

Transcript – Yvonne Ruiz, class of 1977

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Track 1

Mary Murphy: OK. So good morning.

Yvonne Ruiz: Good morning.

MM: My name is Mary Murphy, and I'm the Nancy L. Buc Pembroke Center Archivist. I'm here today with a member of the Brown University alumnae community, who is back on campus for the all-class Black Alumnae Reunion – alumni reunion. So if you would please introduce yourself, and we'll just begin in conversation.

YR: OK. My name is Yvonne Ruiz. I'm a 1977 graduate of Brown University. I am Puerto Rican, original– my parents came to the mainland of the country back in 19–in the '50s. They were laborers. They worked in factories. They – my mother went as far as tenth grade, and my father went as far as third grade. They came to New York, and then they moved to [01:00] a small town in Somerville, New Jersey, which is where I grew up. And at that time, there weren't very many diverse people, people of color. There were – there was a Puerto Rican community, which I like to say is mainly my family, because I had aunts and uncles. Generally, a lot of times, Puerto Rican families stay very close to each other. So my mother had a sister come from Puerto Rico, had her brother come from Puerto Rico, and everybody lived within about three or four blocks of each other. And so I started out going to Catholic school, and then my parents couldn't afford to keep us there, so I ended up going to junior high and high school in the public school.

I was unique in the sense that being [02:00] a Puerto Rican and first generation with – aspiring to go to college. So sometimes, I felt like a little bit out of place, because I kind of felt

like people would say, “Well, what is this little Puerto Rican girl doing wanting to go to college and doing all that?” But I was very focused that that was what I was going to do, because I really believed that that was going to improve my life. It was – to me, it was very important. It was particularly important for my people to, in fact, do that, and that always was just something that was always on my mind. So I took college prep courses, and –

MM: Can I –

YR: Yeah.

MM: Do you remember, like, what – like, your youngest kind of like, “I want to go to col” – do you remember, like –

YR: You know –

MM: – where that was rooted? [03:00]

YR: – it’s really funny. It just – it was always there. I can’t think of a time where all of a sudden I had decided that I was going to do this. It was – I was always going to do it. So obviously, it became more focused when I got to junior high, and then of course in high school. And so I took college prep courses. I worked because, you know, I had to work. You know, my parents, they weren’t poor. I wouldn’t say we were poor, but, you know, both my parents had to work, and I always liked to work. So I started out with a paper route. I took over my brother’s paper route, and then I would babysit, obviously, and then I had job – I remember having a job at a bank. But I always worked, and I always worked in the summer too.

So when it came time to apply to schools, affirmative action was really, really at its height then [04:00], and –

MM: So this would have been 1973-ish?

YR: Right, yes. So that's when I started here at Brown. So I remember that there was this – well, I was looking at local schools, so I was looking at Rutgers, because I – there was also the financial concern too, of how I was going to, you know, pay for school. So I looked at Rutgers, which was a state school, and I – so I knew that that would be cheap. And at that time, Douglass was the female school, so I applied to Rutgers, Douglass. They had begun to, like take courses. You can take courses. I applied to the University of Bridgeport, and I applied to Boston College. I remember when I was looking at schools and how I came to apply to Brown, is this – I was in study hall [05:00], and there was this woman by the name of Lenny Gross. She was going to graduate in three years. So I said to her, I go, “Well, if you had anywhere where you could go, where would you go?” and she got this look on her face. She goes, “I'd go to Brown. That's where I'd go.” And I just remember that, and I remember that look on her face.

So I go, and I look up, and what's at Brown and stuff, and I remember I had a guidance counselor. My guidance counselor was a White guy, and then there was another guy in the counsel there who was an African-American woman, and her name was Bernice [Venable?]. So I remember talking to her and telling her where I was applied. At that point, I don't think I told her I had applied – was thinking about applying to Brown.

MM: Can I have the name of your school one more time?

YR: Somerville High School.

MM: OK.

YR: So when I told her, she goes, “Why are you applying to those schools? You should be applying to better schools.” Interesting the perspective of her, as opposed to the guy, the White guy, who was called Mr. [Demski?]. [06:00] So when I went into, you know – he goes, “Well you should apply to these schools,” which is the schools I talked about, but he said, “What is your dream school? I don't think you're going to get in, but what is your dream school?” And I said, “Well, my dream school is Brown University.” So he kind of looked at me, incredulous, and then he goes, “OK.”

So then at that time, you know, I didn't apply to as many schools, because it was expensive to apply, although most – I think all my fees were waived. My application fees were waived. So I applied, and I didn't have an interview, and I don't think Brown did a lot of interviews back then, but I'm not sure. But even had they, I wasn't sure I could get up here anyway, because, you know, we didn't have a lot of money, and I – in fact, I didn't do any interviews, and I didn't visit schools either. So they – you had to write an essay, and I remember there was a – Time Magazine had done an article about how [07:00] the different Latino groups were doing. Like, you know, the Mexicans, the Puerto Ricans, the Cubans, because people tend to put us all in one group, and we're not. We're all very distinct. You know, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, all that. So it kind of showed how each group was doing economically, and the Puerto Ricans were, like, at the bottom of that, and so I talked about that. I talked about the article and talked about this is why it's so important to go on to college and it's important to talk to other Latinos about that, the importance of education, and it was interesting, because my parents really didn't, but they were like – it was nothing that they knew about, right, because they just didn't. So – and my father really didn't understand. I think that was part of the whole sexual – you know, just because I was a girl, and there were, like, certain roles as a girl [08:00], and I had three brothers, but I was the one that I had all these chores I had to do every week.

So you know, there was not anyone that I could really talk to, although I had also made the decision that I was going to hang out with the kids who were going on to college. And in my school, it ended up being a lot of the Jewish kids, actually, and I had – and other kids too, but that's how I learned, like, what I was supposed to do, and who I could talk to, and what, you know, courses I could take. But as I grew older, my mother kind of got it, because I ended up going to law school. I'm a lawyer. Retired, but I'm a lawyer. So I applied, and I talked all about what that meant to me and the importance of education. So I didn't – so finally, I get a phone call one night, and it was another Latino guy. His name was Jose Santana, and he calls me up on the phone, and he, you know, [09:00] talked to me, and he goes, "Well, I want to tell you that you got in." I go, "What?" He goes, "You got" – I got in. I'm like, "Oh, jeez." And then I say to him – I remember saying to him –

MM: He was – I'm sorry, he was from the...

YR: Brown.

MM: Brown Admissions?

YR: Right, or he was – I don't know back then if they had a group like the Latino student –

MM: Like a peer-to-peer union, yeah.

YR: Yeah, like a peer group or – they must have, I would think. Anyway, he called me, and then I said, “Well, that's great, but I'm going to need money,” because I – you know, it was expensive. You know, back then, it was all relative. So he goes, “Don't worry about it. You will.” And that was it [laughter]. I remember going back to my guidance counselor, and I remember I said, “Guess what?” and he goes, “What?” “I got into Brown.” And he was like – he just was like, “Wow.” And I think I was the only one in my class to have gotten into an Ivy League school, and went.

MM: That must have been a learning experience for that man.

YR: Yeah. Well, one would hope. And I, you know – [10:00] but anyway, so then what happened was I was part of the transitional summer program, so they had picked certain students, which they felt, I guess, could use it. And I didn't feel I was, like, good, and it was, you know – it was a six-week program. We came up here, and we took three courses, and we had different folks talking to us, so we kind of knew what it would be like. And it was – and I remember walking and seeing the green, and knowing I had made the right choice. I mean, because I came here sight unseen, I just knew it was the – I could feel it, you know.

MM: That gives me goose bumps. It is such a beautiful campus.

YR: Yes. So the interesting thing is, up until this time, all of my friends were White. You know, there just weren't many African-Americans or Lati– but when I got into this program, it was, like, all minority. So it was – there was, you know. There was three, as I remember, Latino

women, including me, and of course the rest were [11:00] African-American. In fact, one of my best friends, who's here with me today, not the one that's downstairs, but another one, is where I met her. And so then it was really interesting. I always pride myself in, you know, I was able to go with the flow. It wasn't a big deal for me, but I also felt at that point that I belonged. I always had this sense of trying to find who I was and where I fit, especially given the fact that I was a Puerto Rican woman and my parents weren't educated. But I felt here, in hanging around with this group, that I didn't have to worry about, like, somebody's parents going to like me, I mean, was there going to be any issue of prejudice or anything about me. And so I really felt comfortable, and it really helped me to be ready to come to school here in the fall. [12:00]

That was a really good experience, and then I actually became a counselor in that program my junior year. I decided – when I started taking classes, I took English classes, Spanish classes, and French classes, because I had taken French all through high school, and I'd taken some Spanish, and even – my parents were Spanish speaking but learned how to speak English, and what we would do is that they would talk to us in Spanish, my brothers, and then we would answer in English. So they didn't – you know, in some households, you had to speak Spanish, but my parents weren't like that in terms of making us, you know, speak Spanish and only Spanish, and I think that was helpful in that you have to know English. I mean, you just do. And you can still save your – you know, keep your language, but I think even now, and this is mainly with folks – not so much Puerto Ricans, but some Puerto Ricans, but mainly more the immigrants that come to this country don't learn English, [13:00] and it's just hard. It's just hard, because they stay within their group, and everybody speaks Spanish, but in order to make it in this country you have to, you know, you have to learn English.

So anyway – so I took all language, and then I decided to major in Spanish Culture and Literature, and my – you know, I tell people when I came to Brown, I met this African-American guy. He was, like, really militant, right. It was really – So he, like, really influenced me about this militancy about race and stuff, and so when I was, like, my first year, like, I wouldn't talk to White people, which was so dumb, but, you know, I think the pendulum had to swing for me, so I could find, you know, the road for me that would be fine. But that ended after my first or second year, and then I decided I needed to be open to everyone. I mean, my girlfriend Kim, downstairs, her roommate was White, so – and very nice. When my [14:00] – we picked our roommates from TSB, so my first roommate was African-American, and then my second-year

roommate was a woman that was in the program too. Her name was [Alice Biñero?], and she was Puerto Rican.

But I found my experience to be really good. I mean, I loved going to school here. I loved the mode of thought courses that they had, and if truth be told, one of the reasons it was great coming here is I didn't have to take a math class, because I just wasn't really good at math or science. So you know, I really liked that. One thing I tell people about why I loved Brown so much was the fact – and I just recently told somebody, is that people here, the students here, at least when I went here – I don't know what it's like now – they were interested in more than just going to class and doing their work. They were interested in community outside of Brown, although my girlfriends and I were talking [15:00], and we said we never really ventured out to the community, which we should have done more. But I mean, students cared about what was going on in the world and politics, which leads me to I was part of the takeover of '75. So that was – we were talking about it in the car, and I remember –

MM: Can you tell – for our listeners. We're going to be streaming this.

YR: Yeah. So we – so the talk – so there had been some talk about doing something to make the university aware of the fact that they weren't doing a good job in bringing a diverse student body here, even though they talked about it. So I wasn't one that was planning it, but you know, we knew that we – you knew about it, you heard about it.

MM: Was there a specific student group that was at the core of that? Do you recall?

YR: I think the organization [16:00] of United Af– what was the name of that group? Organization of United African Peoples, or something. I don't know. I'm sure that my girlfriend that you're going to talk to will know more about that, because she was more involved, as I recall. So it was talk, and then, you know, the what were we going to do? And so they had decided what they were going to do was to take over University Hall, and I remember we were meeting in Churchill House.

MM: I was wondering. Set the scene.

YR: Yeah, we were meeting at Churchill House the night before, because we wanted to find out what could happen to us and whether or not, if we got charged, what would happen, what could the charges be, and one was conspiracy to – I don't know – for disorderly conduct. I'm not sure what it was. So they kind of talked to us about it, and it was, you know, arguably you could be charged now with conspiracy, because it was an agreement, [17:00] and sometimes you didn't have to have a – like when I practiced, all you have to have, the agreement, and then you had to have what was called an overt act, and I think in Rhode Island, you didn't have to have the overt act. So we were like, "OK. We're ready," but we were scared. I mean, I remember we were scared, and then we got up really, really early the day that we were going to take the building over, because we needed to be over there before – I don't know how we got in either.

But anyway, so I remember walking across. I was at Pembroke, so we walked across over to University Hall. It was dark, dark outside, and some folks got in. There were certain folks that were designated to get in, and then the rest of us, what we did was to march around University Hall. And then, you know, of course it got like students were coming out, going to class, and stuff like that, and then obviously we had [18:00] representatives who made our demands known to the university. At that time, the president was Swearer. He was the president. And so we worked out something that in fact they were going to try – they were going to institute new policies to try to get more folks of color and diverse folks into Brown. I don't know how well they've done. It's been a long time, but that was real – that was an interesting...

MM: And how long did that takeover go on? Was it a day?

YR: Well, so we s– Yeah. So we – I remember – I think we might have taken over the building on – it was a Thursday or a Friday, but what was really interesting is that something was going on with the frats, and they were pissed, that they thought we were ruining the whole thing. I mean, it was – I don't think it was a racist thing, but all the frats were White [19:00], because when there was – when I was here, they started the AKAs, which was African-American, the Deltas, and then the Alphas, which were the guys, but we didn't have a house – they didn't have a house or anything like that. But yeah, I think there was going to be some kind of frat weekend or something like that. They were really mad. So I think that, in a sense, helped matters to move

things along, because I remember, like, by Saturday, I think it was over. But that was a very, very interesting experience.

Then, you know, after that, it's like – I tell people all the time. I go, “You know I had my life planned up until I was going to college, and then I didn't have my life planned after. I didn't know what I was going to do.” And here, when you go to a place like Brown, for the most part everybody's going on to school, right? My two best friends that are here with me, Kim went on to law school at Yale, and then Stephanie, who's with us, went on to Harvard, to the John F. Kennedy school [20:00]. So I was like, “What am I going to – I don't know what I'm going to do.” And I was thinking about, like, getting a master's, but then at one point, I said, you know what, I said, “Yvonne, you've got to stop, because you don't know what you want to do, and you don't want to feel like you're doing this because everybody else was doing it.” So I ended up getting a job with the United Way of America, which was like an internship program, which actually is their way to develop executives. I did one year of that, and I lived – I wanted to live in another part of the country, other than along the east coast, so I lived in Omaha. I lived in – for six months in Omaha, six months in White Plains, New York, and then I moved to Denver and lived there for four years.

So I knew that I wanted to go back to school, and I knew I wanted to go full time, but, again, I was at the point – and I didn't want to wait too long, because I was afraid if I waited too long, and I knew I wanted to come back to the east coast, because I felt very isolated. I mean, I was there with a boyfriend and stuff like that, but my family was back [21:00] here. And so, again, I'm going through the process, like, “Where am I going to go?” And again, it ca– it was basically a process of elimination, where I go to – where I ended up deciding, “OK. Law school sounds good,” because it taught you a way to think to look at issues from both sides, which, to me, if I didn't decide to practice law, I think it was applicable in other jobs.

So I ended up applying to several schools, and I ended up going to Boston University. Now that was a very different experience from Brown. Now, number one, I take into account that it's a professional school, but I tell people all the time, I never felt like a minority until I got there. It was really, really bad. And as my girlfriend who went to law school there too said, it was oppressive, which I found to be an interesting word. And it was like there weren't a lot of minorities there. They had what's called the retention program [22:00], which I thought was an awful name, and it was kind of pretty well-known, and what it would be is like there were certain

professors, like the civil procedure professor. There was a writing professor that would kind of help us. Even though they say the grading system was supposed to be anonymous, there were five sections in the school, and in one of the sections, they placed no minorities. Now, because there were certain professors – two of them were known to fail minorities. So here I walk into this place. I'm like, "Oh my god, where have I come to?" and I worked for four years, and I had a pretty responsible position, so I was like, "Oh, good goodness." But look, you know, we bonded together, the few minorities that were there.

MM: And how many women were there?

YR: Oh, well – you know, I don't know how many women there were. I was more concentrating on the minority aspect of it [23:00], so I don't know.

MM: This would have been the mid-80s too, so it would have been really --

YR: Yes, I went from 1981 to 1984. So there weren't a lot of women. There were Latinas. I had a roommate who was – she was from the Bahamas, I think. And anyway, but we all just stayed together. And then you'd meet students. Like your first year is big thing with study groups, right, and to get the best study group, and I couldn't find anybody – the White students didn't want me in their study group, right. So we had formed our own with certain minorities, so that was really bad.

And then another thing is that I kind of felt like they thought I didn't deserve to be there, a lot of these White students. And don't even – and then if I told them I went to Brown behind that, they were, like, really upset about it, beca– [24:00] and they weren't obvious about it, but you could just feel it, you know? And so – because they felt like we d– I didn't belong there. And I would say to them, I'd go, "Look, let me tell you something. OK about affirmative action. That's true. It's leveling the playing field. But guess what? Affirmative action didn't keep me at Brown, and affirmative action is not going to keep at this law school either. I'm going to keep myself there," and that usually would shut them up. But it was really – it was not a good experience, but I will say –

MM: (inaudible) – I’m sorry.

YR: Yeah, I will say I did get a good education there. So I mean, I give credit where credit is due, but it was a little bit –

MM: It was actual confrontations with people, where they were in your face?

YR: Well, you could more feel it, because people aren’t like they are now, will talk to you in your face. I mean, you could just feel it. You could tell by the look on their face. I didn’t – we didn’t interact a lot with the White students. It was just bad. It was a – [25:00] Now as I got into my second and third year, it got a little bit different, because it’s a lot of hype your first year of law school, especially back then, but the second and third year, to me, it was like, “I don’t know what the hype is all about. There’s not so much hype here.” So it became better from that sense. And again, minorities, we stuck together, and we supported each other, and that’s what really helped us.

And I began to start talking in classes when we did Constitutional Law and the Bakke decision, and what was really interesting, I was applying to a fellowship called the Whitney Young Fellowship for my second year of law school, which paid everything, and I remember that my constitutional law professor said to me, he goes, “I know something about you,” and I’m like, “What does he know about me?” And that’s all he said to me. And then I got the fellowship, and then when I saw him again, he goes, “I was just so happy to be able to [26:00] talk about you, when” – because he was on the committee to pick the person with the fellowship. So that was really nice.

MM: That’s wonderful.

YR: Yeah. So then I went – what I did was I applied for different jobs, and I ended up in Philadelphia at the district attorney’s office at a law school, and I was there for 33 years.

MM: Whoa.

YR: That was really interesting. I got – I was – what had happened was I was forced to retire because there was a new administration, and he’s controversial – he’s progressive – and there were certain people he didn’t want there. And I didn’t have a problem with – if you don’t want me there, fine. If you don’t think I fit into what you want to do with this office. I just didn’t like the way it happened. It was not professional. You know, but I had a great career. [27:00] I’ve been in Philadelphia longer than I’ve been anywhere. I felt like I wore the white hat, protecting the community and stuff. It wasn’t perfect. The criminal justice system is not perfect.

MM: Can you tell us a highlight of your legal career, a case that really stuck with you? I don’t know if you can share that.

YR: Well, I did a lot of different cases. Before I went to the homicide unit, I did child abuse cases, which were really difficult. In Penn – in Philadelphia, one of the things that we were proud of is the fact that our unit would try cases, even though there wasn’t any corroborating evidence, because what happens is a lot of these kids don’t report right away. OK. So you don’t have any physical evidence, right. And most of the time, even if they did report, it’s not like you’re going to find scarring in the vagina and stuff like that. So I had this little girl. Her name was Ilene Rivera. I will never forget her. [28:00] Cute, cute little girl, and she was, like, six or seven, and her father had abused her, and she had gotten gonorrhea. But I had corroborating evidence there, because the mother got gonorrhea too, so everybody had gotten it. So that was obviously – it was –

MM: A link.

YR: –that evidence that the father had done it. So apparently, she wouldn’t talk about the incident, and you have to make sure that the children are competent, so they know the difference between the truth and a lie, and that makes them competent to swear that they’re going to tell the truth. So she was really good at that. You would say to them, “OK. If I’m wearing a white shirt, is that true or fal– is that” –

MM: Yes.

YR: –“right or wrong?” And she goes, “Yes, it’s true.” She was very good at that. Then when I started asking her about what happened, she like shut down. OK. Fine. I said, “But you know – you understand that when you go see the judge, you have to talk.” “Oh yes, oh yes, I’m going to do it.” OK. Fine. So she comes in the court, and she just looks beautiful. Oh, and we always used to tell the kids, “Is there’s something that you want to bring, a toy or something?” [29:00] She goes, “Yes, can I bring Stephanie?” I go, “OK. You can bring Stephanie.” So in she comes, and Stephanie was called a [puffalo?]. Was, like, this big doll. So she brings Stephanie in, and Stephanie’s sitting next to her. So I called the therapist first, because she was what’s called the prompt compliant witness, and she said she did it. That’s how she got the child to talk, with puppets.

So then she comes in. So we go through the same thing, right. She’s great on the competency stuff, and then when it comes time to talk about the incident, she won’t talk about it. So we try with that, and then the judge, bless his heart, says, “Do you think Stephanie could tell us?” because he had just seen the therapist. She goes, “No.” [laughter] So the next thing, he goes to him, he goes – He was an older Italian. He goes, “What are we going to do?” I said, “She’ll write it,” because that’s how I got – he goes, “Well, that’s what we’ll do. Well, you’ll ask the question,” and that’s how we got her testimony out [30:00], and then we just handed it as an exhibit to the jury, so they could look at it. So that was -- even out of my homicide cases, I mean, that case sticks in my mind.

MM: Wow.

YR: Yeah, and they convicted him. At that time, it was a mandatory five to ten years, and he went to prison. The other thing that I really remember about the case was her mother had really bad eyesight, so when I asked her to read something – she had these really thick glasses on – she had to go this close. So I’m thinking to myself, “Well, no wonder he could get away with – she can’t really see,” yeah. So that was really, really good.

MM: How did you carry that weight? It sounds like a particularly serious career area.

YR: Yeah. Well –

MM: An evil area.

YR: Well, we had a really good unit. A lot of those women that were in my unit are my best friends now, and –

MM: Were they mostly women?

YR: Yes, they were mostly women. It's interesting. [31:00] We had one guy, who didn't last very long in the unit. Now there were more men in it, but there were mainly women, and I think that a lot of us, when we talked about it, I think that the reason that we gravitated towards this, and doing this, and we were good at it, that there was something in our childhood -- not necessarily sexual assault, but that was kind of tough for us, and that's why I think that we, you know, did the – wanted to do this. So we helped each other, and after a while, you had to be tough, you had to be a bit thick-skinned about it, because you couldn't do the cases –

MM: Had to draw an emotional barrier somewhere.

YR: Right, right. So we had different DA specialized in different areas, like older kids. I got a girlfriend who specialized in adolescents, because they were very, very tough, because they really knew the implications of everything that had happened [32:00], and what was really hard is the fact that sometimes I'd walk into a courtroom, and the mother would be sitting on the defendant's side, because she took the defendant's side and didn't believe her child, and they had to then take the child out, and that to me was even harder on the kids than – especially the older ones. But I felt really, really good about that, and if we believed the kids, and we had no reason to believe that they were making it up, we went forward with the case, and we pretty successful. So –

MM: Can I ask, as you're talking about this, as we kind of are in this nation right now, in this moment, looking at the Kavanaugh appointment with your legal background, do you have any, I mean –

YR: Oh, I believe her.

MM: Looking in at that case, do you have any thoughts about what's happening?

YR: Well –

MM: It's a timely moment for you to donate your interview.

YR: Well, I mean, when you sit here, [33:00] and you look at what happened with Anita Hill, at least they gave her the courtesy to call witnesses, if she so chose, so she was ready, because my girlfriend that you're going to talk to was a witness, or was a potential witness. She was sitting right behind Anita, but she never called her. In this particular case, I mean, they just don't even want to do that, and they're all a bunch of White guys, old White guys, that are the ones that don't want it. There is a witness there, this guy named Judge, who claims that he – at one point he says, "I don't remember." Then he says, "It never happened." Well, if you don't remember, then how can you say it never happened? Apparently, he was a very bad alcoholic, which, as a teen, which is a piece of cooperation when she says that they were stumbling drunk, because that's how she describes the two of them to be, Kavanaugh and the other guy, and Judges was [34:00] the one that cheered him on, but Kavanaugh was the one that did it.

You know, my attitude is that after all these years, she's going to come out, and she's going to lie about this, and she's going to put herself in a situation where now she's getting threats? She's had to move her family because of all the threats she was getting. She gets nothing out of this, except she felt the need that she had to say something, and a lot of times they do want to remain anonymous. They're really criticizing Feinstein for it. I learned the other day that in fact she was up for reelection this past time, for primary, and that might have been why she didn't release the stuff, which, to me, I'm like, "Oh, well that's not good," and I believe it. I believe it, because look at the controversy. But I think – she'll say, "Well, she wanted me to be – wanted the woman to be kept anonymous." [35:00] She still could have said something, even to her democratic colleagues.

So I believe her, and when he says it never happened, it doesn't surprise me that he says that. They can't come to terms with it. I think he's kind of a – apparently he quoted two years ago, in 2015, three years ago, he said something like, “What happens at Georgetown Prep stays at Georgetown Prep.” Well, let me tell you something. Those words are going to come back to haunt him. And again, another kind of piece of corroboration. And there was an article that I didn't read in the Washington Post about stuff that went on at Georgetown Prep, and the interesting thing is the whole Title IX stuff that's going on now, and what's going on on campuses, and the fact that campuses and private schools did not report what they needed to report in these assaults, because back then they just didn't do it. [36:00] There have been a couple of private schools that have had – and I think it might have been – not Andover, but one of the schools up here, where they had to do a big investigation on it, and in fact it was going on. So the article, at least the title of the article, talked about all of the sexual assault that actually did go on at Georgetown.

And now I think, again, with the Title IX, it's slowing the pendulum. It's almost certain cases that I don't know if it's worth somebody getting expelled from school, especially in cases where it might be not – you don't know if it's consensual, if the two start drinking, and all this other stuff. And the fact that she says that it has affected her life is another piece of corroboration. They should have the therapist come in. They should have this Judge guy come in, but they just don't want to do that, because they want to rush this. [37:00] It's just going to be really interesting to see what happens. Now she's saying that she will, under certain circumstances. But their whole thing is they want him in there and done before the midterms.

MM: Can I bring this back –

YR: Yeah.

MM: –to – we have about ten minutes left here in the interview. The atmosphere on campus when you were in college, around sexuality, safety on campus, sexual harassment, and assault, do you – what was the – at the time. I mean, now we're so aware of – because of Title IX offices and the work they're doing around safety on campus. Do you have any memory of where that

was at the time or if women felt supported if they had incidences happen to them? Men or women, I guess, or – what was the atmosphere around (inaudible)?

YR: I never remembered even being concerned about any of that, not about campus safety, not about – [38:00] I don't remember that there was a lot of drinking. I mean, we did drink, but I think people smoked pot more than that. So I don't remember any of that. I don't remember anything about sexual harassment. I just don't. I don't think it was something that – at least I was not aware that it went on, although I did – did I not read a story about something that went on here though recently, about some – or a couple years ago?

MM: Well, there's been a number of issues over the years.

YR: Yeah.

MM: In the 1990s, again, it's sort of interesting it coincided with the Anita Hill era. There was some issues on campus, and women kind of publicly exposed. They did a list of names.

YR: Was it guys and professors too?

MM: No, I think it was just students on campus who had victimized others, and so then it was – [39:00] I think it was known as The Rape List, and they put it into a bathroom stall, and that made the Brown Daily Herald, and there was a huge to-do about it, and the university attempted to, like, clean it up, and then the women went back in guerilla fashion, did it again, and so it was, like, very hardcore, and then subsequent issues today. But I was just wondering...

YR: Yeah, no. I don't – I mean, it'd be interesting when you talk to other women that went to school when I went to school. I just never felt it. I also felt like my personality, nobody would dare to come on to me like that, because I'd be like – I mean, they just – just by the way I appear, because, I mean, people will tell you, I look people up and down, I don't look particularly friendly. So I don't think that – they'd know better. So yeah, but I didn't get any sense that there was [40:00] any kind of issues like that.

MM: Well, so then I will ask that we use our last – you’ve got eight minutes left in this interview – to, in your wrap-up time, if you have any final thoughts that you just want to make sure that we have for the record.

YR: Well, I want to say that I loved Brown. I loved it. My girlfriends’ kids are applying to school. I go, “Are any of them applying to Brown?” Of course, I can’t get any of them to come here. I don’t know why. “It’s really hard to get into.” I go, “Well, yeah, I know.” Brown is different, and Brown will always be different, because of the not-required courses and stuff, but I got a really good education here. I feel like I found myself here. I became confident in myself and who I am, and proud to be Puerto Rican, and carried that with me. [41:00] It helped me at law school. And I think I met my best friends here, two of my best friends, that we’ve been friends ever since and in touch. You say Brown, and 40 years later, it’s still people look at you, and they’re impressed.

And this job, recent job, I have a cup that says 1977 Graduate Brown, and I have it in this new place where I’m working, and this guy comes walking by. He goes, “Oh, you went to Brown?” I go, “Yes, I did.” And he goes, “Yeah, Brown is like that granola kind of school,” because we are different. Brown is different. I mean, with the non-required courses and modes of thought. And he goes, “No, I’m not saying it’s not a good school, but it’s kind of like that granola.” I’m like, “Yeah. OK.” I thought it was really funny. And I go, “Well, did your daughter apply?” and she goes, “No.” [42:00] And she’s at Brandeis. When he said, “You eat granola, but it’s really good.”

MM: The hippy ivy.

YR: Yeah, yeah, and I think it’s not ranked as high as some of the others, because I think there are no required – there’s still no required courses here, right?

MM: You don’t have to have a –

YR: A major.

MM: Yes.

YR: Yeah, right.

MM: Sort of focus on concentration, not majors.

YR: Exactly, right. But it's just I felt privileged to have gone here, especially with given my background and where I came from, and it just will always hold a special place in my heart. Now BU's a different thing. Every time I see the alumni, I don't really want anything to do with them. But it is. It was a wonderful place to go to school, and it was a good size. I didn't want a really big place. Providence was fine. Providence has really changed. It's really nice, but – and I hope – I was sad to hear about some of that stuff that you were talking about, the rape stuff. [43:00] I was sad to hear about that. I'm very happy that we're having this alumni weekend. I know it's the second one. And I really do hope that Brown is doing the things they need to do to make it a diverse campus. I don't know how they've done. I was very proud of the fact that they had the president, who's going to be speaking this week, the African-American.

MM: Ruth Simmons.

YR: Yeah. So I thought – I was very proud about –

MM: (inaudible).

YR: Yeah. I was very proud that Brown – I think she probably was the first woman of color in a major university?

MM: I think at any – well, for sure any ivy league institution, maybe even – she was the first of many things, I will say that.

YR: Yes, right, right. So I was –

MM: And her portrait in Sayles Hall is just beautiful, if you haven't seen it.

YR: Where?

MM: Her portrait, her presidential portrait. [44:00] It's really for women's history on campus to see. That hall, of course, needs more diversity around its portraiture, but her portrait is big, and it's centered, and it's just really beautiful.

YR: Oh, that's good.

MM: So it's really something to visit and see.

YR: Yeah. Well, that's good, yeah. So that's my thought. I'm really happy to be back here. I haven't been back in almost 40 years, so...

MM: Wonderful. OK. Well, thank you very much. I'm going –

YR: Thank –

MM: –to wrap up with that. And if I can just ask you a quick –

YR: Sure.

MM: –question. Where are you employed now? If you want. You don't have to share that.

YR: Well, I have a part-time job at the Philadelphia Bar Association, and what I do is I'm the staff attorney that does information and referral. So they'll call – folks will call when they need an attorney. So I've just been doing that recently, since I retired in January.

MM: OK. Thanks. That'll help me.

- END -