war things brought us closer. It was very much a part of our lives. I don’t know why I have that feeling, but I do.

CF: Did you receive a lot of encouragement once you started in with the teaching? Or did you really have to strike out on your own?

GEDP: I [15:00] found that a majority of the teachers I taught with either came from PC, Providence College, or Rhode Island College of Education. There weren't many Brown graduates then. Even now, there aren't that many. Maybe...I don't know why that was. Maybe more Brown graduates left and went on to bigger cities to do other things, but I couldn't. My family culture – to go away was not done, and I didn't have the courage to strike out on my own.

But I didn't find it was any – I didn't feel superior or anything. But I was always glad that I had that. I always felt it added dimension to me as a teacher, and helped me to be a better teacher. I certainly felt my background, academically, was stronger than the people who went to the Rhode Island College. Maybe not PC people, but I do feel [16:00] – now, I wouldn't say that's true today, but in those days, it was. I think an awful lot of training and methods classes and not as much content.

But a lot of people in my class have done interesting things, but I don't think that my class has been outstanding in the sense that we've had a lot of published authors, or great leaders, but I think it's been a good solid class. I think they've been very supportive of the college.

CF: Did you find, was there any pressure to get married or did you – how did you feel finding, perhaps, all the women that you went to school with were all –

GEDP: Well, that was kind of difficult in a way. First of all, I did feel, as I said, during the war years, because it was the war years, I didn't feel that I was – I couldn't go to a dance. I went to one [17:00] once and, you know, nobody wants to dance with a heavy girl. I was kind of a pretty girl and so that wasn't that. And I had a nice personality. I'm not – but no boy is going to come over, particularly – I was not what they were looking for. I went to one dance (inaudible) afternoon tea dances or something. Mixes. It was just a terrible experience. And I couldn't even dance well, so I never went back to another one.

But most of the girls were marrying nice up-and-coming young businessmen. And then they eventually had homes and two or three children. You know, the regular thing. It never bothered me, really. It really didn't. The only thing – I used to laugh because everybody became

three names, all of a sudden. You were, like, “Betty Lipkin Brown,” or you were “Mary Smith –” whatever your husband’s name was. And we used to laugh and say we were [18:00] one of the few that were just the two-namers. In fact, I remember Miss Rudd’s meeting me after about five years and saying, “Who are you now? Gloria Del Papa what?” And I said, “Just Gloria Del Papa.” But we were in the minority, the ones who didn’t marry. Definitely.

I have one vague memory about a girl, a Japanese girl. Her name is June Suzuki. She’s in my class, a lovely girl. Now, I’m sure she couldn’t have been put into an intern camp because she’s in here as having graduated. But I think her family must have been. But I can remember her talking to us at chapel about that, about her family, and our being very disturbed because her family had been put – you know, Japanese were put into these camps.

And now, since then, they’ve written all these books about it and all, but I can remember our being very disturbed in one way. And yet, in another way, our accepting that as though it was something that was OK. [19:00] I can’t believe we did that. It must have been the war. Can you imagine? Just calmly accepting that the government would scoop up all these people, June Suzuki’s mother and father, our classmate’s mother and father, and take them off. It was really horrendous when you think of it. We were disturbed but I don’t think we did anything. We didn’t demonstrate or anything. Pretty sad, when you think of it.

But the war really intruded, and yet, it didn’t. You know what I’m trying to say? The men marched (inaudible) would march across the campus in their squadrons. And the V12ers, they had terrible pressure. I can remember that they had to pass their courses, and if they didn’t, they’d be washed out and would just go into the regular Navy. And it was terrible pressure. They would do anything to stay in. I mean, they might even cheat on exams or anything if they could.

I can remember a V12 sitting next to me on a [20:00] science exam. Even though I hated the science, I always studied enough, so I knew. And begging me to let him see my paper. And that was not done. We worked on the honor system. It just wasn’t done. But I just couldn’t – he was giving me this – that he’d be probably dead in six months if he washed out. So I kind of moved my paper so he could see my answers. And I never had any....I never felt badly that I did that even though it was – I felt (inaudible) help this kid make it. I don’t know whether he ever did.

But the irony of it was, later on, I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. A story came back to me that I had been doing the cheating. They remembered that I had copied from someone’s exam

in biology or something. They saw the movement of the paper, I guess. But then I could've said, had I known, "Well, you didn't stick to [21:00] the honor code. You should've reported me." But that was just the kind of pressure you were under. Those boys were – they had to stay in so they could go on to medical school. Otherwise, they'd have to go out into the war area.

It was all a not very good atmosphere or (inaudible). But people were happy. My girlfriend went with...my girlfriend, my roommate went with a meteorologist. She loved him dearly. Then he was sent away. Well, then, all of us, all we did was wait for the mail to come. "Where is he? Is he going to write?" So forth.

CF: A lot of courage all around, really.

GEDP: Yeah. It was. But then, in another way, the men all looked so – the ones, when they came back, they were mostly officers. And they had these lovely uniforms, and all that glamour, too. We never saw the ugly side of it until we began to get some of the repercussions. But these glamorous uniforms, we all loved. They were wonderful. There was an [22:00] aura of not reality about everything.

So, I don't know what else, what other things you'd like me to –

CF: Well, I just thought –

GEDP: Seems I've talked on and on for somebody who didn't think she had enough to say.

CF: Is there any other memories? Any observations you'd like to make? Do you have any – I guess you could call it gracious living?

GEDP: Well, I learned a great deal. Well, I think Pembroke did give me that, too. I came from a very plain background. We didn't go out to restaurants much or didn't have any – I learned a great deal about social life at Pembroke, surprisingly enough. Living at the dorm, too. I can remember being extremely nervous when I first went to live in the dorm. And we sat at tables of eight, at the dining table. And the headmistress, the house mother, we ate at Metcalf or Miller. We had to walk for ours. [23:00] I think it was Metcalf we ate at. And she'd say a grace and

everything was served, and I remember being so nervous that I wasn't going to use the right spoon because the settings were different. But I learned, you know.

And, of course, I learned about teas, afternoon teas, and things like that that I had never known. I guess I did get a sort of finishing at Pembroke, too, besides my studies. I met lovely ladies like Margaret Morriss and Dean Lewis and they were gracious ladies. And I watched and observed them. And I'm sure that they taught me a great deal about how to get along and rubbed off some of my rough edges. Because I was, I'm sure, kind of doltish as far as social graces went.

Travel was very much a part of my life. We went two days a week to chapel in Sayles Hall. What's the [24:00] Pembroke Hall? Now what's the one? Sayles, isn't it?

CF: Sayles.

GEDP: Yeah. We would have a speaker one day a week, I think. I forget what the other one was, but there was chapel. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we went to chapel. And we'd all get together. Seniors would wear their robes to that, and we'd sing a hymn and –

CF: What do you mean by a robe?

GEDP: Seniors would wear their graduation robes. You'd get them at the end of your junior year. Usually either you bought a new one, or what you did is, you'd buy one from a senior and they were kept in a cloakroom down there. And you would put them on.

And that makes me think of a funny story. We were always reminded by Dean Morriss that we represented Pembroke when we walked between the Pembroke campus over to Brown. And she was always telling us that we were not a – she'd get up, and some of these things were told to us gently. That we were not off somewhere –

CF: Was chapel separate from the men's chapel? [25:00]

GEDP: Yes. This was only just all women. And she said that we were not lucky enough to be off on a campus somewhere remote. We were in the city and that there were several people around,

and we were to always be aware of that. So, one thing, we were never to smoke. We could never have a cigarette in our hands walking between campuses.

And I can remember that we used to put our robes on over whatever we had. And although I never wore shorts because I was a city girl and no one commuted in 1945 in shorts. We just didn't. But some of the girls – and I guess that some of the neighbors called the dean to complain about that. And we were not to wear our robes, which were symbols of academics and a higher honor over such things as shorts. We were to be properly attired and so forth. These were some of the things that were serious discussion at chapel. [26:00] Kind of funny.

CF: So, you couldn't kinda cheat and wear shorts either, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

GEDP: You were expected to be... What it was is, you were a Pembroke girl, and you were expected to live up to a certain standard, especially for those neighbors. Many of whom, I suppose now, might've been contributors to the school or graduates of the school or upper-east-side ladies or whatever. Because it was different in my... many wealthy people around there in those days, too. But it's changed because the history is not – the bookstore was some small hubbly over on Influence House, the Brown bookstore. It wasn't terribly small, but it wasn't huge. And it wasn't a business the way it is now.

And then we had access to the Brown pool. There was a lovely library on Pembroke. That's one thing that I loved. And the librarian – it's terrible. I can't remember names. But she [27:00] had a great effect on me. She was a lovely lady who – the Pembroke library was a lovely place. The men could come to it, but they didn't choose to very often. Is it still there, the Pembroke library?

CF: Do you mean the third floor of Pembroke Hall?

GEDP: Of Pembroke Hall, yes.

CF: It's still there.

GEDP: It had a fireplace which was often lit. We had easy chairs and tables. And the librarian, I got to know very much. In fact, she tried to encourage me to go to librarian school. I was kind of sorry afterwards I didn't do that. I might've gone in a whole different direction, you know? But it was a lovely place to be. And there was another little side room where, when we broke from our studies, we could go have a snack. And just had nice times there.

Whereas the Brown, the John Hay Library, was all business. You sat in your carrolls and you studied hard and so forth.

CF: You'll have to forgive me. John Hay is [28:00] now – I never went. I always went to the science building.

GEDP: OK. That's the big white building next to the – isn't there the Rockefeller Library?

CF: Right. OK.

GEDP: And there's a white –

CF: So, it's on Prospect Street.

GEDP: Right. Right across from the Van Wickle Gates. That was the library, you know.

The other thing I did want to mention, the last year changed, too, because the soldiers were gone. But then we had the big influx of men coming back from the war, many of them older, who, under the GI bill, were coming back to school. So, that was another whole experience. They really weren't young boys, anything like young boys would be. They were very serious-minded. They had been through a terrible war and now they wanted their education.

So, I don't think we ever saw much of the crazy hijinks boys. None of that. We never did because it just wasn't done. [29:00] A few civilians who were around, I think most of them must have felt strange with all the – it was war and – although many of them, I'm sure, were glad not to have to go off to – they were there. I think they had to be taking certain courses in order to stay.

CF: So, just premed students?

GEDP: Premed and things like that. But even with all of its rush it was an experience and I, I really ... for a while long after I was active in the Pembroke Club and kept ties very closely with the college. I always feel, though, that you're always welcome back at Brown. I don't know whether you as a recent graduate feel that – well, you work there. But, I mean, are you working on any advanced degrees out at –

CF: No. I'm working for a biology professor.

GEDP: Oh. And we had some – that was a very fine department. Walter Wilson was one of my professors. The lab is named after him. And he was a very – oh, I was afraid of him because he [30:00] was really a very brilliant man. And I was new. I was misplaced. I had had this Professor Swan, who was very nice, in Imperative Something-or-Other. But Professor Wilson was a really exalted member of the profession as you can see. Must have had a great reputation because the building was named after him. We recognized him as really something.

Other than that, the years fade. And although the people had a great influence on you, you didn't keep touch with them. But I just remember it as a whole, as a whole entity that was a very important part of my life. Really. I guess everybody might feel that way about college. But I do particularly. I'm glad my father said, "You're going to Pembroke!"

See, I still talk about it as Pembroke. Isn't that funny? But if people ask me, [31:00] I'll say I graduated from Brown now. But I used to always say, "I'm a graduate of Pembroke College." And people might say, "Well, where is that?" Then you'd say it's in Brown, and they'd say, "Oh, yes." They know Brown. Well, now, I think they –

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