

## Transcript – Ruth Elizabeth Burt, class of 1953

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Interviewer: Nancy L. Buc  
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**Track 1**

NLB: This is Nancy Buc, class of 1965. I am interviewing Ruth Burt Ekstrom, class of 1953.

**Track 2**

NLB: All right. We're at Ruth's house in Princeton, New Jersey, and I'm going to start with how you got to Pembroke and Brown. Where did you grow up?

RB: I grew up in Bennington, Vermont, and my mother had a couple of – had taught junior high school before she married. She had a couple of friends who she had grown up with who taught school, one in Providence, Rhode Island, and one in White Plains, New York. They used to go back to Vermont in the summers. They knew me and she asked them where they thought would be good places for me to go to college other than the University of Vermont which is what my goal had been. And the one that taught in Providence suggested that I go to Brown, and the one who taught in White Plains suggested I go to Swarthmore, so I applied to all three places and I got an early acceptance at Brown and I got a better offer financially from Brown than from the other places.

NLB: Ah, good for Brown. So we gave you some money.

RB: So by a hundred, a hundred dollars they, I arrived at Brown.

NLB: And had, had you visited beforehand?

RB: I had visited, I visited, but not until after I had been accepted.

NLB: And where'd you live? Do you remember?

RB: My freshman year I lived in East House and then the rest of the time I lived in Andrews.

NLB: Did you have a roommate?

RB: Different roommates different years, yeah. So the –

NLB: Are you still in touch with any of them or were they –

RB: I'm still in touch with the roommate that I had my junior year, Wendy Clark. She lives out in California.

NLB: And did you know what you were going to study when you started at Brown?

RB: I kind of thought I would like to study psychology, but of course there wasn't any psychology being taught in high schools at that time. I was interested in how you could help people identify their talents, what they would be good at, both in school and in adult life. And I thought if you could, I could figure out how to help people do that it would be a very satisfying career.

NLB: And did that work?

RB: It worked! [laughter]

NLB: So you concentrated in psychology?

RB: I majored in psych.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: Now, the Brown department was primarily experimental psych.

NLB: I was going to ask that.

RB: And Harold Schlosberg was the chair of the department and my junior year he said, "I think you should take the, the advanced measurement course next year." And I said, "But Harold, I haven't had the introductory courses." Said, "Don't worry, that's going to be your field. You'll do fine." And so at that point he really helped me focus within psychology.

NLB: Advanced measurement in the sense of tests and –

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Like IQ tests and things like that?

RB: I, I, yeah. All sorts of ways of assessing human talents. Yeah, for, I mean. I'm a believer in a wide, wide variety of human talents. And I feel that IQ tests are terribly, terribly limited in what they assess.

NLB: Sure. I was just trying to get a sense of – so, so what other kinds of tests then and, are we talking about?

RB: Oh, we're talking about, well I mean –

NLB: Meyers-Briggs?

RB: Oh.

NLB: Not, not really.

RB: That's not really my favorite.

NLB: OK.

RB: And that wasn't around at that time. It was, it came, it was being developed after, right after I came here to Princeton. But, yeah, I mean, personality assessments, interest assessments. I mean, physical skills. I mean, reaction times, and you know, perceptual skills.

NLB: Right.

RB: So there's, I mean, visual skills are terribly important. People are just beginning to realize how highly linked to creativity they are.

NLB: That's interesting. What else, what else did you study besides the major, besides the concentration.

RB: Well, I mean we still had distribution courses at that time.

NLB: Right.

RB: So I had to kind of grind through those, then I took a few things that I wanted to take. Astronomy had always been an interest of mine, so I took astronomy. Met my husband in the astronomy class.

NLB: You met your husband in the astronomy class?

RB: Yes.

NLB: Tell me, that's not the most obvious place to meet your husband. Tell me more about that.

RB: Well.

NLB: You just sat down next to him one day or?

RB: Well, the professor, Dr. Smiley, was something of a match maker and talked about that as – he wanted to have a class trip to Boston to, I guess to go the Harvard observatory. And he decided that the committee would be Mr. Ekstrom and Ms. Burt and they would meet with him afterwards in the Blue Room. And he got us both in there and left.

NLB: And it worked!

RB: And it worked! [5:00]

NLB: So you and Lincoln met in astronomy class?

RB: Yes.

NLB: And –

RB: He also had evening labs, and served cocoa, and made it something of a socializing occasion.

NLB: And did either of you know what Smiley was up to? What the matchmaker astronomer was up to?

RB: Well, not really, but I mean it wasn't –

NLB: Sort of, but you were willing?

RB: Sort of, yeah.

NLB: And so you started going out?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: And that was it?

RB: That was it.

NLB: And when I was looking at the *Pembroke Record* I saw that you and Lincoln went to the Christmas Formal your senior year. Was he the same year?

RB: What?

NLB: As, was he the same year as you?

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah, he's same class.

NLB: Same class?

RB: Yeah. '53. Which is nice too, going back for reunions.

NLB: Right. Right.

RB: Yeah, I mean, just, we just went back for out 60<sup>th</sup>.

NLB: And when did you get married?

RB: 1957.

NLB: So, four years later.

RB: Four years later, yeah. Lincoln was in graduate school and I was teaching.

NLB: What did you teach and where did you teach.

RB: I taught elementary school in Beverly, Massachusetts, and Lincoln was at MIT.

NLB: Interesting. What was he studying?

RB: He was doing physical chemistry.

NLB: Physical chemistry? The bane of all chemistry students. And so you, you dated all that time, presumably, and then got married in 1957. Go back to Pembroke. What was your – did you like Pembroke? Were you, what – did you have?

RB: I had had a pretty poor high school education and –

NLB: Yeah, me too.

RB: And I was having a hard time with a lot of the classes. I mean, I liked some things about it. I had been active with my high school newspaper and I got on the *Pembroke Record*, Polly Coffman was editor and became a good friend, and is still a good friend. And so that's a –

NLB: Yeah, she – when we did that program for the 120<sup>th</sup> women at Brown, Polly was one of the panelists and she mentioned you. In fact, at that time told me to say “hello,” which I did, I think. What – but you're such a, a hard worker. Were you, did you overcome your high school deficits just by doing hard work? Were you a good student?

RB: I mean, I didn't do all that well academically at Brown, so I mean I, I did OK in, I did well in psychology, but I, the stuff that I wasn't interested in, I had a hard, hard time getting motivated.

NLB: That's very interesting. I would never have guessed that about you. That's, I mean, I'm glad I'm doing this interview.

RB: But, but you know, this, that's I think having had that experience myself makes me more sympathetic to trying to figure out how to help kids find their own intellectual way because we're all different and we've got all sorts of talents out there and.

NLB: Interesting. So, so what about – how did you find Pembroke socially? Was it a comfortable place, were there big class distinctions, were there?

RB: An awful lot of the young women had gone to private schools. And part of the problem with distribution courses is that many of them had had in their prep school essentially the same courses, same textbook, and they were taking it over again at Brown. And of course, [inaudible] and I had gone to the Podunk high school and never heard of them, what was going on. And I felt that it was a bad situation on the, that they shouldn't be wasting their time and their, and family money on retaking something that they'd already taken. And –

NLB: And wrecking the curve for people like you.

RB: Yeah! [laughter] Exactly.

NLB: So, but you, you were active in the Alumnae Association for years.

RB: Well, that got started our first reunion and I got asked to be class agent. And that meant that I had to, each fall, write a letter that went to everybody in the class and then put personal notes on as many as possible. Turned out I was fairly good at it and I got a couple little award, silver bowl sitting over there on the side, for that.

So the next thing that happened was they asked me to run for class agent representative on the Alumnae Board. So I did that and that went well. Then the next thing they asked me to, there was a, at that time a committee of the Corporation for Pembroke.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: And so they asked me to [10:00] run for that. And I did that, that was good. Ray Heffner was President then, and so I got to meet with him and some of the other Corporation members several times during the year to talk about Pembroke and where things were going. I thought – so that kind of was. And I also got involved in doing some fundraising. There was a campaign for Brown going on then. And I was co-chair for the one for this part of New Jersey.

NLB: So whatever discomfort you may have felt as an undergraduate, on the whole I gather it much have been a positive experience. Otherwise you wouldn't have put in all this time and effort later. Is that, is that a fair statement?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Yeah. OK, so then you went and taught elementary school. Had, had you planned to go to graduate school right away? What?

RB: Oh no. No. I mean, nobody suggested graduate school to me. And my mother, as I said, had taught school before she married and wanted me to take enough education courses so I could get a teaching certificate when I left Brown. So that was, kind of filled up part of my course taking pattern that perhaps I would have preferred to do something different. But yes, it was important for me to be able you know, to get a job when I got out.

NLB: That's interesting because Lincoln, your husband, went to graduate school.

RB: Well his father was a professor at Brown.

NLB: He was?

RB: Yes, so –

NLB: What did he teach?

RB: So you know, neither – my parents graduated from high school, but neither of them had gone beyond that, so.

NLB: Your mother was a school teacher even though she hadn't gone to college.

RB: Yup.

NLB: Uh-huh. When she, but she's the one who pushed you or pointed you in a direction past the University of Vermont. That's very interesting.

RB: Yeah. I think so. Yeah.

NLB: Well, OK. So Lincoln's father was a professor at Brown, but my, my question is more in terms of – here you are, dating a guy. Presumably by that time you knew you were going to marry him, or thought you might marry him. He's going to graduate school.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: But the thought didn't occur to you. Is that because women –

RB: The thought didn't –

NLB: Women didn't?

RB: Well, it did occur to me because as soon as I started teaching I applied to Boston University for getting a master's degree in education research [emersion?].

NLB: Which was the part of psychology that you were so interested in?

RB: Yes. And they had a special, this specialized program which was relatively unique. It was a pretty good, it was a good program.

NLB: So you pursued that?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Did you get that master's?

RB: Got that master's.

NLB: How long did that take?

RB: Couple years.

NLB: While you were still teaching full time?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: And –

RB: I went summers and then I went, they had Saturday classes. And I guess they had, occasionally I had to do an evening class. But that, I could teach, and get on the train, and get in, and do an evening class.

NLB: So you could make a living and –

RB: Yes.

NLB: And do that as well. And then, did Lincoln get his PhD in four years?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Wow, that's pretty, by today's standards that's pretty quick. Well, in the sciences I guess it's sometimes faster. And then what? You got married in 1957 –

RB: Well, yeah he – then he was looking around for jobs and I think we ended up trying to decide whether he was going to go with [GE?] in Schenectady, New York, or RCA here in Princeton. And I said, “Go to Princeton because I always thought I'd like to work for Education Testing Service and if we're going to Princeton I'll see if I can get a job there.”

NLB: And?

RB: So we moved to Princeton –

NLB: You did. And did you get a job?

RB: I walked, I walked in and said, “Here I am, I'd like a job.”

NLB: At ETS?

RB: Yes.

NLB: And what did you start out, what did you start out doing?

RB: I started out as a research assistant for a man named John French. And he was interested in being able to assess students intellect – I mean, cognitive skills, personal characteristics, and interests, and predict what major in college they would be most happy with and most successful with. And so he was doing, had been collecting data from colleges, universities, all around the United States and so the first thing I did was work on that with him. And then the other thing he, he – somebody there had been working on a program for the Ford Foundation about early admission to college where people who went to college after –

NLB: That's what I did.

RB: And so I was asked to, they discovered I was a reasonably decent writer of reports and stuff. And I could take a batch of data that was sitting there and turn it out into a report and some of the stuff that's languishing [15:00] got turned over to me to do. So I did the final report to Ford on the –

NLB: Back up to John French's interest in predicting happiness with majors.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: How do you, how do you know whether somebody's happy and how do you know whether, what would have happened if they'd majored in something else?

RB: Well, you, you, you, you ask them if they liked it.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: I mean it was that simple. I mean probably, yeah, you don't, you don't know, but you ask. Look up what they major in and whether they said they liked it you know, or didn't, or they wish they had majored in something else and if so, what they said they wish they'd majored in. So you got, you got a –

NLB: So you could, you could test your predictions based on the data, against what they said.

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NLN: But there's no real way to randomize that, is there?

RB: No there isn't, there isn't, there isn't.

NLB: Yeah, it's interesting. Alright, so you're writing reports and being a research assistant.

RB: And then John also had a project on trying to identify as many different cognitive factors as possible from a mathematical technique that was used called factor analysis. That had been, [Thirst Stone?] had been the person that started doing it. Thirst Stone was an engineer and was trying to find a way to measure these same skills with paper and pencil rather than having to go to the lab and measure it physically. And so he started doing it and then there was a guy named Gilford, and a guy named [Katill?] who started doing it also. John was doing it, so there was a lot of research being done on that. John had had one conference at ETS and put out a manual that used the tests that each people has found most effective for these different cognitive abilities. And it was well received and researched because anybody could put that in your data with you, and know when you did your analysis, yes this relates to special abilities, relates to ideational fluency.

NLB: So in effect it's a way of validating –

RB: Validating, yes.

NLB: Various measures.

RB: So, but he would, John wanted to put me to work that spring. I started in late fall and he put me to work that spring reviewing all the literature that had been done since his previous conference. So we planned for another conference. So I got going on that and found I enjoyed it. And so we had, I did a, did the review. There was a monograph that got published on that and then we –

NLB: Did they put your name on it?

RB: What?

NLB: Did they put your name on the monograph?

RB: Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah. John was very good. There were no research, women in research science at ETS at that point and John was very good. He encouraged me, said “You got to go beyond the master’s. You got to get a doctorate, go up to Rutgers,” because Princeton didn’t take women. And –

NLB: Even in the graduate school?

RB: What? Oh yeah, even in the graduate school.

NLB: Especially in the graduate school.

RB: Anywhere. So anyway, he pushed me to get the doctorate and pushed me to go on and.

NLB: Back up a little bit. I, I think of ETS as the operator of college boards, of SATs and achievement tests. They did all this research as well?

RB: Oh yeah.

NLB: And so what was its corporate, or its institutional structure? Who paid for all that research? My college board fees?

RB: Oh your col – no. The research I was doing, the factor research sample was Office of Naval Research.

NLB: So, so they were in effect a contractor both for foundations and the government?

RB: A great deal. Some of the research was paid for by different testing programs who thought it would be useful, they wanted to find out something. Other, but a lot of it was contract research where you had to write a proposal or, to a foundation or an agency.

NLB: Interesting. So in essence it was very much like a university –

RB: Very much, very much.

NLB: Without tuition to cover the –

RB: Without tuition, yup. You, that's the way I earned my living basically. John left ETS and went to New College in Sarasota, Florida, when that got started. And I stayed at ETS and got my doctorate and became a research –

NLB: When did you get your doctorate?

RB: What?

NLB: When did you get your doctorate?

RB: Educational psychology.

NLB: And when?

RB: Rutgers, oh my goodness. I'm trying to think.

NLB: Early sixties?

RB: It was probably '60, I'll have to look at my [inaudible]. OK, but yeah, early sixties.

NLB: So with a doctorate you were promoted at –

RB: Well I actually moved laterally into another division for a year and then moved back into research because it wasn't a mechanism for promoting. But at that point, by that time I began to get enough stuff out, published, that I could [20:00].

NLB: So everybody knew.

RB: Yup.

NLB: But you said you were the first woman research scientist at, at ETS?

RB: By that time they had begun to hire some, so that was. There had been an interest – Head Start had gotten, was getting started, and there was an interest in getting people in to do research on early childhood education. So they hired a couple of women that did early childhood education.

NLB: A form of stereotyping.

RB: Yes.

NLB: OK.

RB: But anyway, so it was easy to move back in once that was going on and –

NLB: And how long did you stay there? Your whole career?

RB: I, I retired in the early '90s.

NLB: So –

RB: I was there something like 39 years.

NLB: Wow.

RB: So.

NLB: And does ETS still do all that kind of research?

RB: They, yeah they do. I think they do more research now for specific testing programs and less grant and contract than they used to. But yeah, most of my money for, oh the first two thirds of my career there was either foundation or federal government.

NLB: And what kinds of things did you study? I mean did you specialize?

RB: One of the things, well I mean I continued with this factor analytic work on abilities and I also was very much interested in women's experiential learning. I saw in my contacts at Brown and elsewhere and awful lot of bright women, again in this period of the early '60s, that had very successful careers in volunteer organizations and wanted to get into the job market. And the job market didn't recognize their talents. And so the experiential learning movement was just getting started and I was trying to work and publish something about the kind of skills that women had earned in doing volunteer work. I mean managerial skills, for example, are a good example, fundraising skills are a good example. I mean there were a number of things there. So I got, that was supported by the fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.

NLB: And so there are publications on –

RB: Yup, yup.

NLB: Those kinds of things? I mean that's still pretty relevant today, isn't it? With all these –

RB: Yeah, it remains relevant.

NLB: Nontraditional bachelor's degrees.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Partly from experience, partly online, partly in classrooms. You have –

RB: Yup.

NLB: Views on all that?

RB: Yeah, I mean I think that's imp – I think it's important to recognize what people know and less important where they learned it.

NLB: So, presumably then you're not a fan of credentialism or a fan of what people actually know than how they learned it or where they learned it?

RB: Yeah, at the same time you have to have credentials in a system. I mean you have to know that –

NLB: Yeah.

RB: Your, your nurse can do CPR.

NLB: Right.

RB: I mean.

NLB: Right.

RB: And you don't want to have her learn it online.

NLB: Really. OK, I'm, maybe I'm not asking the right questions, but I'm curious then about – well, you were thinking about experiential learning in terms of job qualifications, in terms of women moving back into the work force?

RB: And also, also, also academic credit.

NLB: Academic credit as well? So how would you, how would you then credential it? How do you, how do you assess all that?

RB: Well that, I mean it might be with a test, it might be with an interview, it might be with a demonstration of some sort. I mean depending on what the thing is you're trying to get credit for. Say if you're trying to get, if the person says they know how to do certain kinds of nursing procedures because I took care of my husband at home for all these years and I can do this, this, and this, then you want her to show that she can do it.

NLB: Right, right. Although I must say, I think that the medical profession in general has been the most resistant of all professions to allowing anybody to do those things without their – the profession's – organized training. Much more so even than law work.

RB: Well, I mean there's law, there's architecture, I mean there are a number, there are a number of fields.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: I mean.

NLB: And what else? Experiential learning was one, was one of your emphases and that obviously related very much then to women.

RB: Oh definitely.

NLB: Today –

RB: I mean, but it relates to both men and women.

NLB: Of course, of course, but it was important for, or especially important for women during that era.

RB: During that time because there were a lot of women trying to get back into the labor force during the late fifties and early sixties. And trying to – and they, they had to be taught how to explain their volunteer work [25:00]. I mean the trouble would be women would go in for an interview and the guy would say, “Well, what have you been doing?” “Well, I’ve been very active as a volunteer at the hospital.” Well, the guy would have an image of her plodding around lugging bed pans and she would neglect to say, “I ran the fundraising campaign and we raised X million dollars.” And it was a matter of trying to teach the employers and the college interviewers what to ask, and also teach the women what to say.

NLB: Yes, yes.

RB: Because both sides of the equation –

NLB: Yeah.

RB: Had to be dealt with.

NLB: Right. I know that when my mother went back into the workforce she, she attended several courses that were aimed at both networking and then also at teaching women how to articulate.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

NLB: The skills to identify and articulate –

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NLB: The skills that they had.

RB: I made up something called the "I Can list" that listed typical things that women could do under different kinds of categories, volunteer work and homemaking categories, so that women could look at those and begin to work through that to develop a statement about their own skills and to develop their own resumes.

NLB: So were you using the Pembroke Alumnae Association as your raw material? Because that's, that's one of the things that's always interested me about the Pembroke Alumnae Association, and your involvement in it, is that it was in some ways two very different groups of women. One, one hundred percent volunteers of the kind that you just described, and others, women who also had professional careers and were doing the Alumnae Association.

RB: Yeah, though there were fewer of that latter group and that was one of the things that I worried about. When I went onto the Board of the Alumnae Association, Libby Kenyon was then president of it and Libby's aunt had been one of, in the first graduating class –

NLB: Right.

RB: And had felt very strongly that it was important to have women, first of all elect alumni trustees, and then be alumni trustees and so that – and I felt very strongly too. Lincoln's mother had graduated from Brown and had been active in the Alumnae Association until her death. And I had a notebook of hers with a lot of stuff about the Alumnae Association and the *Record* here from 1926-27 where they asked the President of the, that the petition to, that an alumnae trustee be –

NLB: In 1926-27?

RB: Yup.

NLB: That's great.

RB: Actually, they asked, once those women got the vote they asked if women could then vote for the trustee, because up to that point they hadn't been able to. And then they asked in '27 to have a woman alumnae trustee and they never turned down.

NLB: Yes, as they were every year until –

RB: Until Libby finally got it pushed through.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: And Libby was a wonderful, wonderful woman with real iron-hand-in-the-velvet-glove skills. And –

NLB: I remember her. I think she was the president of the Pembroke Alumnae Association the year I graduated because she, they took us out to dinner.

RB: Oh did she? Good.

NLB: They took some of the seniors out to dinner –

RB: Yeah.

NLB: To instruct us as to what our duties were in the future.

RB: I don't know whether you ever got an interview with her or not? I think you did.

NLB: I don't know. I don't remember.

RB: But I, Libby was anxious when I got on the board to, was trying to push that as she got started. And I, I felt it was terribly important and so we worked together pretty well on that and I pushed pretty hard on that.

NLB: Who else, who else worked on that?

RB: You know, I honestly don't remember.

NLB: I have this recollection that [Sophie Blistein](#) worked on that issue –

RB: She may well have.

NLB: At some point. So you were in the, on the Board of the Pembroke Alumnae Association and ultimately got yourself elected President –

RB: Yup.

NLB: I think.

RB: Yeah, the year, the year that we did the merger.

NLB: Oh you were the, really?

RB: I was, I was the President of the Alumnae Association the year that the alumni organizations had a sit-down and discussed merger. And that was an interesting experience.

NLB: So, well I was on that committee.

RB: You were on that committee, yes.

NLB: Where did you find me? How did you –

RB: I don't know. I, I look around and pick out people.

NLB: Because I always wondered how I got onto that committee. [30:00] Because that was, that was my start.

RB: Yup. That was your start.

NLB: It was supposed to be your interview, but that was my start in all this stuff, was helping to merge the –

RB: Yeah, no I was, I was asked to pick people and I got some information and we –

NLB: OK.

RB: We went from there.

NLB: And, and then –

RB: I was looking for people who were professionals as much as possible, rather than strong volunteers in the community. Not that I had anything against strong volunteers in the community, but I felt that the world was changing and I wanted to get people that were more used to operating in –

NLB: Yeah.

RB: A business environment and working with men.

NLB: Yup. So, so you were the – I'd forgotten that. But you were the Chair of the Alumnae Association just in time to merge the Alumnae Association with the Associated Alumni.

RB: Yes, and got told, “You’re killing my college.”

NLB: Yes, right. How did you feel about the merger?

RB: I thought it was important to do. I mean I, it was painful, I mean there’s no question about it. There were many advantages to Pembroke, but there were also major disadvantages. One of the things that bothered me terribly was the employment office. People would come to college, the campus to interview and the trouble was that the employers would send the men over to the men’s office to get anything except teachers. And they would send you know, go over to the women’s office to get teachers.

NLB: Right. Right.

RB: If you were looking for a job outside of some very stereotyped areas you didn’t get good help, good help from –

NLB: That probably persisted after the merger for a while.

RB: Oh it did –

NLB: Because that’s the way the world was.

RB: I mean it was part of the larger society, but at least –

NLB: Yeah yeah.

RB: At least there was one, one office that was handling it and so the information was there for everybody to see whereas when there were separate offices –

NLB: Yup.

RB: So that was, that was a part of the problem.

NLB: You think that was true of advising as well in terms of medical school, law school, and graduate school? That they –

RB: I honestly don't know. The other thing that was happening of course was the different admissions qualifications. The average SAT score for young women, math SAT score of young women entering Pembroke and for men entering Brown was the same. And the women were about one hundred points above them verbally. And because there was a numerical limitation on the number of women admitted –

NLB: Right.

RB: And this was making it an unfair situation in the classroom for everybody.

NLB: And do you think that, how long do you think it took for the merged admissions to – it took years before women were half the class. We had been about, the ratio had been three to one roughly I think, for years.

RB: Yeah. Two and a half to one.

NLB: OK. And now it's –

RB: It's fifty fifty pretty much.

NLB: It's fifty fifty. Do you remember, I do. Do you remember the first time that there were more women in the class than men and the Corporation had a long discussion about whether that was OK?

RB: I mean as far as I was concerned it was OK so –

NLB: Well yeah me too.

RB: If you, yeah I mean it was pretty close, it's remained pretty close. I think there, there is some interest in keeping the numbers reasonably close to fifty fifty, and I think most institutions try to do that.

NLB: Yes, although why?

RB: Yeah, be –

NLB: The theory always was –

RB: That's the way the world is organized.

NLB: Well or, yeah but. Yeah I mean if you're doing admission on the merits –

RB: Yup.

NLB: Then why? If more women get in than men –

RB: Well then –

NLB: I mean part of, part of the argument has been that you want to maintain academic excellence in areas that men are said to be more interested like engineering and physics.

RB: Yes, yeah.

NLB: But of course all that is [inaudible] as well.

RB: That's all changed too. But you, you – there's a lot you don't know about people when you're admitting them actually. I mean –

NLB: True.

RB: You want to look beyond just the high school grades and the SAT scores. I think it's important to look at opportunities and learn how well the person has done [35:00] given the opportunities to learn that they've had.

NLB: Do you remember Barnaby Keeney's –

RB: Oh yes.

NLB: Tom Sawyer program? That seems to fit very well –

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NLB: With your experiential learning and evaluating a wide array of competencies.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Was that something that was interesting to you?

RB: Yeah, I mean I knew about it. I mean I didn't have anything to do with it, but I knew about it and I thought it was – because there are kids that have a great depth of skill and interest in a particular area and there, you – I think Brown at that point tended to look for kids that were broadly capable of a variety of things. And I think sometimes the kid with the very strong long suit and not much interest in other things would actually in adult life, if they continued that strength, be worth having.

NLB: I'm just now thinking that at the Tom Sawyer, as its name suggests, only applied to Brown. I don't remember that there were any women Tom Sawyers. Do you?

RB: No.

NLB: Oh well, the story of our lives.

RB: I mean Alberta Brown had her own.

NLB: She did. Elaborate on that. What do you think she was looking for? Other than ladies.

RB: Oh no. I mean she was looking for – we used to talk a lot. She was a good friend. She was looking for –

NLB: She was the Admissions Director at Pembroke for those who are listening to this tape.

RB: I think she was looking for women who would develop into more than just, just homemakers. I mean not that you wanted, I think she was a pretty strong feminist.

NLB: Really?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: That's, that's very interesting. I mean Nancy Duke Lewis had been in that, that category of encouraging women to go to graduate school. And certainly [Rosemary Pierrel](#) who was –

RB: Yeah, yeah.

NLB: Herself continued active as an academic – I know people in my class, '65, were encouraged by Rosemary to go to graduate school. That's interesting. So you think Alberta Brown was looking for lawyers, doctors, PhDs, and –

RB: Hoping to find them.

NLB: Interesting. I would not have guessed that. Well alright then.

RB: OK.

NLB: You went on the Corporation as a trustee right after the merger. 1972?

RB: Right. 1972 I think, yeah.

NLB: Were you elected or appointed?

RB: I was appointed.

NLB: And how did, how did you – did you want to be on the Corporation? How did you get there?

RB: OK. Go back to my freshman advisor who was Penny [Thunberg?] who was then teaching economics at Brown. She left at the end of that year, but she knew me at that point. We had no contact –

NLB: This is, this is [Penelope Hartland Thunberg](#) for those who are listening.

RB: We had no further contact until I was doing the fundraising for the campaign here in New Jersey. She came to give a speech. She was an alumni trustee. She had been a good, was a good friend of Libby Kenyon's and she and Libby had been apparently exchanging information about me. And so after, after she was here she sent my name in as somebody she thought would be good on the Corporation and –

NLB: So the old girls' network was operating then.

RB: Old girls' network was operating, yes.

NLB: And is, you hadn't met Doris Reed yet, or you had?

RB: I had seen Doris Reed around yes, I knew who Doris was because of my contacts with the Pembroke Committee.

NLB: Yeah.

RB: So, but I, and I mean Lincoln's mother had been very friendly with Pauline Barrows Hughes who was also, who was –

NLB: One of the early trustees.

RB: Early appointed trustees. And so I knew about the Corporation from the too, I mean because Pauline was a good family friend over the years and so.

NLB: So presumably you were pleased to be appointed a trustee –

RB: Yup, yup, yup.

NLB: And you accepted.

RB: Yes.

NLB: And what was it like in those first years?

RB: Well there –

NLB: Were there, how many women trustees were there? There were no fellows yet.

RB: Doris had been appointed fellow the, Ray Heffner did a lot of things very bravely that I think were hard on some of the older parts of the Corporation. One thing he did was to get

appointed to the board of fellows. The first Jew, the first Black, and the first woman. All at the same time.

NLB: So the first Black was Saunders Redding. [40:00]

RB: Saunders Redding.

NLB: First Jew was Al Joslyn.

RB: Al Joslyn. And Doris Reed was –

NLB: And first woman was Doris Reed.

RB: Yes.

NLB: Who was what, '27 I think? Class of '27?

RB: Yup. So that was, no I think Ray does not get credit that he should've gotten –

NLB: I would say.

RB: For a number of things at Brown and that was one of them that I –

NLB: That's very interesting. Well good for him. I didn't know that. I glad to, I'm glad to hear that. So, and how, do you know how, do you remember how many trustees there were? Not many.

RB: There were, there were not many. I guess there were a couple of appointed trustees still around that, but there were not many. But the alumni trustees were coming through at that point.

NLB: Right.

RB: And what we were beginning, what I was beginning to look for, I got put on the committee to select trustees. And I was beginning to, again, look for women who were having successful professional careers and would be, again, bring to that situation their experience and working with men.

NLB: Well you found Jean Howard didn't you?

RB: What?

NLB: You found Jean Howard I think, in that –

RB: Doris was the person that was strong on Jean, strongest with, recommended Jean Howard.

NLB: Because she was appointed.

RB: Yup, yup.

NLB: And I was elected not too long after you –

RB: Yup, yup.

NLB: Were appointed.

RB: Yup. So, no Doris had thought Jean was very, very good and –

NLB: Which –

RB: She is.

NLB: Was and is.

RB: Yes.

NLB: What was, what was your experience like on the Corporation? Who was the chancellor then? Charlie?

RB: Charlie Tillinghast was chancellor and –

NLB: And Ray Heffner was president for a short –

RB: Well, Ray had left by the time, Don Hornig had become president by the time I was on and, came on, and –

NLB: What committees were you appointed to? They always put women on campus life. Were you on campus life?

RB: No, they didn't put me on campus life. They put me on budget and finance.

NLB: Really?

RB: And that scared the bejezus out of me because I don't consider that my strong suit. So that summer before, that was my second year on the Corporation so that summer the Higher Education Resource Center which Lily Hornig had been involved with, had a summer program for women academic administrators who wanted to pick up skills about finance. And they had a long program and they had a one week program and I went and took the one week program so I –

NLB: So you were prepared.

RB: So I came out of that with a good understanding of the basics of higher education budget and finance.

NLB: That's the Ruth Ekstrom I thought I knew who went off and studied up.

RB: Well if you're going to do something there's no point going into it and being dumb.

NLB: Well, fair enough. Fair enough.

RB: There are enough things in life where you can't help going into it and being dumb.

NLB: So were you on the Budget and Finance Committee during that awful period where Don Hornig had to cut the faculty?

RB: Yup.

NLB: And was that something you agreed with?

RB: Well we, we – Charlie was pushing it as much as anything else. We would hold your feet to the fire, hold your feet to the fire, and then bite the bullet. In fact, I finally came in with an ornate silver bullet, gave it to Charlie, said in case he needs this. [laughter] But yeah, I mean the – we were running a deficit and we had to do something and it was not fun.

NLB: As Hank Sharp was always saying, we were eating our seed corn.

RB: So I mean we you know, but it was a good experience to learn how to deal with that kind of pressure.

NLB: Yeah. Yup.

RB: And then Don was not well liked by the faculty.

NLB: Do you think it was the faculty that, that played the major role or the Corporation in –

RB: I think a little of both, but I think probably the faculty went to Charlie and asked to have –

NLB: What didn't the faculty like him?

RB: Don, like many academics, kept saying, "Well I really would like to get more information before I make a decision." And then of course the business world knows that at some point you've got to make a decision based on whatever information you've got even though there may be other better information out there at [45:00] some point in time that you, but you've got to decide today and –

NLB: Don was, Don Hornig was president during the early stages of [Louise Lamphere's situation](#) where she was denied tenure. Do you remember any discussion of that in the, in the Corporation then or later under Howard?

RB: I don't really. I mean I knew Louise, I liked her. She introduced me to the Tony Hillerman mystery stories. I had a feeling that the Anthropology Department had expected her to have less strong interests in women's issues and more in other things. And they were sort of, partly their problem was that they were disappointed and she wasn't pushing for what they had hoped was going to be pushed in the department and, which was Native American –

NLB: Right, right. Yeah, that's a, that's always a difficult issue when you, when you hire somebody to do research and teach in one area and their interests shift.

RB: Yeah. Yeah I mean, that's, that's –

NLB: There's –

RB: Classic problem in academia. Or the cutting edge of the field shifts and suddenly you're left with somebody you know. Geology was one of the fields that had a huge, huge shift. I mean everybody was doing hard rock geology and all of a sudden plate tectonics came in and –

NLB: And now all the geologists are doing interplanetary geology and –

RB: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah.

NLB: It's a whole new discipline.

RB: It's a whole new world. I mean you tenure people, you've got –

NLB: Let's just say, as you know I'm doing some work on that, that you're, you're correct that, that they weren't getting what they thought they had hired. But it's also probably the case that, I think it is the case, that they were very dismissive of her new work –

RB: Oh yeah. I think –

NLB: Beyond, beyond just the fact that she had shifted fields.

RB: Yeah I mean –

NLB: They didn't consider anthropology, women's issues, to be legitimate work.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: And that's a –

RB: Yeah.

NLB: That's the bad side of –

RB: Yeah that's the bad side, you know I mean there was a problem at that period as women's research on women's issues in a variety of fields – in women's literature and women's history –

that a lot of people were trying to dismiss it. And I mean there were still people around who dismiss a lot of social history as not being as valuable as –

NLB: So called drum and bugle –

RB: Yeah.

NLB: History, yeah.

RBL Yes. So that's, I think the remnant of that problem. But initially it was felt that it just wasn't as good.

NLB: Well one, yeah I mean, one of these days when we're done with this you'll see the exhibit and you'll see what they were saying.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: I think it, again this is supposed to be your interview not mine, but I think you'll, you'll see that the argument that she had moved, changed fields was in some respects protectoral for many respects –

RB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NLB: Protectoral for what was actually going on.

RB: Yeah because I mean the old boys' network was not happy with what was going on.

NLB: Yeah. And there's one, there's one document in the, in the court files where she's essentially accused of being a raging feminist.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: As if that were relevant to the –

RB: Yeah I mean, at ETS when I started doing this women's experiential learning stuff, I mean people you know were used to different kinds of stuff and were having a hard time accepting the fact that there were people out there in both foundations in the government that thought this was interesting and important and were willing to pay me to do it.

NLB: Yeah. Yeah.

RB: And the thing that I loved about my job was that if I did have something I thought was interesting and important you could find somebody to pay me to do it, I could do it!

NLB: Yeah. Right.

RB: All I had to do was find her.

NLB: Do, do you have a bibliography – does your CV include all your publications?

RB: I, yeah. I gave you a copy of that I think.

NLB: I don't think so.

RB: Oh I think I did. Did I ask you to have the archives look at it?

NLB: OK.

RB: I'll get you another one.

NLB: Will you get me another one?

RB: Yeah.

NLB: I'm having, having retired two years ago I'm still missing a secretary. I'm my own secretary. I'll ask for another one.

RB: OK.

NLB: OK. So you were on the Corporation, you served as a trustee for six years.

RB: I think yeah.

NLB: And were you then immediately appointed as a fellow?

RB: No I mean I retired as a fellow at the end of the academic year. And then there was a fall Corporation meeting and there was a vacancy on the Board of Fellows and at that time I was elected to the Board of Fellows.

NLB: So you retired as a trustee and then –

RB: I retired as a trustee and became a fellow, yeah.

NLB: Yeah and was –

RB: But that's pretty standard. I mean at Brown.

NLB: Mmmm, it, it, more or less. For some people. [50:00]

RB: Yeah.

NLB: Were you, was Doris Reed still a fellow? Were there now two of you or had she –

RB: She had retired.

NLB: So you were the one.

RB: Yeah, I was the one. And the first thing I did was say that we needed another woman because women get stereotyped when they're the only woman in a situation –

NLB: Very much so.

RB: And there are classical, the classical model is that they either treat them like their mother or they treat them like a daughter, pet, mascot, or they treat them like a seductress, or they call them the iron maiden. And those are the categories to which they assign them. I had thought because most of the guys on the corporation were twenty years older than I was that I was probably going to get treated as a pet mascot and patted on the head and not listened to hard. And Sullivan took me aside one night and said, "You know what the guys call you behind your back?" And I said, "No, what?" And he said, "The iron maiden." So I told Dick about the stereotyping of women and –

NLB; That's interesting. It's interesting in your case because you always told me that you preferred to write rather than speak up in public.

RB: Yes.

NLB: And that's true right?

RB: Yes, that's definitely true.

NLB: And so how did you, how did you operate? How did you maneuver? Did you when you saw an agenda write things in advance? Did you write things afterwards?

RB: I tended to write things afterwards. I frequently went back and forth to the Corporation meetings by train and that meant that I could have a nice two or three hours of uninterrupted time to think about what had happened at the meeting and to, if I wanted to write a memo about my reactions to anything that had happened I could pull it together and get it typed the next morning and send it out.

NLB: Because you and I used to joke that as a team I would do the talking and you would do the writing.

RB: Oh yeah. Yeah, definitely, yeah. And it worked pretty.

NLB: Did it?

RB: Helen Nowlis who came on the Corporation as a trustee, who was one that I recommended, because I again was looking for women who had, mature women who had had distinguished careers. The problem had been that they were bringing on women, but they were young like Jean and they were good, but they were being put up against men who were, you know they were twenty five years old and are being put up against sixty year old men. And they just didn't, it wasn't working well so I was trying to find some mature women –

NLB: Who else? Helen Nowlis was a, was a very good trustee. Who else did you –

RB: Yeah, I, I don't know. I mean Helen was one that I, because she's another psychologist, that I, that I knew of and knew she had a good reputation, and knew she'd be able to deal well with that situation.

NLB: And how, how did you then, you were ultimately elected secretary of the Corporation.

RB: Yup.

NLB: How did that happen?

RB: Beats the heck out of me.

NLB: You, you must've been the first woman –

RB: I was the first woman to be –

NLB: Secretary.

RB: First woman to be an officer of the Corporation.

NLB: Yes. I mean one, one question is –

RB: Al Joselyn had been before me, and before that John Nicholas Brown.

NLB: Yes. John Nicholas Brown was a secretary? I thought he was just the senior fellow.

RB: He was a senior fellow, but he was also secretary of the Corporation.

NLB: Ah. Interesting.

RB: Well, I had done, I was appointed to the search committee when Don Hornig stepped down. And that was an awful ordeal. We, Charlie Tillinghast was unable to chair the committee because he had, the same day had to fire the head of TWA and, or the – and so Charlie was running TWA on his own rather than having, and felt that he couldn't. So he got someone else to chair the committee to look for a successor for Don. And –

NLB: Well that committee didn't produce anybody as you recall.

RB: That committee didn't end up with anybody –

NLB: Because then –

RB: It was very difficult. The person that was running the committee wanted us to be called by phone and given twenty-four hours to get back to Providence whenever he wanted to meet. And we tended to meet every week in Providence. But I mean sometimes I would come through the front door and it's John Macintyre saying we're meeting the day after tomorrow. You know it's, it was very difficult.

We saw, Howard's name came up. He had been recommended by, to Dick Sullivan, by someone on the board when they had done the search [55:00] for the University of Texas. They had looked at him and thought that he was great, but not for Texas. And, but they – Dick had been given the name and we called Howard and he had agreed to come in for an interview that fall. Beginning of the week that he was supposed to come in for that interview he called and said he wasn't coming. We had already had a conversation that he had a capital campaign going on and it would end that spring, and if there was a, anything that we would keep it under wraps until his campaign ended. He called and said he wasn't coming. His dean, he was at Carleton College, a small place, very few administrators, his dean had dropped dead in the middle of a board meeting the previous Saturday. So he said, "I absolutely can't leave this place."

So we went on and did a search. We, there was a woman candidate that the students and faculty liked, but the board didn't like very well.

NLB: Was that Virginia Smith? Yeah. I remember that.

RB: And then there was a male candidate that everybody was pretty happy about. It was somebody that I knew about because someone that I, on the west coast, that I worked with at the time was very friendly with. And he warned me, he said he will, he wants to get his name out because he really wants a job out here. And he eventually did get that job, had a very successful career and I won't name names hers –

NLB: I know who that is.

RB: And probably should delete the name that we just mentioned too just for – anyway. So he came to campus and Charlie was walking across the campus with him after and said, “Well I guess everything’s fine, now are we ready to make an announcement?” He said, “No, I won’t take the job.” Charlie, I said, “I warned you,” and, but everybody – I mean he has glowing credentials and has had a very successful career. And the fact that I heard the rumor you know and people were not inclined to believe me.

NLB: Yup, yup, yup. So then –

RB: Or thought maybe that Brown would overpower that.

NLB: So then as I recall, Charlie Tillinghast fired the search committee and reconstituted it with A and E.

RB: Yeah, yeah.

NLB: Which is the Advisory and Executive Committee of the Corporation.

RB: Yup, yup. And so we –

NLB: You were on A and E.

RB: What?

NLB: You were on A and E.

RB: Yeah, I was on A and E, woa. Oops.

NLB: [Coughing] Excuse me.

**Track 3**

NLB: OK so we're recording again. We were both on A and E.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: And we were both on that search.

RB: Yeah, and so by that time Charlie had found somebody to handle things at TWA and was able to chair the committee and things went along much more –

**Track 4**

NLB: Emergency medical technician, but we have the thing turned on again so let's go back to that. OK so we're, we were on the, what turned out to be the search committee –

RB: Yeah, yeah.

NLB: For Howard Swearer.

RB: And at that point one of the first things we did was actually call Howard back because we knew that he finished his campaign, we knew that he had gotten a dean, and we said, "Hey, Howard, would you like to come in for an interview?" I think things went fairly quickly and fairly smoothly at that point.

NLB: You do remember, I'm sure, that famous meeting in the University Club where you and I were required to go in the back door.

RB: Yes, and I told Charlie Tillinghast, and embarrassed the hell out of him, that it must date back to the quaint old days when the only women that came in were women of ill repute. Charlie was so embarrassed, and you chewed him out, and –

NLB: And we, and we never again –

RB: Never went there again. Yeah.

NLB: Right.

RB: Yeah.

NLB: One of our smaller, but meaningful blows.

RB: No, Charlie was good about learning about gender issues. One of the things early on that I was trying to impress him about asking women to do things. Something came up in one of the first Corporation meetings I was at and somebody said, “Well, we’ll get the faculty wives to do that.” And Charlie looked over at me and said, “No, I don’t think we can do that sort of thing anymore. I think people would call that sexist.” And I thought, my gosh Charlie, you’re beginning to learn.

NLB: Yup.

RB: And he, he was, he was very good about –

NLB: He did.

RB: Learning.

NLB: He learned a lot.

RB: He learned a lot.

NLB: And quickly.

RB: And yeah, I mean –

NLB: And ungrudgingly.

RB: Yeah, I, I, I, I admired Charlie. I thought –

NLB: Me too.

RB: Because many men of his generation in the background had a much harder time dealing with that kind of issue.

NLB: Absolutely right.

RB: And the Corporation was full of them.

NLB: You also remember at that, that same university club meeting, we won't name names, that there was a groundswell for a particular candidate and –

RB: There was a groundswell for a candidate that you and I both know about. There was also a big groundswell –

NLB: Well you and I, you and I put that groundswell to rest. That was one of our –

RB: There was also a groundswell for another candidate who, who had been on the first search committee and that was bad. I mean my mother was getting phone calls about it. People were getting –

NLB: Your mother was getting phone calls? [laughter]

RB: My mother was getting them. I mean, this was really bad. I mean, I sat down with Charlie finally. I mean, because the faculty were beginning to catch on that there was a problem and they talked to me and I sat down with Charlie and told him that a, the faculty was concerned and b, that I was concerned. And gave him, and Charlie said, "I've been getting all this correspondence saying that we should elect this person." And I said, "Charlie, I think," and he said that he had had a conversation with the person before the search started and the person had said they definitely were not interested. And so Charlie went and talked to that individual and –

NLB: That's interesting because Charlie really liked Howard, I know. And –

RB: Oh yeah.

NLB: Was very happy when that –

RB: Was very happy, yeah.

NLB: That worked out.

RB: Yeah, and was very unhappy with this other individual for telling him one thing and then doing something behind his back.

NLB: Uh-huh. Well that's very interesting because I, I knew that you and I together had helped eliminate that one candidate. And now I'm finding out responsible for two, not just one, but two. And we got Howard Swearer and that was good.

RB: Yeah, it's a –

NLB: So, OK, so back up. You, you must've been a, we, we were both on A and E at that point?

RB: I think we were both on A and, we were both fellows at that time because I had started as soon as I got, as I said, as soon as I got on the fellows saying that we needed to have more than one fellow, that having a single woman there, yeah because they kept saying, "What do the women think?" And I said, "Women think different things. We need to have more than one woman here because I can't –"

NLB: Right. Can't speak for everybody. Neither can anybody else.

RB: And I give them credit. They were good about it. I mean or at least, at least they responded positively.

NLB: And so you served one term as a secretary or served –

RB: One term as secretary of the corporation.

NLB: Yeah, yeah. And, and, when, when did you get your honorary degree?

RB: When I finished, yeah so whatever that is. I guess it's '88 or thereabouts.

NLB: And they managed to, they must've managed to hold a meeting of the fellows without you so that, or did they wait a year?

RB: They, they managed to go around and do it behind my back.

NLB: And, but you were the secretary of the corporation? [5:00]

RB: Yes.

NLB: So who signed your degree?

RB: No, I did not sign my degree. I said to, I'm curious what happened when Ruth Simmons got the honorary degree from Brown, whether she signed her own or not because I said at the time, "It doesn't make much sense for me to sign my own diploma." And John Macintyre said, "We'll take care of this." And so my honorary degree is signed as the secretary is Josiah S. [Carbury?], Secretary Pro Tem in Absentia. [laughter]

NLB: John Macintyre was a clever, John Macintyre was the secretary to the uni, to the university, I guess.

RB: Yes.

NLB: Not to the Corporation which was you. And the long time aid of Presidents starting with Henry Wriston.

RB: Yes.

NLB: And the person behind the scenes who doubtless affixed the signature of Josiah S. Carbury, Secretary Pro Tem in Absentia to your honorary degree.

RB: Yes.

NLB: What, what else did you, other than Brown, what other volunteer civic activities have you been engaged in all these years?

RB: I was not a whole lot because of course I was working full time.

NLB: Right.

RB: Lincoln and I were both active in getting the Sierra Club started here in New Jersey. And Lincoln continued to do environmental work later in his career, moving out of physical chemistry and into environmental work. But, so that was something we were both interested in.

NLB: Are you an outdoor person or are you a camper and hiker and –

RB: We, we used to do a lot of it. I mean we've gotten to an age now where we don't anymore, but we used to like to go out to the southwest and camp and hike.

NLB: I see Lincoln was a Boy Scout. Were you a Girl Scout? Where'd you learn to camp and hike?

RB: I was a Girl Scout, yes, and learned to camp and hike and so fourth and so on. But my family liked to hike. My father would take me hiking. He enjoyed doing that.

NLB: Do you have brothers and sisters?

RB: No, I'm an only child.

NLB: You're an only child.

RB: And actually my, the strongest influence in my life was my mother's father, Joseph Lamber, who lived with us when I was small. He died just before I started school. But he was the person that got me up in the morning, read to me, taught me to read, and taught me a number of things. In addition to how to read, most important being that an educated person can't know everything, but they must know how to find out whatever it is they need to know. And he grilled that into me.

NLB: And this is before you started school?

RB: Before I started school.

NLB: Boy.

RB: And that, I think to a large degree that has made me the kind of person I am.

NLB: That's a wonderful theory of education in general isn't it?

RB: Yeah. I mean, he was born in 1847 so I'm a, as they say, a product of what it is to have a Victorian influence in your –

NLB: That's really, that's – say it again.

RB: That an educated person can't know everything, but it's important for them to be able to find out whatever it is they need to know.

NLB: That's a perfect definition of a liberal education.

RB: It is. Yes, yeah.

NLB: It is. What else do you want to add to this?

RB: I don't think anything else.

NLB: Have we covered everything you think is, that you'd like to leave for the ages?

RB: Well I'm, I'm proud that I was elected a fellow of the American Psychological Association, and a fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, and a fellow for the American Association for the Advancement of Science. I did, I think I did a good job in my career. I probably, if I had been more heavily focused on my career and less focused on Brown I might have done a little better, but –

NLB: Well those are three major distinctions thought.

RB: Yeah, but I'm not you know.

NLB: So professionally, were you active in professional associations as well?

RB: Yes I was. Yes, well, yeah.

NLB: What did, what did you do?

RB: Well, various boards and committees mostly. There was an American Educational Research Association had a part on research on women and of course I had chaired that for a while. I was on the publications committee. And I was, oh, American Psychological Association, after I became a fellow, I was on for a couple of terms for a committee to select other fellows for the Corporation, association. So that kind of –

NLB: Is it fair to say that, that in many respects you've had a standard, distinguished, professional career with constant emphasis on including women in various ways?

RB: I think including women. And as I got [10:00] further along I began to realize it was important to include other groups as well so I got very interested in minority issues. And later in my career at ETS I chaired the Graduate Record Examinations Board committee on doing research on minorities in graduate education. And, and I got interested in disability issues as well because, and I coedited a book for the American Psychological Association on the assessment of people with disabilities. So.

NLB: Ah, so that's interesting. So back, back to your origins in assessing. That's really what you'd been doing all along, various kinds of assessing.

RB: Yeah, because you want to, I mean there are talents there and how do you assess the talent if the person has got some disabilities? There's still many abilities there and how do you work around the area that is making it difficult to assess in a traditional way.

NLB: Yeah. Yeah. I, well, to me that's, that's so important is that people, people are so complicated and complex. And sounds like you've done more than your share of figuring out how to bring out the best in almost everybody.

RB: Well, that's what I would like to be able to do. I mean, that's –

NLB: Well, I will say thank you for that. I should just add that it has been enormously important to me to have you as a mentor all those years at Brown and in my life and I thank you –

RB: Thank you.

NLB: I thank you for that as well as for everything you've done for Brown.

RB: Well thank you for my voice [laughter].

NLB: We were a good team and I hope this interview will prove that. Thank you very much.

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