

Transcript – Class of 1972, 50th Reunion

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Amanda Knox: Good afternoon, or good morning, depending where you are in the country. My name is Amanda Knox. I'm the Assistant Archivist at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women at Brown University. It is Tuesday, May 10, 2022. It is 4pm Eastern time. And I am here recording the 2022 50th reunion class, the class of 1972. I'm so happy to have all of you here today with me to capture your memories as we look back on your time at Brown 50 years out from graduation, if you can believe it. So, I'd like to just start by sort of going around our little Zoom Room here and introducing ourselves. I'll sort of call on you as I see you on my screen and then we can sort of get going with the interview. If you'd like, share where you're zooming from, maybe what you're doing in your lives now, [1:00] just some brief introductions. And Joan, if you don't mind, I'd like to start with you.

Joan McDonald DeFinis: Oh, okay. Well, I'm Joan McDonald, and my married name is DeFinis. I live in Middletown with my husband, and I'm retired. I work, I'm a trustee for the local library. And I'm also involved with the Lifelong Learning Program at URI, so University of Rhode Island, and I'm on the Finance Committee there. So, and that's, that's been interesting. I've been doing that for about five years. For those who don't know what that is, it's really just taking classes in a variety of topics, no grades, just like at Brown. No tests. Really just for enrichment. And it varies from horseback riding to American history to learning Italian. And our [2:00] challenge recently has just been COVID, of course, for every, for everything because we were shut down and couldn't do any classes. And we rely heavily on course fees and membership fees. So we're slowly getting back to normal, whatever that is. And I think, I think that's it. That's pretty much it. I have two children. One is a nurse working in Boston, and one is in real estate development. And he's on, he lives on the Cayman Islands. So, he's, he has a nice, he has a nice life there with his family. And one granddaughter.

AK: Thank you so much. Karen, would you like to go next?

Karen Leggett Abouraya: Sure. I'm Karen Leggett Abouraya with both, both names there. And Joan mentioned that she was retired and then listed all the things she's doing. And I, I feel the same way. I'm technically retired, I'm not really earning much money at anything, but I'm busier than I was [3:00] when I was working full time. I grew up in Ohio and came to Brown and, and looked for, I think Brown chose me in part for some geographical diversity. There weren't many other people from, from Ohio or even the Midwest. But I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and made some very close friends several of whom are, are on this, this call. And followed up with a career, a first career as a radio journalist because I'd been a, I'd worked at WBRU. So, I did that. And then I traveled a bit and came back and had a 20-year career in broadcast journalism here in Washington. And then I wrote a children's book and that opened a new door for me. I've written a couple and I'm working on, on a few more. And I'm very involved in children's literature and that opened all sorts of doors. I also married an Egyptian and that opened a few more doors. And I had a daughter with some developmental disabilities and that opened some new opportunities. [4:00] So I'm involved in all of those arenas now. I live in Rockville, right outside Washington, DC.

AK: Thank you so much. Linda.

Linda Papermaster: Hi. Well, I actually also came from the Midwest. I came from Minnesota. And I remember there were only five women from Minnesota who went to our class at Brown. And I, actually one of them I've kept in touch with because she lives 50% of the year in California and 50% a year in Florida. And so, we've gotten back in touch. And actually, I've stayed in touch with a lot of Brown alumni in California because I've been very active in alumni, Brown Alumni Organization. It's interesting, because when I moved out here in '77, we had, there were only two remnants of the old Pembroke Club, one in Providence and one in Los Angeles. And we [5:00] had a lot of really interesting women in that group and I was a regular. I started when I moved out [inaudible]. I was a regular attendee in that and it was really nice to meet these older women who were very competent and, and then learn about, you know what things were like years ago. I mean, there was one lady I was very good friends who graduated in

1917. And she's obviously no longer with us, but you know, it's funny now for me to, when I go back to campus and there's now people from 2017. It's, you know, that's, you know, one amazing thing. But anyway, I'm retired now, too. And I'm actually a full-time grandma, and I have one, I have five grandchildren, sixth on the way. And I have two grandchildren who live near me and one of them is in preschool. And so, I'm, the, my full-time job now is picking her up from preschool and spending the afternoons with her. And I enjoy that. Anyway. [6:00]

And also, my, well, I was very active at Brown. Well, I was one of the I think, I think Karen, weren't you in coed college the first year? Am I mixing you up with someone else?

KLA: No, I didn't live there. But I –

LP: I know. So, see, I'm so I was part of the experiment. Sally moved in the next year. She was there next year, but I was in the experiment of coed living at Brown. And I think I'm the only, maybe I'm the only one on the call on that. So that, I feel like I'm that part of Brown history. Because, you know, that was really interesting. When we lived at Brown and we had any problem with housing, you'd go to the Brown Housing Offices, and they'd say, "Oh, well, you know, you're a Pembroker, go to Pembroke Housing Office." And you go to the Pembroke Housing and say, "Well you live in the Brown dorms, you have to go to the Brown Housing Office." And you know, so. And we also had the issue. When it was, it was Brown and Pembroke, if you if you needed a job, you know, the Pembroke Placement Office, all they had was babysitting jobs. And you weren't allowed to use the Brown Placement Office, [7:00] because it was for the men. And luckily they merged that summer before our senior year, so our senior year, we actually were looking for jobs, we were allowed to use the Brown Placement Office. I did use that for looking for jobs after I graduated, but I actually wasn't lucky in getting a job that way. But it helped.

I'd say we were, our class really was there during a lot of the changes at Brown because our freshman year, you know, we had parietals, we had, we had curfews we had, we had all these rules. And by our sophomore year, we had no rules. And, and so we were really there at a time of change. And I think it's important for us to talk about these things that changed. You know, like, I was friends with a couple guys who were at Brown when we were there, but they'd started in the '60s and got kicked out, out of Brown for different reasons. One guy got kicked out, because

he was, he had a case of beer on the Pembroke campus and got kicked out of school for that. And these two guys actually went, and you know, they got kicked out of Brown. [8:00] They actually went and fought in Vietnam and then came back and were back finishing up their bachelor's degree when we were there. And that's really interesting, because here was a guy who actually had to go, you know, risked his life in Vietnam because he had a case of beer on campus and when he came back, beer was all over the place. I'm just saying we were there at a time of a lot of changes. And I, and I think as we're recording this history I think that's an important thing for us to talk about is all the change that we experienced from between, you know, from between our freshman year and our senior year. Okay, thank you.

AK: That is absolutely high on my list. I, those stories are exactly what I'm hoping to capture today. But before we get there, let's continue with our introductions. And Sally, if I may, you're you're next.

Sarah "Sallie" Lloyd Wolf: Hi. So I'm Sally. I was Lloyd, my married name is Wolf. I'm married to Chuck Wolf, also class of '72, [9:00] who I met freshman week of freshman year. And I live outside Chicago. I'm an artist and a writer. I write children's books. And what else am I supposed to say?

AK: Whatever you like or nothing at all up to you.

SLW: Well, I applied early decision. So, I think I applied to Pembroke in 1966, getting in in the fall of '66 – Entering in the fall of '68 knowing I was going in the fall of '67. I applied to old Pembroke. The thing that to me represents old Pembroke is the gym uniforms we were required to wear.

LP: And you know what? Our class was the last class that had [10:00] those gym uniforms. The next class, they set up a thing to buy our old ones and not buy a new one. Our classes last class. They usually had a different color sweatshirt for the gym uniforms. And our class was the last class that had that.

SLW: Right. So that's, that's who I am.

AK: Thank you, Lucy.

Lucy Meadows: Hi there, everybody. I was Lucy Richardson while I was at, in college, and I changed my name to Meadows. It is not a married name. It's a long funny story, I'll tell you sometime. But I changed it after my daughter was, our daughter was born because I thought Richardson was just way too patriarchal a name to pass on to a daughter or keep for myself.

So, I love Brown. I had a very agated career since. I'm currently a career and life coach. And I've had about at least three different careers before that, including international development, which was a lot of fun. And [11:00] I'm married to Bob Murray, who was class of '73, but we didn't connect until about 1989 or '90 when we met by accident much later, and then got married and had a baby when I was 41. And so, I'm just glad she has a live-in boyfriend, let alone grandchildren. It's fine. So, I have a good life here in Milton, Massachusetts. I hope a bunch of you are going to the reunion. I can't wait to see you.

AK: Thank you, Eileen. You're on mute. And for those who are you looking back on this interview 50 years from today, that is a term that we hear in every single meeting.

Eileen Rudden: Hi, I'm Eileen Rudden and I grew up in Nutley, New Jersey and went to an all-girls Catholic High School. And you know, [12:00] going to Brown was a pretty big change for me. It opened a huge number of doors. And I've had a probably a varied career like, like most of you, I spent most of my career in technology, which I always laugh at, because I never finished my applied math degree at Brown because I didn't see any role models. And then wound-up spending, you know, my career in technology primarily in software. I'm one of the people who brought you email. And for the past 12 years in education. I served as the Chief of College and Career Preparation for the Chicago Public Schools. And I founded a nonprofit called Learn Launch that has been focused on bringing new innovative techniques, including technology-based techniques, into the [13:00] education system. And so, I am a board member primarily at this point of organizations that are national education, nonprofits, and several ed tech companies. And I married Josh Posner class of '71. We have three sons, and they are now all married. And I,

as I was saying in the beginning, have just been – I live in Cambridge, Mass, but I am currently in Brooklyn, greeting grandson, grandchild number five in six years. So the family's growing.

AK: Thank you so much. And last but not least, Ann.

Ann Seelye: Thank you. Hi, everybody. So good to see you. I'm living in Beaufort, South Carolina. I lived in Brookline, Massachusetts; first Baltimore then [14:00] Brookline for 27 years and then ended up down here in the low country. And I love it down here. It's between Savannah and Charleston along the coast. So, the beach – I bought a house, I bought my first house by myself last year, it's been one year. And the beach is about 20 minutes down the road. So I'm grateful to be here.

I, I've related to something everybody has said as I thought about – So I got into Pembroke off the waiting list. So, I didn't know I was in until May I guess. The letters went out, anyway I think it was early May, so. And yes, I, when I think about our four years in college, just huge changes. I remember the sit-down meals. I lived in East Andrews and so the old dorm and sit-down dinners. We waited until they opened the doors [15:00] and we'd go in and sit down and was served. I forget if it was family style, or I think people came around and served us, it was very formal. And I'd been to boarding school, so dining room eating was, I was used to that. And the switchboard and no, you know, and you know, they call your room and say, "You have, you have a gentleman caller down here." Then we'd go down and meet whoever it was in the lounge. Yeah, lots and lots of changes.

So, I'm working part time, also have done many different things, most of them having the thread of teaching, starting with second grade, up to life coaching and personal training and various things in between. And I have one daughter, and one four-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter, [16:00] whom I'm, I'm going to see them after the reunion because they live in New England. So that'll be fun. And that's, that's enough for starters.

AK: Thank you so much, everyone. So, let's just sort of kick it off. My first question. You were coming in, in '68. So, like, everything's happening in the world in '68, right. And so, how did you decide that your next step was going to be Pembroke College, Brown University. And here, I'll just – jump in as you feel like it.

JD: Well, I, I had a little different experience, because I was born and raised in Rhode Island. And my mother's family lived on the East Side. [17:00] My grandfather was a blacksmith. And so, for entertainment on Sundays, we would go for drives. That was what you did, or at least that's what we did in the '50s and '60s. Now you can't drive anywhere because of the traffic. But we almost always ended up to see what was going on in the old neighborhood. And they lived off of Hope Street and so we often drove by the Brown campus. And I, and around when I was, when I was around 12 I think, I started thinking about going to college because no one in my family had been to college at that point. My older sister went into business school. And, and so we're driving by the Brown campus and that was my only experience with college, a college. And I thought, well, this is a pretty nice-looking place, I think this is the where I'll go. And then it just worked out really [18:00] nicely.

But yeah, 1968 was, wasn't just what was going on with us personally, of course, it was the Civil Rights Movement, it was the war in Vietnam. There was, there was a lot of turmoil politically. Not so unlike now, in a way there was some polarization. There was quite a bit of that going on. But I just loved, I loved Brown. And Pembroke I thought was a nice, you know, was just a nice way to start to get acclimated. And we had our smaller dining halls, like Ann said, and our food was much better. So, yeah,

ER: Yeah. I mean, I grew up outside of Newark, and 19 – that, this was the year that both Martin Luther King and [19:00] Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. And there were riots in, you know, outside the houses of some of you know, the girls that I grew up with and went to school with. I, that summer, was actually in a National Science Foundation summer program at Brown that I had been selected for, because I guess I had high PSAT scores. But at my school that, you know, I was the only person who applied to an Ivy League school the following year. And most of the, the nuns had advised, you know, various all girl Catholic schools to me. It was, it was, as you said, a time of great upheaval, which we saw when we arrived at Brown. I mean, our freshman year the Black students walked out

KLA: I remember that, that walk out because [20:00] I grew up in a very not diverse high school. It was a good high school outside Akron, Ohio. But the only diversity was that we had Catholics and Protestants. And that was –

SLW: We didn't even have that.

ER: Diversity in my world was, you know, Italian Catholics, Polish Catholics, Irish Catholics. I love the term diversity.

KLA: Yeah, that's right. It means something very different. And I had, it's interesting, Eileen, that you mentioned the National Science Foundation Scholarship. I had one the previous summer to go to Mount Hermon in Massachusetts and studied economics. And that was sort of my introduction to New England schools, and colleges. And I looked and I liked the coordinate idea of Pembroke, which lasted all of a year once I got there. I thought that that was going to provide more leadership development opportunities. There were those opportunities, but it wasn't because it was Pembroke. And of course, everything, everything changed. [21:00] And I certainly, we were all nodding with it, with everything that was mentioned at the time. And I do remember the walk, I remember being very supportive of the walkout, even though I had no sort of personal identification with anything that, that those students were walking out for. It was sort of a new world to me. I had come from a pretty sheltered, sheltered experience in Ohio.

LP: You know, it's interesting, everyone's talking about that, the walkout, that walkout the end of that, the big issue of that walkout, they said that Blacks were 11% of the population, and they wanted 11%, Blacks at Brown, that was their motto for that walkout. And, you know, it's been more than 50 years, because that was in the fall of '68. It has now been 54 years, and I don't think Brown has ever met that goal of 11%. And I think the big reason is there just aren't enough qualified Black candidates. [22:00] However, you do notice when you I go to reunion, I come back to reunions on a regular basis and there are a lot more Black students there now than when we were there. And there are a lot more Black alumni, but it's we've never reached that 11% goal.

SLW: That is, that's a tough goal because –

LP: Yeah.

SLW: I think the Ivy's, the little Ivy's –

LP: Yeah.

SLW: Are all competing for the same pool.

LP: Right.

SLW: When they maybe need to look wider. I, having read Michelle Obama's book. I mean, she, she ended up at Princeton, right? Which was not coed when we all applied to school.

LP: That's right.

SLW: But she grew up right around the University of Chicago and had no idea that that was a great school. I think, [23:00] I think that people need to make themselves known more and particularly look at your own neighborhoods.

I, I applied to Pembroke because I wanted a coordinate school. There were very few coed schools in New England at the time, and none of the size that Brown was. You could go to Middlebury, one or two others that were, I thought too small and too isolated. So your choices were Tufts/ Jackson, Radcliffe/ Harvard, and Pembroke/ Brown. I wanted to go to Radcliffe, but I applied to Pembroke because Radcliffe didn't have early admission. And I was, I wasn't sure coming out of my school in Virginia if I was Ivy League caliber. [24:00] I really had, I think I had a fairly mediocre high school experience. But I did, I wanted to get out of Virginia, like anything. I want, and I wanted to be more than one day drive from home. So, I ended up at Pembroke and never regretted it.

LM: I literally couldn't wait for –

SLW: And we flew up together.

LM: I still remember that day. I similarly wanted desperately to get out of Virginia to a place which I imagined was less racist, more progressive. I'm, looking back on the Black walkout, I'm continually stunned how oblivious I was during college of race and class despite all the efforts of ourselves to enlighten ourselves, but it's really been a lifelong journey. [25:00] But feminism was the place that I gained the most, I think while I was there, but, but I loved it. It was a good decision.

KLA: One thing that I especially appreciated, and it didn't have to do with political issues, but very specifically with Brown, but I appreciated it, was when we had all the curriculum changes at the time as well toward the end of our time. And that's when we started the New Curriculum, which was the New Curriculum for 30 years. Under that title, maybe even more. But it opened things up, it enabled us whether it was pass fail, or whatever else, it enabled us to study all kinds of unusual things and try things. And I was very glad to see the current *Brown Alumni Monthly* has it, has a story of three students who are right around class of '22, '21, and they, it was talking about the impact of the pandemic, and I don't really and how they [26:00] had discovered things during the pandemic that they ended up perhaps following as career choices. One was going to pre-med and, and ended up becoming, or is on the path now to becoming a chef; and another one started out with some tick tock videos and is now planning to work in, in tech areas that he never imagined. And I thought that it was not so much the pandemic that led to those changes, but the openness of Brown, and Pembroke, to those kinds of ideas and possibilities and, and non-traditional careers. I don't think any of us here has necessarily had what we would consider a traditional career starting at point A at, in a corporation and working up the ladder. We've all done very different, interesting things at different points in our lives. And I credit, Brown was sort of teaching us or imbuing us with the, with the sense that that was okay. We could try a lot of different things and maybe do it for five [27:00] years, or 10 years, or six months, but find something useful to do and do it, and then try something else. And that opportunity to try new things, I think was, was part of what I enjoyed it at Brown.

JD: You know, I think that's true. I was, it's interesting you mentioned the *Brown Alumni Monthly*, Karen, because when I read that, I am really struck by the innovation, the creativity, the imagination, of the students, and what they put together and how well supported they are

globally, if they want internship opportunities overseas, you know, internationally. And, and when, when it first came, when it first started, I don't think anyone was really prepared. I don't think the university knew exactly how they were going to structure things. The, the faculty was surprised. And I think the students [28:00] as much as we were intrigued by it, it was really shocking. I mean, all our, all our lives, everything was measured, everything was tested. And that was you know, just how we, we were used to learning. And then suddenly, if I remember, if you if it wasn't in your major, that's where you sort of experimented in your non-majors, in your electives and picking pass/ no credit. It wasn't even pass/fail. It was pass/ no credit. So, it was a lot of fun. And I think it was, it was much more I think, I actually think you learn a lot better when you don't have a lot of pressure, grade pressure on you. But now over the years, over these many years, the University and the faculty and the students there, it's really, it's really well done, I think. And there's plenty of paths [29:00] and opportunities. I guess they have a seminar week, freshman, early freshman year and for the whole week, you just sample different classes and things that you would not ever think you might be interested in. So I think it's great that it's not, it's not just survived, but it's thrived there.

KLA: I think it's become the essence, and it was when we were there, of a liberal arts education, which is sometimes difficult to define. But it's exposing us to a lot of things. I took some outstanding art history courses that they were probably some of the most important courses throughout my life, even though I've never worked in the field and would never consider myself capable of working or qualified to work in that field. And yet it has enriched my life constantly and I can thank Brown for the opportunity to take those kinds of, kinds of courses and sort of open up your mind to new ideas. [30:00] Lucy, do I remember correctly that that you did an independent project or some sort of concentration on medieval jewelry?

LM: Well, I, I changed my whole focus at the beginning of my senior year with an – I created an independent major in medieval art and history to justify going to Edinburgh from my junior year. And then I switched to studio art again at the beginning of my senior year and took nothing but art courses. So, the best thing I learned at Brown was that I could pull off anything if I really put my mind to it. So, ye.

KLA: That was a useful thing to learn.

LM: It served me well ever since. I have to go friends. See you soon, I hope.

SLW: Great to see you Lucy. I'll see at the reunion.

LM: See you. Yes.

ER: It's so, it's so different to – hearing that compared to, remember getting ready to go to college? I mean, I remember like going out and shopping with my mother [31:00] for something to wear to a football game in the fall.

SLW: They told you you needed a cocktail dress.

ER: And remember the round collared blouses and then after, after Christmas, everybody came back wearing jeans. Nobody, you know, ever got anything close to dressed up after that. The whole, the whole idea of you know, poor Brown football team, you know, but going to a football game kind of disappeared.

SLW: I went to all of them.

ER: You did. Okay, good for you.

SLW: I did. That's because Chuck was the sports editor.

ER: Alright. Okay.

KLA: Do any of you still have your pine boxes?

SLW: No.

ER: I actually think it's up in my attic somewhere. It's part of what's been my box a, box a week effort to just get rid of stuff. [32:00]

KLA: I actually had mine until we downsized two years ago. So, it ended up –

AK: Did you say “pine box?”

KLA: I did say that.

ER: Yeah.

AK: Okay. Could you, for me and our listeners, could you tell me what that is?

KLA: Absolutely.

LP: At the end, at the end of freshman year, you could order one of these and it was like, it was a pine box. It was a box about the size of a trunk, you know, and it had your name stenciled on it, and it's where you stored your stuff during the summer. So you filled up the pine box and they stored it in the dorms over the summer for you.

KLA: Yeah, I don't know when they, when they stopped doing that, but, but it was very handy and it was handy for my house.

ER: True. Probably when they stopped doing posture pictures and having requirements for swimming and you know other things that kind of went by the boards during the, you know, after the merger.

AK: That's something, would, if you're comfortable any of you, sharing about the posture picture situation. [33:00] Would, could you talk about that a little bit?

SLW: Well, it was creepy.

JMD: All I remember is no one, no one, I think I had one friend who passed.

SLW: I placed out.

JMD: Did you? Oh good.

SLW: Yeah.

JMD: Everybody else had to –

SLW: Posture picture and some physical, something you had to do I forget, you know, a few calisthenics or something. And I think the top 20% or the top 10% placed out of Freshman Fundamentals, which taught you what, how to sit down and how to pick up a suitcase and stuff like that? So I –

LP: No, you know what the most, the most important thing I learned in Freshmen Fundies?

ER: I don't remember that. What, what, what? I don't remember that.

SLW: Because I didn't have to do it, I ended up on the Brown, on the Pandas hockey team because I, I had to take some kind of gym, they still had a gym requirement.

ER: Okay. Okay. So that's what it was. It was a [34:00] first year gym.

SLW: And, right, and I, and I signed up for figure skating. I had figure skates. But I couldn't get enough times a week so I added on the Pandas and I'd never done hockey in my life. But it is sort of my claim to fame that I was on the Pandas, the first [inaudible] girl, women's hockey team in the US. We had nobody to play. We played the freshman who, the freshman boys who had brooms and they were totally drunk, and we imported a team from Canada. But that's my claim to fame at Brown.

KLA: I remember the, I don't remember the, the posture pictures at all, but I remember my roommate and I, Dorothea Steve, went and tried out for the Pandas, or at least we thought we were. But then we really realized that we didn't know how to skate well enough to play hockey.

SLW: No one did. That's what you didn't know is that nobody did know. [35:00]

KLA: They were so big at the time that we thought, well, we might as well try out for this. And then we realized that we couldn't skate well enough to skate around the rink, let alone play hockey on hockey skates. But I do it, is a signal, signal memory of that time and I think Dorothea would remember it too.

AS: Those kind of highlights – oh, go ahead.

JMD: Go ahead, Ann, go ahead.

AS: I don't remember posture pictures there. I remember an eighth grade posture picture back in, and I think I have a memory of playing field hockey freshman year, so I must have, whatever you call it, opted out or I got excused from freshman fundamentals. And I played field hockey, I think with Dorothea, I think that's one of the –

KLA: That's right because I think she played in high school. Yeah.

SLW: I think Fundamentals was like half the year or a quarter.

LP: It was a quarter. [36:00] Although the PE classes were half of a semester, so we had to do for four quarters.

SLW: Yeah.

LP: One year of PE.

SLW: Because my roommate, Carol, and I were in soccer together and we cut the first day. We went downtown Providence, went shopping and thought, oh, well, we get two cuts, we'll blow it off. So, when we showed up the next time, the gym teacher was she was very funny. She was kind of outraged that we cut the first day, but we were allowed two cuts. I think it endeared us to her.

LP: Well actually, I took ice skating, just for fun, even after I fulfilled my PE requirement. And there was this lady who taught ice skating and I think she could have been a good ice skater. But she must have fallen once and hit her head because she wore this big huge thing over her head, I think to protect her head because she fell. But the thing was, you know, I grew up in Minnesota where we went, we went ice skating all the time. And I didn't really know how to do anything. [37:00] And I actually learned some, a little bit of figure skating. I mean, I, I'd never been a competitive at it, but it was good for me to learn, to learn some things. And I did it for more than one year. I think I did at least two or maybe three years.

SLW: Well, and there was a great, great social part of Brown. People use go at lunch time –

LP: Or just to go on dates on Saturdays if you go out on a date, you'd go out on a date trying to skate around.

SLW: There was free skate, you know, when hockey teams weren't practicing. And, and people were out there doing figure skating, people are out there doing hockey skating, people were out there holding hands and just trying not to fall down. And the hockey skaters would, would be practicing or I think, you know, it was I mean, they were just building up their muscles and they're sliding around and it was beautiful. I thought it was one of the most aesthetically pleasing things to do was go hang out at the rink. [38:00]

ER: Remember being outnumbered because there were 250 of us and I think it was 1200 or 1000 guys. I mean, you know, so that was the other part of being a coordinate college.

SLW: 3.5 men day every woman.

ER: They would bus in women from Wheaton, which at that point was all, all women, for mixers and things like that. It was, it, you know, definitely, especially for somebody who was interested in math and science. You, definitely you were outnumbered in those classes. You know, sort of it, so it was a very different experience. Brown, I think now is close to 55% women, and that's a very different, that would be a very different experience. That would be you know, 55/45 compared to, [39:00] so what was it in our era? You know, sort of something like 15%, 20% at the most,

LP: It was roughly three to one, I think. Or more than.

SLW: It was like three and a half, 3.4.

LP: Yeah.

ER: Yeah, yeah, it was a –

SLW: Now that was a recruiting stat, that if you went to tea with Pembroke alums or, or Pembroke students, they used that. And another one was that something like 90% of Brown, of Pembroke women who marry, marry Brown men. Now the part you had to listen to was those who marry because there was a percentage who didn't. And frankly, coming out of high school with a very disappointing social life, I paid a lot of attention to this and I, I have to admit I, I would say I'm, [40:00] well, I, I'm a feminist, but I have not been a really, really active feminist. When I went to Brown, I went there to get married. I went there, I knew I'd have fun learning, but I went to get married. And I didn't have career aspirations beyond I wanted to write for children. And, and when you applied the old Pembroke, that's what they were pushing.

JMD: You know, another thing that changed quite a bit right after us, I think it was, was Title IX. And, and, you know, we've talked about the gym and the facilities that we had were really meager.

KLA: That's putting it politely.

JMD: Well, the, even the, the pool that the men used wasn't [41:00] very great, either. But Title IX –

SLW: I think it was marble.

JMD: Yes. Yes. And so I think that's why they, Brown now is more 50/50 women/men. I think a lot of it has to do with Title IX, as well as other things. You know –

ER: It, yeah, it was happening, it was also intentional. I actually have had a varied career working on Brown things. I was a member of the Corporation. But in the early '80s our classmate, Fred Wang, was on the Corporation and I was working for Wang at the time, and I did the staff work. And Brown in the, in the, in the late '70s into the early '80s, intentionally expanded the number of women and the number of minorities. And they did that by expanding the class. You know, which, certainly from the perspective [42:00] of, of women, you know, I actually wound up being very active in equal admissions for, for women in my, in my senior year. And today, you know, as somebody who I actually did work for a corporation for many years, go to the top and serve on the board on six public companies, and so forth. And I still heard the same kinds of arguments about women, you know, sort of in the last 10 years is I heard from Jim Rogers, when we were seniors in Brown, there wasn't a pipeline. That's the basic thing. That's the basic thing that everybody says about anything that has to do with representation, rather than going and working on the pipeline, which I think is what many of us have done.

KLA: For the purposes of history, this changes the subject of it, but I would like to mention the cost of school because that has changed so dramatically. And I don't know exactly what it was [43:00] at, at, when we were there. But I do know, my mother worked full time as a high school librarian and had worked in that career for 15 years, for quite a while. So, she was at a senior level. And I'll always remember that it took her entire salary to send me to Brown. That included room and board and everything, but, but that was, that was a, it was a huge commitment on their part. And there weren't parent loans and FAFSA and all those other things at the time. But it's always struck me and, and I don't, I also haven't checked, and I thought of it and didn't have

time to check, I don't know what the relationship now for, for a school teacher or librarian who's worked 15 years how that person's salary would compare today to what it costs to go, to go to Brown.

AK: I can tell you it would take more of my salary and I'm one of the librarians.

KLA: All right, but it's, it's an interesting, it was as I say, it was a relative – [44:00] I mean, it was, it was an important sacrifice on my parents part and I've always very much appreciated it.

SLW: Well it was, I think, about \$4,000 total our freshman year.

AS: That sounds about right.

SLW: And it doubled.

KLA: Between four and five, and then of course to think that that's when she was making.

SLW: And then it doubled by the time we graduated. It was really hard to keep up.

KLA: And I am very pleased that for the most part that Brown has, has expanded and kept up with its need blind admissions. I think that's certainly helped to expand the diversity on campus in very, in very good ways.

AK: Can you maybe share with me any of your, we always say like, Polaroid memories, like these snapshots of, of the things that were going on, on campus like consciousness raising, protests, anything like that, that you were involved in?

JMD: Well, I remember when, [45:00] after Kent State, the shootings there. All the universities, it seemed like everywhere in the country, were in turmoil. And because the students were protesting and closing down universities. And I have a very vivid image of all of us being on the, on the Green, to, to the faculty, when they met, to decide what we were going to do, what the

university was going to do because it was the end of the year was springtime, May. And what, were they going to close the school, were we going to, what were they going to do about exams and papers and things like that? So, we couldn't all fit, I think they were in Sales Hall, we couldn't all fit in there. So they piped it out to the, to the Green, and the Green was packed with all [46:00] the students. And, and I remember the speeches were just very inspiring in terms of the moral obligation of the faculty to support the students. And, and the administration, you know, implemented that. And of course, they voted to close and we had options about whether we wanted to take incompletes or take exams, or take exams over the summer or whatnot. And I thought it was a really great moment for Brown, because Brown was so united. And there were very few colleges that were like that. There were sit-ins in the administration offices, there was violence. And I thought it was just very, it was a very positive memory.

KLA: I have a memory related to some, [47:00] certainly some of the unrest. The Kent State shootings happened while we were at Brown, and Kent State was the neighborhood college where most of my high school colleagues went, so it was very literally close to home when that happened. And I remember it seeming a little distant when I was at Brown, but calling friends I had who are on the campus. And I just, I remember that those moments stand out and wondering whether that was going to spread to Brown. And then, and then it sort of led to the kinds of experiences that that Joan, Joan was talking about.

And then it was also that year, it was also the year that Shirley Chisholm ran, and for a very short time I was involved in her campaign at Brown. And while I was there, I was also supposed to be a news reporter at WBRU. And there was quite a conversation about whether I could do both. I couldn't work for, for Shirley Chisholm [48:00] and also be a reporter at Brown. So, I learned very early that choosing to be a journalist, you can't sort of show your colors in other ways.

AK: We're coming up on our time here and I know that there were so many things mentioned that you wanted to share. So, I just want to leave a little bit more space. If there was anything that you were really eager to get into the historical record that you wanted to share today in this oral history, now, would be a good time to share that.

AS: Can I just say one thing about when we were talking about when New Curriculum came in, no distribution requirements choice, so pass, whatever, pass/no credit. I, I my experience, I loved that. And I look back [49:00] on my college choices of what courses I took. And there's a lot I didn't take because I didn't have distribution requirements to fulfill anymore. And for me, that was, so I took a ton of art history, which I loved, and it served me last weekend when I was at the Biltmore and in one of those Monet immersion experience things. And I have no regrets about what I did take and because I could choose and that was not my major, there was a lot I missed out on. So, I, I've had, I've had the thought over time that I could go back to Brown and have four more years of stuff that I didn't take that I know I'd be very interested in. So I just wanted to throw that in in terms of the, and I love pass/ no credit that –

KLA: You have to find the kinds of programs that Joan operates [50:00] so that you can take, you're taking all these classes not at Brown, but you can take them.

AS: Yes, it's true. Lifelong learning.

SLW: It's, it's sort of ironic that freshman year the, we had requirements. The New Curriculum became effective, I think, our sophomore year. So, we had a language requirement and, and we had distribution requirements. And one of my favorite classes was Rocks for Jocks, was a geology class that was designed to get the freshman hockey team through their lab science. But it was a fabulous course, if you paid attention and came. And so, you know, I probably wouldn't have taken that if there hadn't been distribution requirements at the time. And having done that, that sort of taught me to sample things that I was interested in. So I took religious studies, [51:00] literature, art. What didn't I take? I didn't take, I didn't take math at all, or physical science other than geology. And actually, I would have been interested in majoring in geology if the department had been more welcoming, but they were not. They, I had a male friend in the class and we were talking one time and he said that they approached him about majoring in geology. And he said, "Well, I'm sorry, I, you know, I love the class, but I don't have the physics background, or the chemistry, or the math." You know, he came from a pretty lousy high school. And they said, "Oh, we can work you through that." Nobody came to me and I was front and

center, always there, [52:00] very, you know. But so, there were, there were issues of having a predominantly male faculty that focused on the male students.

KLA: That hasn't entirely disappeared. Look at all the attention we're paying now, and particularly with children's books, trying to get girls interested in STEM, and not to lose their interest in, in science as soon as they get into middle school or high school. So, some of those issues, unfortunately, 50 years later, are still with us.

ER: Some of that, as somebody who spent a life in that, is, you know, now there's research that says that people form their STEM identities actually, by late elementary, early middle school. And, you know, sort of it's, it's just so important. But I actually went, was encouraged, actually, by a physics professor and by one of my math professors. For me, it wasn't a lack of encouragement by the faculty, it was a lack of visibility [53:00] of, you know, what, what it would be like, after, after Brown. And no one, you know, no, no connection. And then I wound up, you know, in the, in the industry for my entire, you know, literally running 1000s of software developers. And now I'm taking machine learning as a visiting fellow at Harvard. So, it's still, you know, it's important to get, have, have kids, very early on, I had that identity through eighth grade. And Brown didn't beat it out of me.

SLW: I thought I was going to be a scientist all through high, elementary school, a little bit in high school, my interests broadened. And then at Brown, it wasn't, didn't seem possible.

ER: I think that's actually the, the numbers. The women faculty [54:00] and other women in your classes, sort of lack of representation. That's why I still believe that people who argue for representation, you know, I certainly can relate to it from my experience.

LP: I can I can speak to that too because, you know, when I was in high school, my best subjects were math and chemistry. And when I, when I applied to Brown, I didn't, they had Bachelor of Science programs. They didn't have one in math, they had one in Applied Math, I didn't know what that was. So, I actually applied for the, to be, to get a bachelor's in, a Bachelor of Science in chemistry. And my freshman year, I really didn't like chemistry. And you know, I was dating

a guy that year, and he says, “Oh, you’re a girl, you should major in English.” And that was the, that was what people thought, people, that women should major in English and the men in, the sciences were just for men. And I had two friends Carol [Comb?] and Molly Moran, [55:00] who were the only, they were the only engineering majors.

ER: Right. Molly, I remember Molly. Molly did engineering, yeah.

LP: Yeah, so, so actually Molly did, I don’t know what happened to Carol [Comb?]. Molly actually went on and got a degree in architecture. And she went, she had her own architecture firm. And she did very well with that. But I, and I actually suggested we ask her to be on this call, but I think she declined.

But anyway, you know, I ended up majoring, switching to applied math, and I was an applied math major. And, you know, people thought, there was just the stereotype there that women aren’t supposed to be good in those things. And that, and that is a problem. Like you say, it’s still a problem today.

SLW: I, I had another, you know, sort of snapshot moment. We used to have sherry hours, remember those?

LP: I remember those sherry hours?

ER: Yes.

SLW: Yeah. So, there was a sherry our with my favorite anthropology professor [56:00] and I guess he indulged a bit. And he started talking, saying how he hated to see the department give money to women graduate students because they’re just going to go off and get married.

LP: But that was the one attitude back then.

SLW: He was my favorite professor. And that was his point of view. And his wife was out there doing fieldwork, and maybe he was just bitter about that. I don’t think that marriage lasted, but.

But I did, I, there were, there were lots of women who had a lot more gumption, I guess, is the word than I did, and dug in, and I was late to the party on this stuff. And I was enjoying what I was doing. I really loved my classes. But I do feel that the male faculty did not support the female [57:00] students to the extent that they did the men. I, I took a classics course with my now husband, then boyfriend, and he got A's on all his papers. I told him everything about, I was the one who read the books, he didn't read the books, but he got A's and I did not. And I'm pretty sure that it's because he was a drinking buddy of the professor. And they, they were both on the Athletic Committee together. You know, that –

LP: That's not just Brown, that's a lot of places.

ER: I was going to say, welcome to, welcome to the world!

SLW: Right. I didn't know how to fight it. I was coming out of Virginia where girls weren't supposed to be smart and you weren't supposed to be athletic.

ER: Well, you know, it happens, you know, [58:00] it's not just at Brown that people get advanced more if they interact socially, you know, with, you know, with people. That's, that's the way of the world.

LP: The way of the world. I once was on a job interview and that was when I had, I had young kids and we really needed the money and I needed, you know. And I wore my wedding rings in and the guy just throw me all off balance, he says, "Why are you looking for a job with rings like that?" The reality is, I paid for my wedding rings, because when we got married, my husband was going through a divorce, and he didn't have any money. I wanted wedding rings so I went out and bought them. And people are so this, this, the stereotype that you know, that the men are supporting us and can't accept the fact that sometimes it's the woman who supports the family.

SLW: So, so worried that, that the things that we've fought for [59:00] and worked through and thought we'd accomplish, like Roe v. Wade, and quite a lot of other steps forward for women, are being, are sliding by the wayside because the current generation of young women –

LP: Well, don't forget what, you know, what about, what's, what's her name? She wrote the book, she was working with, with Facebook, with, with –

ER: Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In*.

LP: Yeah, *Lean In*. Yes. I have trouble remembering things. But yes, because she, you know, her book is very good. You know, and that, but when I read her book, I was thinking, yes, she is right. However, she didn't acknowledge people like our generation who really opened the doors for people in her generation to be able to do the things they've done.

ER: Yeah, I don't know our, [1:00:00] I have three wonderful daughters in law and I don't believe they're going to let, you know, anything go by the boards. In fact, I think more likely there'll be an expansion of early childhood care, to meet the needs of the economy and the needs of working families. And, you know, things that we had to deal with, I raised three kids working full time, you know, that were – And there were the women who worked and the women who didn't and dealing with all of that, which was, you know, another thing Linda, you, you may have been dealing with as well. I don't believe that my daughters in law are going to let things, let things go back. I don't think it can go back.

LP: No, I really, I don't think it can go back. But I'm just saying, you know, I feel more positive because I feel like, you know, I feel like we were the ground breakers and we were the ones who really were, like, when we graduated Brown it was like, oh, you're a girl? You should be a nurse or a secretary or a, etcetera.

ER: Absolutely. [1:01:00]

LP: Or a teacher.

ER: Yeah.

LP: And it's much, it's a lot different today. But I think it's just going to take a lot more time. So, we're not, we're not where we should be yet.

KLA: I think that's right. I think what Eileen said, you mentioned your daughters in law. My daughter in law is the same way. She's, she's Indian American. And she's very, very conscious of slights and microaggressions, and working, and not letting any of that stand. She's going to speak up and she's raising two little boys, my two grandsons, and they're going to be aware –

ER: Yes.

KLA: As boys.

ER: That's right. That's right. And two of my, two of, two of my daughters in law went to Brown and one went to RISD. And so they're the next generation making it happen.

AK: So we're coming up on our allotted time here. I think this is a good stopping point. I want to thank you all so much for your time today and again, your willingness to be a part of this [1:02:00] project. This is now going in to a collection of almost 300 oral histories of alums, students, staff, and faculty of Brown. So thank you so much.

KLA: Thank you.

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