

Transcript – Judith Vivienne Korey [Charles] '45 [started as Class of 1946 but graduated one year early in June 1945]

Narrator: Judith Vivienne Korey [Charles]

Interviewer:

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Track 1

Q: [00:00] This is April 25th, and this is an interview with Judith Korey Charles, Pembroke Class of 1946. And maybe we could start with your telling me a little bit about your family, where you're from, and I guess, just if you had any siblings, things like that.

Judith Korey Charles: I was born in New York but raised in Providence, Rhode Island. My father was an attorney, and my mother also was involved in the business world. She handled the advertising for a chain of supermarkets, which was unusual for a woman at that time. And [01:00] she didn't feel she was doing this, I believe, as a form of self-expression or independence. But you must remember, that this was during the Depression, and it was out of economic necessity. And I, as a child, was not particularly proud of the fact that my mother was doing this interesting work. I think I would have preferred that she, like so many of the other ladies I knew, spent her time going to luncheons and being on charitable committees. Now, as I look back on it, I consider that she was a pioneer and was really making her mark in what was not really quite a field for [02:00] women at that time. The fact that I ended up in advertising probably has a little connection with what she was doing, because she shared very little of what she did with me. But I've always been amused that somehow, I didn't realize at the time, I was, indeed, carrying on the family tradition of working in the field, and being very much an independent woman. And while I think my mother would probably – she would probably have to say— well, she's just working "because we need the money." I seem to recall that our financial situation improved a great deal, and she continued [03:00] working, I suspect, because she really enjoyed it.

Q: What was your father's attitude about your mom working?

JKC: I think it bothered him because it reflected on his own, at the time, inability to – sufficient to keep the family going.

Q: This is, just, interests me. Do you have any strong memories of, I guess you must have, Providence when you were younger?

JKC: Oh, of course, I –

Q: Because it must have, obviously, changed an awful lot.

JKC: It has changed but, actually, the part of Providence that I knew best – the east side – has changed much less than such [04:00] areas in other cities. It has remained a beautiful, residential district, and I can go back to the walk where I lived and it, if anything, is even lovelier with even more beautiful plantings of bushes and flowerbeds. And that has not changed. The downtown area, which I remember, has not fared as well. Although in recent years, there's been an attempt to bring it back by creating a pedestrian mall, and they have redeveloped the historic Arcade, which is now filled with charming boutiques. I remember the Arcade as [05:00] having shops that I didn't particularly care to go to as a child, but was occasionally dragged to, along with my mother, where she might go to the optician or to the shop that sold notions and sewing goods. And I thought they were very boring as a child. And that was my childhood impression of the Arcade, and it has since been turned into a very exciting shopping experience. Providence, as I knew it, was where I lived, which hasn't changed. And, of course, Brown campus which has changed, but only for the better. It has expanded and has many more buildings of new and very contemporary [06:00] architecture. I remember Brown more as for its Federalist architecture.

Q: How did you decide to go to Brown?

JKC: Again, it was a question of economic necessity, in that I had wanted to go to Wellesley. And my parents said, fine, if you can get a scholarship to go to Wellesley, you may. Well, it – I was offered a scholarship, but for the grand sum of \$100, which wasn't quite enough to cover both tuition and room and board. And so the compromise was that I would go to Pembroke, and that if the financial situation changed, I would be allowed to move into [07:00] dormitory space. So therefore, the last two years at Pembroke, I did live on the top floor of Miller Hall. But within a few weeks of the time that I entered Pembroke, of course, I felt so much at home there, I felt that it was so right for me, I made so many already fast friendships that I couldn't conceive of my going any place else. And I think that's generally what happens with most any college that someone ends up at. It becomes the only possible college for them. So I have no regrets, and I did get both the experience of living at home, and then living in a dormitory. And of course, the dormitory experience was a far richer one and [08:00] certainly, much less taxing on me, in the way of travel time. I immediately threw myself into lots of extracurricular activities, and was on campus many long hours, well into the evening, and it was much more comfortable for me to just go right into the dormitory.

Q: Were there any difficulties with your family about you going to college?

JKC: Oh, no, it was considered a given that I would be going to college. And I attended, in Providence, Classical High School, which is almost totally college preparatory, studied four years of Latin, three years of Greek. And it was [09:00] everyone – my friends were going to college, and many of them ended up with me at Pembroke or at Brown.

Q: Do you remember your family having expectations about what you would do with your education?

JKC: I was expected to have a career of some sort. The feeling was that I had a good brain and that I was – they recognized that I was ambitious. And I think they felt that I would do something other than just marry right after college and settle [10:00] down. I don't know if they expected me to get involved in advertising. Once they realized that I did not want to be a teacher or a social worker, the goal I think they had set for me – I know they had set it for me – was to be a

lawyer, like my father. And I thought that was a rather charming idea at the time, and I studied political science, and I made sure I took constitutional law, and I really was gearing myself for a career as [11:00] Judith Charles, Grove & Smarty. There were, at that time, a lot of movies with Rosalind Russell and maybe Joan Fawcett, about women who were making it in the man's world, and somehow that appealed to me. And I actually did go to Columbia Law School for one year, at which point I decided that this was dumb, that this was not going to be the kind of thing I would be happy doing, that I just did not want to get myself involved in the nitty gritty of legal problems, that I wanted to do something more creative. And I decided to take a year away from law school and see what else there was in the world out there. I think I, [12:00] in the back of my mind, realized that I was just playing out a fantasy, rather than something that I really, really would be happy doing. And so I knew that one talent that I had was being able to write. I enjoyed writing, and so I tried to get a job first with a newspaper, with magazines, and then someone suggested that I might like to be an advertising copywriter. And I made the rounds of some of the advertising agencies, and was not too successful in landing anything there. And then one day, I saw this ad in the Sunday Times, as part of Gimbels' regular consumer advertising. It was a little block on the page that said, "Copywriters wanted. [13:00] Ivy League graduates preferred. Your Phi Beta Kappa key is your key to a career in advertising." And I said, well, that's describing me. And I went out there, with my little portfolio of great literary essays that I had written, and some of the things I had written for the school newspaper, and I met this hugely dynamic woman, rather huge woman – fat and not at all like Rosalind Russell. She was a great big slob of a woman, but she knew advertising, and she [14:00] had done a tremendous amount of creative work for both Macy's and then for Gimbels. And she was almost frightening in the way she said, "All right, what can you do?" And she bestowed upon me this great honor of giving me a job, at all of \$25 a week, as a messenger in the mailroom of Gimbels advertising department.

Q: Starting from the bottom?

JKC: On the absolute bottom. And after a couple of months of running proofs of ads all over the store, and incidentally, getting to know every last square inch of that store, and of pasting ads into scrapbooks and doing all kinds of dirty work, I was [15:00] finally given enough maturity to be a copy cub, writing advertising for Gimbels' basement store. So I was still on the ground,

working my way up, practically. But I discovered I enjoyed it immensely, trying to be creative and even having – even when I was doing these boring sale ads where you would write one-liners in boxes above. I would see the store open at 9:30 in the morning, and thousands of people were crushing up against the doors, waiting for the store to open, and while they were waiting, they were clutching in their hot little hands, the ad that I had written. It was a wonderful feeling, and I have carried that concept through this very day in the work I do, that there is only [16:00] one real test of what good advertising, what good communication is, and that is, can you get the reader to do something you really want, like come at 9:30 in the morning into your store?

Q: Did you ever feel when you were in college, knowing that you wanted a career, when you were just starting out, that you were somehow different, that you were part of a new trend of women working, or something like that?

JKC: Yes, I knew that I was part of, just, a very – a group of very few women at Pembroke who were really into careers. But there was something happening while I was at Pembroke, and that was the war. And I remember [17:00] there were a right number of chapels, at which Dean Morriss would speak, and she would tell us that our primary goal in college, at this time, was to prepare ourselves for working in the war industry. And that those of us who had talent in math or in chemistry and the sciences had a great obligation to take a job that would free up a man to go into the service, and that would help gear up our still lagging war industry. And while she applauded some of the volunteer efforts that were going on, she said the most important thing for us as women in college to do, [18:00] was to prepare for jobs. And this, of course, was something totally different from what was being taught us earlier on, that we were to prepare ourselves for volunteer work, for adding culture to the lives of the families that we would have. And while this was being told to us as, primarily, an interim measure because of the war, I think a lot of it took hold, and that many of us were inspired to go on and to continue on. And while I never got involved in the war industry, being particularly terrible at math, I still [19:00] took these words to heart and felt encouraged, in my desire for a career.

Q: When that, once the war was over, I've heard there was an awful lot of propaganda, trying to get women out of the office or out of the factory into the home. What sort of effect did that have on you?

JKC: That had not too great an effect on me because I was involved in retail advertising, which had, more or less, a tradition of women in the field. For instance, Bernice Fitz-Gibbon, who gave me my first job. And both in the advertising and the retailing, and as in the executive offices, there were women in retail. I'll never forget Dorothy Shaver, who was President of Lord & Taylor. There were lots of other women [20:00] who were making it. But, yes, I observed them when my friends, that despite what Dean Morriss was telling us, the rush was on to get pinned, to get engaged, to get married the minute you graduated from college, and you worked only as long as your fiancé or your husband was overseas. But as soon as he came back, then you, zoom, bought that little house in the suburb and started having children, and the result, of course, was the Baby Boom. And many, many of my classmates did just that. And, for one reason or another, I did not. I think the reason was that I did not connect up with any man that [21:00] appealed to me, or to whom I might have appealed. And somehow, I was already on my career track by the time any man gave me a really genuine proposal of marriage –

Q: An offer you couldn't refuse?

JKC: – and at that time, I was already so pleased with my career, that most of the men I met did not meet my standards for a really dynamic person. And I didn't get married until much, much later on.

Q: How much contact did you have with the Dean while you were at Pembroke?

JKC: A great deal of contact. Pembroke [22:00] classes were small, and she was very much in evidence. I was active in many – countless organizations. I was an editor of, then later managing editor of, well, first, the Brown, you know, the *Pembroke Record*, and then the combined newspaper, the *Brown Herald Record*. And so that, I would frequently call upon the Dean to get information for the newspaper. There was chapel twice a week, and after chapel, there would –

well, the chapel would either be a guest clergyman or a – once a weekend – the other weekend would be a secular chapel, and there would be a secular guest [23:00] speaker. And after chapel, the Dean would have luncheon in Alumnae Hall, and she would invite selected students to come and meet the guest speaker, and I, on a number of occasions, had an opportunity to be a guest at one of the Dean's luncheons. She was, very much, in evidence.

Q: I'm interested in how you developed a sense of appropriate roles for women while you were at Pembroke. It sounds like you had a notion that there were a lot of options.

JKC: There were options, and we were given – being given several different messages at once. One, go and have a career, your country needs you. And the other was, a woman [24:00] who should get an education so that she will be capable of being an ornament to the family, to provide the music and art and the literature for the family, that she would bring the social graces into the family. There was emphasis on a great deal of tea pouring going on at various meetings that we had at Pembroke. And I had a number of opportunities to pour tea for visiting guests and for just people attending meetings, which, I think, I'm glad for. I think it is important to be able to be a gracious hostess, in addition to running [25:00] a good business meeting. And certainly, that kind of knowledge has helped me all through my life, as I am active in many community organizations, and many organizational meetings are being held right here in this apartment. And I can't get away from my background, and I still – I feel a great obligation to make sure there's a pot of coffee and some nice cookies waiting, no matter who or what the business is, because that's just something that you just do in my old world.

Q: How did you make sense of these conflicting messages while you were at Pembroke?

JKC: Oh, by selecting the one that suited me the most.

Q: Did you feel a sense of conflict, [26:00] of obligation, to provide a home and get married, and this and that?

JKC: You know, oddly enough, I didn't. I think I would have liked to have been part of that group of girls who was go—they were going out on dates every single night, and they were going away for weekends, and they were just boys, boys, boys. And somehow I wasn't part of that set, and I realized that, OK, I'm going to do something else. And — surprise, surprise — once I developed my own sense of self-worth and knew that I was on my road to success, then all the rest of it followed. [27:00] But by then, I wasn't going to just start a family because it was the thing for a woman to do. It had to be, by then, only with the right man.

Q: Can you talk about some important influences on you at Pembroke?

JKC: Well, I think I've already indicated that Dean Morriss had a great influence on me. There was Professor Dodge of political science, Guy Howard Dodge, who really — he forced me to hone my intellectual abilities. He always insisted that I do somewhat a little [28:00] more than what the regular classroom work was. He applauded my determination to go to law school, although his suggestion was, and in a way, I'm sorry I didn't follow his suggestion. He had suggested that I go to study law at Tufts School of International Law and Diplomacy — the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy at Tufts, and that would have sent me off in an entirely different direction, probably with the State Department in the Foreign Service. But for one reason or another, I went to Columbia instead. But he made me feel that law school was a great idea. And I'm glad of having had that experience and having spent the year [29:00] there. Nancy Duke Lewis was another wonderful woman who made me feel better — a college woman could have a career and also be a beautiful, gracious, very marvelously dressed woman. She was bright and charming. Dean Morriss had some — she was a plain, no-nonsense woman. Nancy Duke Lewis came from the South, and she was all Southern charm, but underneath, she was a woman of iron, and [30:00] I admired her a great deal. And she arrived at Pembroke while I — probably in my junior year, and she was — I've forgotten exactly what her position there was, at the time. But she — I think she depended on some of us who were already in leadership roles on campus to help her set her own path there, and I got to know her, enjoyed her very much. And I think, if anything, that she was a role model for me.

Q: It must have been nice to have such small classes.

JKC: Oh, it was great, and some courses I took, like the courses in Greek were, in fact, seminars. There may have been three or four students, and we really [31:00] were able to relax and just do the kinds of things that we wanted to do. It was very much the way I understand things are now in some courses where the new curriculum there – that you can plot out a course of study that might entail just a few students.

Q: Yeah.

Track 2

JKC: [00:00] Distribution requirements – you had to have a course in English, which I think I satisfied by taking Greek instead, and I'm not sure how that worked, and a course in math, which I satisfied by taking philosophy.

Q: How interesting!

JKC: I didn't feel that the distribution requirements were onerous. I know that I – most of my courses were in political science, which was my major. [01:00] And I took courses in economics, in history, and I always took a course in Greek, straight through, except for the year I took a course in – oh, I think I satisfied my English requirement by taking a course in Biblical literature.

Q: Hmm, that must have been interesting.

JKC: And one year, instead of taking a course in the Greek Department, I took a course in the Biblical literature department, studying Biblical Greek.

Q: Wow.

JKC: I took Greek because I had studied it for three years at Classical High School, and it was very easy for me. It was relaxing, I didn't really have to study that hard, it was a matter of

translating, and I did not have to study at all, at exam time, [02:00] for my Greek course. So that freed me up.

Q: Did most of your courses have men in them?

JKC: Yes, my first semester, there were a number of courses that were women-only. They were out in Pembroke Hall. But after that first semester, there were – the men at Brown – the classes were just decimated by men being pulled into the service, and it just didn't make economic sense to hold duplicate classes. So our classes were held together, and slowly, a number of extracurricular activities were combined as well, such as the school newspaper. And it was [03:00] the forerunner of the merger of Brown and Pembroke, although in many instances, things went back to the way they were. As far as I know, the classes, from that point on, were always held together.

Q: Did that make a big difference?

JKC: Oh, I found it more dynamic to have the men and the women in the same classroom. I felt that we were getting the real thing and not any watered down version of the course that the professor might be teaching. Some of the professors seemed, at first, to be a little annoyed by having women in their class, and perhaps, bore down on the women a little more, [04:00] perhaps tried to catch us up when we were called upon in class. But I think it all settled down and worked out well.

Q: Do you think that women spoke as much in coed classes as they did in all-female classes?

JKC: Probably not. I don't recall, but I would guess that the women would not volunteer as often as the men did.

Q: What were male-female relations like outside the classroom?

JKC: Well, there was the usual joking about that – on the part of men, that all Pembrokers were dogs, or whatever it is they called them then. But there was a certain [05:00] amount of dating between the two groups. And the men, certainly, had a ball because of the proportion of women to men – they could be very selective. And only the most attractive, or the sexiest, or those thought to be the sexiest, were the ones who got invited to dances all the time, and the others had to, kind of, sit and twiddle thumbs. Of course, there was a fresh infusion of men with the Navy ROTC units that were brought in. And they were, of course, delighted to land on a campus [06:00] where there were women around.

Q: Yeah, I can imagine.

JKC: But really, the opportunities for exchange were pretty limited in that the dormitories were, for all intents and purposes, closed off – women's dormitories were closed off to the men, and vice versa. Men were allowed into the women's dormitory living room, and no further than the living room, only during very limited hours. Women had to be back in their dormitories by eleven o'clock on weeknights, I think 12:00 on Friday nights, and maybe it was as late as one o'clock on Saturday nights. And if you weren't back in time, the door was locked.

Q: Was there much of invention going on, as (crosstalk, inaudible) –

JKC: Yes, there was. There were a few [07:00] dormitory rooms that were practically on ground level, and their windows were frequently used.

Q: That could've – did the Dean come around and ever check to make sure people were –

JKC: Oh, yes, there were checks. And, of course, there was – very difficult to get in any really good, good night kiss, with the night watchman standing there, waiting to wrench -- to open the door for you. And there were all kinds of ways that people tried to get away for the weekend by signing themselves out. You know, I'm going to visit my friend's parents, that kind of thing, but they were frequently found out, and there were some girls who were suspended.

Q: Oh, wow.

JKC: Oh, yes.

Q: Can you speak a little bit about the work [08:00] you did with the school paper?

JKC: Well, it was a weekly, and we tried to cover all events. And, much to my surprise, as I look back over my scrapbook from the paper, I realized that I, among other things, was covering the sports news. Since I'm not particularly athletic, I'm not sure why, except, I guess, maybe no one else wanted to do it. I thought it was an excellent paper. We would cover the talks of chapel and what was going on among various organizations. For me, it was a great experience because, while we did have a faculty advisor, I really don't remember who that person was. I cannot recall there being anything in the way of input. We put it out ourselves. And I [09:00] enjoyed the writing part of it, but I also learned how to set up a newspaper layout, how to set type, how to make manuscript corrections, and I recall that we would spend one morning every week, down at the printers, doing our last-minute changes and putting things together. I learned a great deal, which I later was able to put to use in advertising. I found that that was, really, a very great experience for me, and I really enjoyed the people that I worked with on the newspaper, both the men and the women.

Q: When you first came to Pembroke, was there a Pembroke paper and a Brown paper?

JKC: That's right.

Q: And then they came together?

JKC: It was merged because there weren't enough Brown men to put out a paper on the ground.

Q: What sort of changes occurred because of that [10:00] merging?

JKC: Oh, well, I assume that – I’m trying to recall now – I believe there were probably more hard news and less emphasis on teas and the like. But the Pembroke paper was never a gossip kind of thing. It was always pretty straightforward, business-like. Editorials was all – we were always urging the young women to participate in various war-related volunteer organizations. There was Russian War Relief, there was the Pembroke Auxiliary War Service, and the Red Cross, [11:00] and all kinds of things that were demanding our time and attention. But, as I said, Dean Morriss said, better put your time into studying so that you can graduate and get that war job, than spending your time doing volunteer work. It’s not that important for you to roll bandages; it’s more important for you to get out there and get that job in the war industry. Several of my friends were in the Pratt & Whitney program where they were being – they were given a scholarship to study engineering. And they did work for a year in the Pratt & Whitney plant, producing airplanes. Then the war was over, and one of my friends remained in engineering, but it’s interesting that as a woman, she did not [12:00] get a – she left – after she left Pratt & Whitney, she got a job with the *Automotive Journal*, published by the Society of Automotive Engineers. And she later became editor of that journal, very responsible job. But it was, as you see, a peripheral area. She was not really working as an engineer because those jobs were being given to the men, particularly to the men who were coming back from the service. And so she was squeezed out of the main course. She was doing what might be called “women’s work.”

Q: Did many Pembroke students accelerate their studies so they could get out early?

JKC: Yes, yes, I did, and many of my friends did. [13:00] That, too, was part of this whole war effort, so that we would learn all the sooner, graduate all the sooner, and get into industry all the sooner. But as I look back on it, I feel that we didn’t give ourselves any time to decompress between classes, and it was very hard. I mean, there was no way I could get to (inaudible). I do remember it was very pleasant. Some of the classes we would have would be right on campus, (inaudible) sit in the grass under a tree, which was nice, but I think it was demanding too much of us. We were graduating at too young an age, and we weren’t ready to make adult decisions about what to do with the rest of our lives. And [14:00], now, many of the girls accelerated, and merely for the purpose of graduating, or walking right to the wedding chapel, and I think that,

being too young, they married the wrong men and it – I would not recommend it to try to speed up your college career. You have to take time off, put your oats in before you go, (inaudible).

Q: Did the acceleration involve summer – taking courses in the summer?

JKC: Oh, yes. So we would have, maybe, two weeks and then, either the end of June, certainly beginning of July, we were back again.

Q: Did you have to do extra courses during the year, or you made them up, or just made up in the summer?

JKC: There were three equal semesters –

Q: [15:00] Oh, I see.

JKC: – and we took four full courses every semester.

Q: Oh, I see, so you finished in three years instead of four?

JKC: That's right, yes.

Q: That's really rushing it.

JKC: Yes, I started with the Class of 1946, but I graduated in 1945, in June of 1945. Of course, by then, I guess the war was over in Germany, and the war was over in Japan by August, so all this – this thing was all –

Q: Oh, all for naught.

JKC: For naught. Yes, so.

Q: Before we talk about your jobs after college, were there any other extracurricular involvements?

JKC: Oh, I was on everything. I was manager of the debating team, and I formed something called the International Innovation Society. [16:00] I formed a political action – some kind of political action group. I – what else was I involved in? Of course, I was a member of the Pembroke's Auxiliary War Service. I was a great joiner, and I participated in many things.

Q: Kept yourself busy?

JKC: Yes. But the newspaper was what really had me involved.

Q: Well, I guess we began to cover your work at the ground. Can we continue the story?

JKC: Well, I got involved in retail advertising and discovered that I enjoyed it very much, that it [17:00] gave me an opportunity to write, to be creative. I was part of a business world, which appealed to me a great deal, and I saw that there was an opportunity for promotion for a woman, that I would probably not be held back from attaining whatever level I was capable of doing.

Q: Did you feel like that was because of the field you had entered?

JKC: Because of the field. Not because it was advertising, but because it was retail advertising. I felt comfortable doing this, and so, I did continue. I worked with Gimbels, and I was (inaudible) copywriter for Bamberger's in Newark, New Jersey. And [18:00] then, I got a copy job in the National Retail Fashion Advertising Department of Sears Roebuck, and within a short while, I was copy chief of that department. I had a large staff under me, including several men, and I – the advertising director was – had a great deal of respect for me and would listen to my ideas. And I felt that I was really doing the kind of thing I enjoyed most.

Q: How did the men you were supervising react to that?

JKC: Oh, they were quite delightful in the way they would listen to me, would take direction from me, and I [19:00] felt nothing in the way of resentment from them. They were very creative people, and as long as I would let them be creative, as long as I would – my criticism would be of a positive nature where I would not just say, “This is not right,” but I would show them how I thought they could perhaps do it right, they accepted this as an opportunity for them to learn and to polish their skills. I had the respect of my opposite number in the art end of it. The art director was a man who really was marvelous to work with, and it was a – I think I was [20:00] very fortunate, particularly at Sears, to be part of a group that was a warm, happy, family-like affair – which was unusual, because we were a conclave within Sears Roebuck, which was a very uptight organization, and we were considered the oddball group in the whole organization. But that was fine with me.

Q: How long were you at Sears?

JKC: I was with Sears for seven years, and I had many different types of experiences there, which – I was part of a team that created fashion advertising for Sears that really changed Sears around from being known for their hardware and automobile tires, into being known as a [21:00] store that sold good fashion instead.

Q: It must have been exciting.

JKC: It was. It was very exciting, and it was more than just creating the ads. We had to create in-house material to train the store managers and the sales people, on how to sell fashion merchandise. It was a totally new thing for Sears, and I felt good being part of it. I left Sears only when a consultant was brought in, obviously for the purpose of getting rid of some of the staff, and [22:00] I felt that I could not really work well with this woman, nor would I – probably, that I would, at some point, be asked to leave. And so I took a job as copy chief at a local department store called Saks-34th. Shortly after that, the advertising director – my old boss – was, indeed, asked to leave, and he became advertising director for F.W. Woolworth. And he decided that an advertising agency should prepare the ads for Woolworths. And he chose an agency, [23:00] and

then he said, “And I want an account executive of my choosing to be on your staff, to handle the Woolworth account, and I want Judy Korey.”

Q: Oh, wonderful!

JKC: So that is how I made the transition over into advertising agency, and we prepared the Woolworth advertising and the opening campaign for the first Woolco stores. And then I worked on some other accounts as well. It was a very exciting experience.

Q: Was that a difficult transition? Was that a different sort of world?

JKC: Not really, because I was working on a retail account. I had already, at Sears, I was working for – preparing ads that were going to appear across the country in newspapers, wherever Sears had stores. [24:00] So that this was not that much different. But I did start running some of the accounts that were not retail, and I found myself a full-fledged account executive at an advertising agency, which was great. And I continued doing that until my son was born.

Q: Wow. When did you marry?

JKC: I married when I was 37 years old, which was unusual, but I’m glad that I waited because I married a man with a strong enough ego and dynamic enough, so that I could respect him, so that he would not be swallowed up by me. [25:00] We’ve had a wonderful relationship ever since, and just a month prior to my 40th birthday, my son was born.

Q: Oh, how nice!

JKC: And that’s when I realized that I could not do the kind of job I would want to do as an account executive, and so I resigned. But I said, look, I’d like to write some ads every once in a while when you need something special. So I started doing freelance writing for the old agency. Then people from Sears realized that I was available, and they called on me to do some

advertising copy, which was so easy for me to do at home. And I could still, at least supervise, [26:00] the raising of my son, and one thing led to another, and I continued doing all kinds of freelance work. And then I found myself preparing more and more different types of services, getting my friends in the art and production field to work with me to prepare the advertising that my clients were asking for, to do brochures, to do catalogs, and then they would ask me to do public relations to get their names in the paper. And so I realized, what I was really performing was, a complete advertising and public relations service, which I was operating right out of this apartment, which I continue to do. My son's going off to college, but I'm still doing it right here because I feel that I can give my clients the best of what's in my head. And they don't need to come see me in a fancy office, and I don't need that kind of [27:00] overhead, that I can perform my creative services right from here.

Q: It's nice to see a woman having a family and making that, sort of, tradition – transition, so you could continue your career and still be with your son.

JKC: I never really stopped for a moment. I was always involved and it, kind of – I toned it down, I did very little, and then I started building it up again.

Q: Did you always want to have a child?

JKC: Yes, yes, I think I did, but I didn't – yes, I know I did, but I kept putting it out of my mind because it was not something that you would think about unless you were married. The concept of a single mother had not really developed then. [28:00] I had one friend who was a single mother of, actually, four children. And she worked with me – she worked for me at Saks-34th as a copywriter. She's been my friend ever since. And I was absolutely amazed that someone would have the courage to do this, and it was very courageous for her in that climate. But now, so many women are doing it, and, right, I think it's great. But, well, even after I was married for a year, I felt that I wanted to wait until I knew that everything was going to work out, even though – well, we didn't call it back then, but my biological clock was running out, it was ticking.

Q: Oh, OK. Did having – this might be [29:00] sort of a naive question, but did having a child change the way you thought about your work?

JKC: Not really, except, I think, in relation to certain products, it gave me greater insights. No, because my business life was my business life, and I try to – I would go, as I said, from one mindset to another, and once I sat myself down, sitting in front of my typewriter and thinking about what my client was expecting of me, I was strictly all business. And I did try to keep the two aspects of my life quite separate.

Q: I guess that really would be necessary in order to concentrate on your work.

JKC: Yeah. No, there was one time when I was doing something [30:00] for Montgomery Ward about – this was a training piece, sales training piece, about children's sizes, and how children grow. And that, I was able to draw upon my experience as a mother, and it was very helpful. And then later, I did a training piece on shopping for children, and this was – I could just draw on my experience. But, you know, I think that in the business world, you don't bring your other lives into your business life.

Q: Yeah. Has that ever been difficult, or have there –

JKC: Oh, there were times when I was – [31:00] when my son was very young, and I would find myself – there was one point when I had to go several times a week to New Jersey, and I felt very separated from my son, and very guilty about it. I was doing some work for a large furniture store there. [31:23]

Track 3

Q: [00:00] Oh, we were talking about going to New Jersey, and being separated from your son.

JKC: Yes, and I saw in the restaurant, of this furniture store, a number of mothers with small children. I felt so guilty, that they were with their children and I wasn't with mine. And there's

always this feeling of: Should I just devote myself to my son? Will he appreciate back? Or will he just consider me part of the scenery, and/or will he admire and respect me if I continue to be a person of some value in the world? And, from what I gathered, [01:00] not from what he's told me, but from what I've overheard him tell other people, I think he is very proud that his mother is a person in her own right who does things. I've heard him tell his friends about some of the things that I do, "My mom does the advertising for these people! Did you know that?" And yeah, this has, I think that I have not only earned his respect, but I think I've given him a role model for what, I hope, he will look for in a wife.

Q: Yeah, that's terrific.

JKC: I think I do want to say, if I haven't indicated this before, that I felt that having gone [02:00] to Pembroke, those years provided me with a great sense of self-worth, and gave me a feeling that I could accomplish anything that I wanted to do, gave me an opportunity to play leadership roles at college, and I was able to carry that through into my later life. I think that Pembroke was, for me, a very positive experience that made me into an independent woman. You were going to ask me?

Q: Can you talk a little bit about your involvement with the Pembroke Center?

JKC: Well, I got involved in the Center through (phone rings) – excuse me.

(break in audio)

Oh, yes, well, I got involved through my [03:00] dear friend Christine Dunlap Farnham, who founded the Pembroke Center Associates. And Christine has done this to me before. She will say, "Just get involved in this project with me, just – I just want to have you thinking on it," or "Would you look at this brochure? Do you think that it's going to do a selling job?" And the next thing I would know, I am involved in writing, in producing brochures, public relations projects, doing everything, and loving it because Christine was such a dynamic person. From a year and a half ago, Christine was killed in an automobile accident, and she was the Class of 1948, and

much too young [04:00] to go. She had devoted her entire life after college to Brown University, and she was involved, in one way or another, with Brown, all her life. And so she got me interested in the Pembroke Center. As usual, I wrote the brochure, and I discovered that this was a wonderful project, that having gone to the women's college at Brown University, that there – while I welcomed the merger and feel proud of my Brown association, there was something sadly missing and that there was nothing for and by women at Brown. And I think that this [05:00] – the Pembroke Center fills that lack, in that, it is a place for women to be themselves, on their own turf, to look into issues that interest them, and while it is – it harks back to the tradition of what Pembroke College was all about, it is also keyed in to the most contemporary aspect of life today, and that is the new feminism. And how wonderful that the Pembroke Center can do that. I think that the Pembroke Center got off to a marvelous start with Joan Scott, and I think we are going to miss her very much, [06:00] but I'm sure that there will be someone stepping into her shoes and who will be carrying on. And I, particularly, am pleased that the Pembroke Center has adopted the Farnham Archives as its own, and that in addition to including material on and by women in history – Rhode Island history and from Brown – it will include the memorabilia and the memories of many of us who went through Pembroke College. I think at Pembroke College, we had the best of both worlds. We were both a women's college [07:00] and we were part of the coeducational experience, a very rare situation. I think it should be preserved. But I think the Pembroke Center and the forward looking opportunities for putting the spotlight on women's achievement, and doing research, investigating what the problems women of today have, is a very worthy goal. And I'm just so glad that dear Chris got me involved in this, and every time I participate in anything having to do with the Center, I, of course, think of her. The Pembroke Center, my involvement with Chris, made Chris and myself closer in that [08:00] last year of her life, than we had been in a long while. And we would drive to Providence together and spend many lunches here in New York, talking about the Center. And we felt we had come to a point in our lives where we could – it would be appropriate to look back. And we did a lot of reminiscing –

Q: Oh, that must have been fun.

JKC: – and I cherish those times now. And we reminisced about the old days, and I think that we had both grown. We both became less reserved, and so we could share our experiences in that last year on a far more intimate level than we had in the past, really just letting our hair down and saying whatever would come into our heads. [09:00] And so that was part of the Pembroke Center experience for me.

Q: That's all my questions. Are there any other memories or observations that you'd like to make?

JKC: Let this train go by. You can't shout over that. Well, I just do remember Pembroke as a very warm, comfortable place that was an intimate experience, because it was so small. It [10:00] surprised me, really, that when you walked in and Sarah was walking out, you didn't really know each other, and you were in the same class? That would be unthinkable when I was at Pembroke. While, of course, I wasn't friends with absolutely everyone in my class, I think I knew everyone, if not by name, certainly by sight. And we just had a feeling of being part of one large family. I think that our professors, too, never really [11:00] lectured at us as anonymous faces. But while there were some classes that were strictly lecture classes, the lecture would be interspersed with individual questions to students, where students would feel free to raise their hands and comment, because it was that kind of warm, family-type experience. I loved the campus. I thought it was beautiful. It embodied everything of graciousness that I felt was in – it added something important to one's life. Some of the buildings were very old, but by their very mustiness, they had charm. [12:00] I think some of the new buildings at Brown are, in comparison, sterile. But even though we were cramped for space, there was a feeling of a long tradition of scholarship going on. I'm so glad for the Brown experience, not only for what it meant at Brown, but for what – I could translate Brown into my subsequent life here in New York. Because Brown provided, again, a family for me here in New York, with the old Pembroke College Club of New York, and then later, in more recent years, [13:00] the Brown Club in New York. Because without any friends in New York, I went to my first Pembroke Club meeting, and I met some people who I had known from campus, who maybe were a year or two ahead of me. I got a couple of my contemporaries who also came to that first meeting, and I already had a nucleus of friendship, and something to do, an activity to participate in. I nearly

volunteered for some committee, and I think within my first year, I was recording secretary. I made at least two lifelong friends who I scarcely knew on campus, [14:00] but somehow, we came together through the Pembroke Club. And so, Brown has been a motif through my entire life. I've always been active in the local club. I've always been active in alumni affairs. I've served on countless committees – I can't tell you how many. I've interviewed candidates for Brown for the [NAS?] Organization. I see people, as I did today, Sarah Johnson, through the [SOC?] Program, helping people who want to get into advertising or public relations. I've been secretary of the Associated Alumni. Sometimes I worked on – and once, on two different aspects of alumni [15:00] life. And so this – I've constantly been refreshed and renewed by being back on campus, and I've never quite – never have I cut the cord entirely. It's something that over a period of 40 years now – I am going to be attending, next month, my 40th anniversary. It's not a question of going back; it's a question of being there again.

Q: Yeah, that's nice. Anything else you'd like to share?

JKC: Well, I'm going to want to go to the bathroom. Why don't you...?

(break in audio)

Q: OK, anything else come to mind?

JKC: Well, I think of Pembroke as allowing me to be part [16:00] of a tradition. I'm part of my family's tradition. I'm a part of a professional tradition, as far as the advertising profession is concerned. But through Pembroke, I'm part of another tradition that I know goes back through the founding of Brown in 1764. And I feel that I have a place in the continuum that goes back for well over 200 years, and will go forward and, certainly, well into the next century, if not the century after that. And I take a great deal of pride in that, that by the time I got to Pembroke, this tradition was already well honed, that it was [17:00] something that you could take a great deal of pride in. And I've read up a great deal on the original Brown family, and I feel that I have somehow, a connection with all that went before, dating right back to Brown, when it wasn't Brown, when it was really (phone rings) Rhode Island College.

(break in audio)

Q: Any concluding remarks, or...?

JKC: No, I think that I've – hopefully, I've indicated through all of this what I really feel, and that is, a great love for Pembroke, for Brown, [18:00] and for the people that I have met through my experiences at the university.

Q: OK, well, thank you, I've really enjoyed this.

JKC: Oh, thank you. Well, good, I think that's probably –

- END -