

Transcript – Margaret Mary Porter Dolan

Narrator: Margaret Mary Porter Dolan

Interviewer: Julia Hyun

Interview Date: 9:20

Interview Time: March 23, 1988

Location: Pembroke Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Length: 2 audio files; 00:56:12

Track 1

Julia Hyun: [00:00] This is Julia Hyun, about to interview Margaret Dolan at the Pembroke Center. It is 9:20 on March 23, 1988.

Okay, why don't we start with family background and some of the things which motivated you to come to college and to pick Brown as a college.

Margaret Mary Porter Dolan: So, family background: I was born in Providence, Rhode Island, October 20, 1918. My mother and father did not attend college, but thought it was very important that all their children would have a college education. And I have three brothers, as well, and all of whom have college educations, two are doctors and one had a legal degree, but he did not practice law.

Actually, as far as my coming to Brown, you have to stop to remember it was during Depression years, [01:00] and I went to Classical High School when we considered it tops, in fact it is tops only to Boston Latin, as far as scholarship is concerned. I had a wonderful teacher, Kathleen Boyd, a history teacher, who asked me one day where I was going to college. I said definitely, I was going, but I had no idea. And she said well, definitely I think you should go to Pembroke, because she was a Pembroke grad herself.

So, I was concerned about the money and all, and she said, "Well..." at that point I had made Junior Honor Society, was summa cum laude, and she said, "We'll have no problem getting you a scholarship," which she did. Of course, it was always just partial scholarship, so my dad said

he would pay the rest, and my aunt said she would buy my clothes and my books. So, with that in mind, I came to Pembroke, and have loved it ever since.

JH: Were you the eldest? Or how did you come (inaudible).

MD: [02:00] No. In my family, I had two half-brothers, my father's first wife had died, and then there was a 10 and 11 year difference between us, my older brothers, then I came, and then my younger brother, George, two and a half years younger. Incidentally, it's his birthday today. A very successful doctor.

JH: Oh, wonderful. What about your parents? What were their occupations?

MD: Mother was just a housewife, but she was a very dynamic person. She made a very happy home. Had a beautiful voice; none of us inherited that. And my dad at first was a chemist or a colorer in a jewelry shop, but unfortunately, it affected his health, so he was very lucky to even get a job during the Depression years [03:00], so the whole time I was a college, he acted as a janitor in the school system in Providence.

JH: What was the whole atmosphere like during that time at college with the Depression that was going on?

MD: Well actually, I think children have a great capacity for not being concerned about unhappy events, and it never did seem to bother any of us as a family, or even the people at college, I mean you were probably curtailed in activities which the people today would think would be just absolutely a penance to be deprived thereof, whereas we just took every day as it was and just kind of happy for what it was.

But I mean, Depression was very evident, and we had during my years the coming into office of Roosevelt and then all of these wonderful policies [04:00] that took care of the problems. And of course, again, the beginning of the seeds of World War II were forming in Europe, and we were all calling here (inaudible) programs were all calling for isolationism and all. So, I mean, it was

quite a vivid time in history, but I think again, as a young person, we didn't seem to carry the banners that people did later for "Stay out of this war" and "Get into that war" and so on.

JH: Okay, well, we can go on to your freshman...oh, I was going to ask you, did you commute to school, because a lot of the people who...?

MD: Yes, I did. We were called the City Girls, as opposed to the dormitory girls. And primarily, there was no question, the greater part of the City Girls could not even afford to be dormitory girls at all. [05:00] Even today, so many will live on campus although they do live in the nearby surroundings.

So I did commute. I had one girlfriend who picked up--whose dad worked in Davol Rubber, picked up me and another student, so we would get a ride that way. Or we would take the trolley car, which, of course, so many hadn't heard of at that time. Which was kind of an experience in itself, before they put the buses on. We would have to transfer to come over here, and come through then the Hope Tunnel in order to arrive here.

JH: I interviewed a woman who graduated in 1928, and she said that, by and large, the City Girls and dormitory girls sort of kept apart. Had that changed by the time you entered, were there more...?

MD: There was a good feeling of camaraderie; we would sit next to each other in Chapel, which was a weekly affair, so there was a mingling [06:00] in that instance, and so too in classes. And so many, I think, in our class were quite friendly, but you still did so many things separately and apart, because they would have their own instances of dorm life together whereas the City Girls didn't. Then we too would eat in the cafeteria together as City Girls for lunch, whereas they would go back to their dormitories for lunch, so I mean there was the division there. I think we were probably maybe closer than the lady would intimate from 1928, but I mean there still is, naturally, a division. The other becomes more like a family, living together, I would think.

JH: What was your freshman year like? Do you have any vivid images of your first day here?
[07:00]

MD: We all were very impressed with the idea that we were at college...it was exciting...very impressed then in time with the seniors, who would all welcome us and tell about their respective clubs. And then we had always the scut week, where they had you act like clowns, and we had to wear beards—white cotton beards—which were kind of unpleasant, because you taped them on, so you had sort of a sore chin by the time you'd take it off. And you had to kowtow to them and do what they pleased, but we always thought we were very smart because we got back at them the time at Senior Chapel, or Freshman-Senior Chapel, when you could have them do what you wanted. We thought we were very smart because we had the orchestra play “The Star Spangled Banner” so they all had to stand up, so [08:00] we thought that was really getting back at the seniors.

Other things for freshman year? Well, it would entail the difference in college courses, as opposed to high school courses. I'd come from Classical, where we had a test every day of the week. It was quite a difference to realize you were assigned a syllabus and you would work at supposedly your own rate, and have maybe a quiz every couple of weeks or so. We had an interesting time in biology, too, that was freshman year. That was a fun thing, and something different. We all got a big kick out of big vats of formaldehyde where you pull out a fetal pig with your name on it. Funny to see “Peg Porter” a fetal pig with all the crustaceans, and whatever. [09:00] And one of our lectures was very interesting, it had Magel Wilder who was a very vivacious professor. And one day, as she's lecturing to this huge class, because it was the whole freshman class she looked out the window along Waterman Street and said, “Oh, there goes a deer!” Well we just were all stupefied because it had nothing to do with the lecture, and we really thought, “Had she been drinking? Or why would she come out with a remark like that?” But actually, there was a doe that must have escaped from the Physics lab and they must have been doing an experiment, and plunged through the window and went running down the street right adjacent to the biology lab. So we had some interesting things that happened freshman year.

JH: What did you think about the required courses? I've had mixed reactions about that.

MD: Well, actually, I think people tried to get around whatever ones they did not like. [10:00] Probably you could be excused from freshman English if you...for writing had you passed a certain composition when you came, so that would have been ruled out in some instances. And I think there was argumentation, which we thought was kind of crazy; it was either that or philosophy, and a great many people were kind of adverse to taking either one or the other, so I mean that wasn't too pleasant a situation. But otherwise I think it's good to have a smattering so that you can decide what you do want to major in.

JH: What classes did you enjoy the most?

MD: Well, I did major in literature, and I took Latin, French and English in did honors in literature, so it would have been, shall we say, a smattering of all of those. And I *loved* Professor Clough, [11:00] who was the Latin professor...I don't know whether you know anything about Professor Benjamin Clough. He was institution in himself.

JH: I think I might have read...was he in the yearbook?

MD: Yes, he's in the yearbook, and he is also in *A Tale of Two Centuries*, and very many people think he started this Joshua [Josiah] Carberry, which was a fun thing, who said he was head of cracked pots. But he always denied it, he said he was a lot older, so it couldn't have possibly have been he. But Professor Couch was another professor in the Classics department, as well, and they had a wonderful story. When they first met each other, Professor Clough [pronounced "klou"] looked at Professor Couch [pronounced "kooch"], and he had just read the name and he said, "Professor Couch?" And Couch, or Couch [kooch] who had never met Clough before and looking at the spelling C-L-O-U-G-H, [12:00] he said, "Professor Clough [kluhf]?" "Professor *Clough*, Professor *Couch*," so I mean they always told that story. So it was kind of interesting.

And I *loved* the English classes. I loved Dr. Robert "Pat" Kenny, was a fabulous, fabulous person who stayed on for, oh, I guess, almost 59 years at Pembroke and Brown. And he told a

wonderful story one time...we were talking about Carlyle, and he said he had a great story about Jane, his wife. He said he became very irritated with her one day, and she was just in the room knitting and rocking and sitting there, and he finally said, "Jane! Must you knit so loudly?" So she just stopped and she kept rocking. Finally he said, "Jane! Must you rock so loudly?" So she finally stopped rocking and just sat there and he finally said, "Must you breathe so loudly?" [13:00] So with that, she just got up and walked out. So he always had very fancy anecdotes.

And then we loved Professor Kapstein too, who was voted our honorary, well, favorite professor, actually. He was a spectacular person. In fact, his novel *Something of a Hero*, came out the same time as Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and we always thought that was even better than Hemingway's. We had very good professors.

JH: Were they accessible? I mean, did you find that...?

MD: Yes, they were. They were very remarkable. Congenial. They would advise you. Professor Kenny was particularly instrumental because I'd become quite busy in extracurricular activities, and so when it came time senior year and I had taken all these literature and honors courses, I said, "I'm not going to take the [14:00] Honors exam," and he said, "Oh, you most certainly *are!*" You know, I mean, so...you had people who really took an interest in the students. I'm just speaking from my point of view, and I'm sure most of my classmates felt the same way about the majority, whether they were math or economics or...Hedges in history was fabulous, and Professor George and Armstrong...we had great memories of so many.

And in the Honors division in English, very many times, or literature, you would be in private seminar groups and you would meet in small groups at their homes, even. We had one Professor Noyes, who said, "Long after you've forgotten any of this Restoration grammar, you'll remember me for my cinnamon toast and tea." And so he would serve that.

And then we had Professor Hastings, was head of the English department, we would meet in the lower corner room of University Hall, [15:00] we would do all sorts of papers on Shakespeare,

and then the finale would be meeting at his home. And there was a great deal of camaraderie, and uh...

JH: That sounds so great!

MD: Oh, it really was! Most enjoyable, and very pleasant. More homey. Of course, they'd be smaller classes when you moved to the Honors program and the seminars. You couldn't do it in with the crowd in biology, it'd be 150 strong or so, you know.

JH: Were the classes single sex, or were they co-ed?

MD: Co-ed.

JH: All across the...

MD: Well, some were and some weren't. It depended, I suppose, on the number that would have been assigned them. But for the most part, I mean, we always prided ourselves on the fact that this was a coordinate college, not coeducational. So that we had the separate campuses, but the same faculty and exams, and the like. So that [16:00] although we had the separate campus, for residents, and some classrooms, we also went over to the Hill and took classes with the men.

JH: What was that like? What were their attitudes toward having women in the class?

MD: Well, I think they liked it [laughter]. It was very pleasant and congenial.

JH: What were the relationships between Brown men and women like? On the whole, like, socially and academically too, I guess?

MD: They were very good. We found so many of them would, well, take each other to their dances. They had a great deal of joking going on, though, about how the men would be very pleasant to the Pembroke all week, but when they'd have the fraternity dances, they'd go to

Wheaton and take the girls, you know. [17:00] But a great many of my crowd never found it that way; we had a very good time with them socially.

JH: Was it...Dean Morriss was still...

MD: Yes, she was. An excellent woman. You'd be very proud of her, she was very well spoken, most articulate, and at that point, she had just finished, when we came to college, being president of the American Association of College Women—I should say—University Women. “When I was president of the AAUW...” she would always refer to. We were justly proud of her, even though, shall we say, in a joking fashion, instead of Margaret Shove, S-H-O-V-E, or “shove,” (inaudible) we would call her Peggy Push. But I mean that was just in a pleasant [18:00] (inaudible) fashion.

But we also loved very dearly Eva Mooar, who was Dean of Admissions. She was much more approachable than Dean Morriss.

JH: Yeah, that's what the other woman I interviewed said.

MD: And then Bessy Rudd was head of the gym, and she is honorary member of our class. And she would speak so many times, and she'd say the three Bs, the smartest, the Brains, and Eva Mooar, I think it was the Business that she'd refer to her as, because Dean of Admissions and all, and she'd call herself the Brawns. So they'd be the three Bs. But all three of them would be an inspiration to (inaudible) people at college. In fact, when you would meet Miss Mooar, because the incoming freshmen would have interviews before they were accepted as freshmen, [19:00] but you just felt you just had to come to this college. She was just so pleasant. A remarkable woman.

JH: What would you say...would you say that they served as role models for you at the time? Or who were your role models?

MD: I don't think that they...I would think that they would. I don't know who else I would say. You mean, on campus, who were?

JH: Or anywhere. Just, female role models that served you?

MD: In general? Well, probably so. I think there were some people that would have graduated in time. For instance, I admired tremendously the teachers that had gone to Pembroke that I had had at Classical, and all. And other graduates that were quite remarkable. Everyone seemed to like Clair Booth Luce at that time, too. [20:00]

JH: What about some of the rules and regulations of the time? All of the other women I've talked to have long lists of rules and things that they had to abide by. Social and academic rules.

MD: We never had to abide by this, but we always thought it was very strange. They had, evidently, a handbook years ago, in which it said you could not appear downtown without hat and gloves! It never applied to us, and we thought that was the funniest thing we ever heard. But of course, that probably was part of it way in the beginning.

As far as rules, I know the dormitory girls would have had rules and curfews. Naturally, none of them would have applied to us. I can't remember too many rules that we were told we had to do or not do. [21:00]

JH: Now, I know you were quite busy during college with all of your many, many activities and so I kind of want to break into that, whichever one you want to start talking about first.

MD: Well, for activities. The more I became most embroiled with was the Sophomore Masque. I was chairman of the Sophomore Masque. And that was a tremendous undertaking for the sophomore class. And we really tried to get everybody in the class in it, doing something if they... We'd have a committee to choose material that would have been subjected [submitted?] because it was an original production as well. And I thought ours was especially good, the one that we did choose, "Now and...When?" Did you read the section of it?

JH: I read it in the yearbook. It was really interesting.

MD: It was almost way [22:00] ahead of its time as far as what it had to offer. How long is this? Should I read what it said there or you don't care to? Well, Mary Lane Beckwith wrote this, and it was "Now and...When?" And it was divided into six scenes, and it begins with,

"We, the inhabitants of this world, are sick of conflict; we are despondent because of the evils and shortcomings of civilization. We are discouraged by our unavailing attempts to make the world a better place in which to live; we are disheartened because of our utter incompetence.

"The overwhelming despair conquers our natural loathing to admit our inadequacy to right the wrong, and we at long last seek the wisdom and guidance of a Divinity.

"The masque consists of six scenes, five of which will represent the five phases of civilization; the sixth will represent the unclassifiable philosophers in whose minds the barriers between the preceding five phases [23:00] have never existed. Upon them will fall the singular honor of uniting the world in universal petition to the Divinity to create a Utopia out of chaos.

"SCENE 1. Politics: The inefficacy of party politics leading inevitably to dictatorship.

"SCENE 2. Domestic Dilemma—Marriage bonds too hastily tied without a realization of their implications resulting in dissatisfaction and divorce. Meeting—Mating—Parting.

"SCENE 3. Recreation: The hero of the alma mater quickly falling into oblivion.

"SCENE 4. Economics: Strife between labor and capitol.

"SCENE 5. Religion: Fadism causing its adherents to miss eternally true religion. First Zealot—The Gullibles—Second Zealot.

"SCENE 6. Vision."

And this was done for the first time ever in the Field House. Which we had recently [24:00] acquired. And there was the hill on the side, that acted as the stage. And we had hired a very remarkable dance choreographer, Otto Asherman, who had come from Boston, and he had with him his accompanist, who looked like Liberace. Really, and he was very remarkable. So the two of them put on this tremendous, modern production, which I think really was kind of ahead

of its time. Because previously, they were all very...they were nice masques in the past, but this was just so very, very modern, we all thought. And the whole class, I don't think there was one person that wasn't involved in it, either in the dancing, or the production in some way or other.

JH: How did people respond to it?

MD: Oh, they loved it! You mean the girls [25:00] participating in it, or the audience?

JH: Everybody.

MD: I think everyone was very impressed with it. And then part of this day...oh, he was funny, too, Otto, he was... He had his own dance class locally that he'd come down from Boston and give, and then he'd come over and train the girls. And one time, we said, "Oh, I don't think Dean Morriss is going to approve of this," and he said, "I don't give a snowball in Hell what Dean Morriss thinks!" And we all go [gasped], I mean you just didn't SAY things like that. And oh! if it ever got back to Dean Morriss...and of course he was above anything so very bourgeois was kind of like that. He was very outspoken.

Part of this whole program that day then is the giving of May baskets to the seniors. So of course that's the freshmen who would give their senior sisters the May baskets. [26:00] So you had a captive audience in them and then of course you had tons of parents of all the people participating, so it was a very gala affair, held for the first time in the Field House.

Am I talking too long?

JH: No, I'm just wondering if this tape needs to be turned over, because...oh, I think it's okay. I think we have a couple more minutes on it. 'Cause I'd just hate for it to end and then have the little silence...right.

Okay, what about, let's see, you were also class president, president of the Question Club, and also worked on the *Record*? *The Pembroke Record*?

MD: I didn't do too much on that. But we would write reports on that. And we had a very good newspaper, which covered the events of the day, and all. Which would vie with the *Brown Daily Herald*, the men's section, you know.

JH: It was really interesting to see some of the debates back and forth, and stuff...

MD: Oh, the debates! [27:00] Oh, too, for the debating teams, even, that you would talk about, and then of course they always had a farcical debate which was the woman's place is in the home, and unfortunately, the men won, you know, (inaudible) that it should have been...

JH: What about the Question Club?

MD: The Question Club was a very good club in that it handled, supposedly, overall affairs of the College. The SGA was the student governing board, but then the president of each of the clubs...the Athletic Club, and the Debating Club, and the *Record* editor, and the *Brun Mael* editor...would all get together and they had, well, to dispense what we called the blanket tax, that would be money that would be apportioned to different clubs, [28:00] for whatever they needed. And then too, you'd take under advisement and we'd try to help the incoming freshmen, and that was part of help along with the freshmen council, that we would do that, or help out with any of the classes if they needed help.

And then our particular year, they had a big Campus Carnival, that they decided would have booths and raise money for the university. They closed off Cushing Street, now, Cushing now is closed to traffic, but then, there was the Cushing Street that did go right through from Brown or Prospect to Thayer. But they closed it that day, and they had booths all lined along there to make money. The Question Club itself had a booth to raise money. I can't remember what we did to have it.

Mrs. Swain and her husband [29:00] entertained the Question Club one time together with the Yale football team, and we had a very good time at her house. And she was very active along with quite a few other alumnae in running this Campus Carnival.

JH: Okay, let me see...I think it's time to turn the tape over.

Track 2

JH: [00:00] Okay, so we were talking about the Question Club and some of the activities that they've done...can you think of any other activities you were involved in which you particularly enjoyed?

MD: (inaudible) I enjoyed the classes and the seminars...and enjoyed all the social events, the dances. I was particularly interested, even freshman year, with the Christmas dance that you'd... One dance in the auditorium, here in Alumnae Hall, and Miller and Metcalf would be the two big dormitories, and each of them would have their respective—its respective—dance. With a live orchestra always, and people always went formal, and it would be so beautiful because then you could go from one dance [01:00] to another, and it was just so quite remarkable to be able to do that, even if it was snowing, to go from one dance to another in that way. And then along with our social events, we were very excited our junior year, Junior Prom, to have Artie Shaw, who become a big name, and was just starting out. So we thought that was quite an accomplishment, to be able to have him. So we did some kind of remarkable things that needed financing and all, to get things done, and accomplish them. But we had quite an interesting and progressive class, that would be interested in doing things.

Some people in Komian's, the dramatic section, that seemed to put on very good productions... [02:00] Brownbrokers was very effective, and that was a combination of Brown and Pembroke where they put on different productions that were almost like musicals together. Some of them seemed to make "Big Time," we thought. In our own respective classes, we had what we called Brownies Stunt Nights that were fun, that you...well, could not ridicule, but imitate the professors or what college would be like, and then each class would put on a particular skit and

we'd be voted as to who was the better entertainer...depending on which class. So, they offered a quite remarkable series of activities and all.

JH: What did you go on to do after college? [03:00]

MD: Before I finish college, though, I did want to tell you about our senior year and the hurricane, which was a...quite a surprising happening for us. In 1938, Question Club and Freshman Council welcomed the freshmen and the day that we had scheduled a garden party, we had the worst hurricane that we had had in, over, I guess, a hundred years. 1938. Unbelievable! We had Midwesterners and Westerners who would say, "Is weather like this always in New England?" Because of course, Mark Twain, you know, New England weather, just wait a minute because it changes so often? So, of course, no garden party, and we sat down inside, right down in the Commons Room, looking out, thinking it might improve. Which it didn't, and a hurricane was not predicted, we did not have the meteorological weathermen [04:00] today that predicted a hurricane's (inaudible) in advance. And it was a calamity. Utter calamity for the whole city. That people, who never were dorm girls before, could not go home; they were put up at respective dorms. And of course, I told you that Miller and Metcalf were the major dorms, but then we had Sharpe House, which was a smaller one, and East House, which was right here, between Alumnae Hall and Pembroke Hall, what since has been torn down. So any of the people from out of town—from in the city—had to be put up overnight. And you would go, we went home that next day, but you had to be careful about live wires and all that were down.

JH: How did the campus do?

MD: Well, trees. A great many trees, of course, blew down, and windows would be blown out, in some instances. [05:00] But for the most part, the havoc seemed to be in downtown Providence, and along the streets, all along here, for live wires and all. But the downtown streets were flooded, in fact, came up to beyond the first floor of the Biltmore Hotel. Cars were submerged and all, because there was a tidal wave as well, which just flooded the whole downtown area. And that's why after that, they built the Fox Point barrier, in case there would have been a hurricane in times to come with the rising tide, to close that. So that created quite a

havoc on the campus! And of course, there were activities for the freshmen which had to be curtailed. They couldn't have the outside picnic that they had planned, they had to have, I think, a movie [06:00] on campus. And then there was to be a dance, which the dorm girls—the freshman dorm girls—had a wonderful time, but anybody else who would have gone home, which we did then, the next morning, would not come back. Because it took a while to clear these wires and get everything back in working order again. So we often kidded and said that the freshmen that year were the Hurricane Class, but they had quite a spectacular welcome.

JH: Wow.

MD: And that was kind of fun. So now, I've interrupted you going back in time, to what I did after college.

JH: Yeah, right.

MD: Alright, after college, I was appointed under the Brown Plan to teach, primarily, that's what I had wanted to do. But then I hated to take so many education courses, because there were so many other courses I wanted to take. So I took [07:00] the minimum necessary to be appointed under the Brown Plan, and took whatever others I needed for certification, to be a teacher in Providence or Rhode Island at Rhode Island College. I was appointed as a Latin teacher at Classical High School in '39-'40, and I enjoyed it immensely, it was going back home in a way, and at the same time, I took a course over at Central, which was in the neighborhood of Classical, in typing. And the irony of life is they were not hiring teachers. As I told you, we came out in the Depression Era, there had been permanent subs for so long, that I did get a job at night school teaching typing, whereas here I had spent four years at Brown, with all these wonderful courses, but there just wasn't an opening at that point.

So then after that, I did subbing in [08:00] English or French or whatever, in the Providence school system, and then I became a home teacher, which I enjoyed immensely. You'd get a pass and you'd ride around in the buses you were in, all over the city to any people that were house-bound with illness, or would go to a hospital and instruct the students. And that was a very

gratifying job, because it's the one time people were just delighted to have education. They were just so happy to see anyone come in when they were ill.

But then after that, it was just on a substitute basis, there was a job opening at the John Hay Library, and I worked at the circulation desk and had a wonderful time, because you'd see all the students coming and going, so that was just super. And, of course, I had known a great many fraternity people before, but you even got to know more at this point, so. [09:00] And one of the wonderful people that worked at the desk with us at the time...he would have been in Brown...I guess he was '41 or '42 out of Brown, was Irving R. Levine. That is, the NBC news reporter that you see all the time. In fact, I just heard him speak at Save the Bay down at Newport. Sheraton Islander, a brunch they had a couple of weeks ago. So we met all sorts of interesting people. Buzzed Professor Elmer Blistein into the stacks, (inaudible) who was a student then and then a couple of years later went on to become an instructor and a full professor at retirement.

Then I did take a job at Lockwood Junior High and High School in Warwick. I taught there about a year and a half, and then I got married. And I married a flyer [10:00] who I had known all through college. He had attended Providence College (inaudible), and he had come back with a Distinguished Flying Cross; he had fifty missions in all in World War II. So then he was...we were married April 15th in 1944. And he was to go instruct people who still were going to be flyers and navigators and bombardiers, so we hit the trail and went down to Louisiana, and then to Texas for a year and had a wonderful and I taught down in Texas for a while when he was stationed there. So then returned to Rhode Island and had six children.

JH: Oh, wow.

MD: Four boys and two girls, none of whom I'd send back. They're all great, great children. So then, when my youngest [11:00] was ready for school—kindergarten—then I went back teaching in Gorton Junior High and then taught there until 1986, when I retired. So.

JH: That's amazing!

MD: That's the story.

JH: Wow. And you're still—from what I hear—very, very busy doing lots of things...

MD: Well, I think it's important to keep busy. I do miss teaching, and miss the structure of doing that. And I miss the students; I enjoyed them very much. I even miss the bad ones, but I figured it was about time to do something different, and I think there are a great many things to keep one busy.

JH: What were the sort of volunteer activities that you've been involved in or are still now involved in?

MD: Well, actually, I still do the phone-a-thon here at Brown, and I've been either a class president [12:00] of my class through the years or a class secretary, so I keep a hand in that, and this past year I was Chairman of Hospitality for the Brown Alumnae Club of Kent County, and this coming year, I'll be secretary of that, then in the summer, we go to Matunuck, down in South County, and I've been secretary of their association for—community association—down there. And I've been a past president of St. Aloysius Guild, which caters to the orphans in Greenville. And we had—the year I was president, we had three functions to raise enough money to buy them a school bus. Not a school—well, it was a school bus, but for their activities, to go places. I can't think offhand what other things...do all the collecting for the Heart Association, and the [13:00] Catholic—not *all* the collecting, but I mean for (inaudible) cancer, and it seems to me I'm always collecting money for something.

JH: (laughter)

MD: So, I was so busy collecting money for things that I figured I'd better go back to work, way back then, so we could put our children through college. Because the price of tuition kept going up so.

JH: Did any of them come to Brown?

MD: Unfortunately, no. Two applied and I was very disappointed and very hurt that they weren't accepted because I thought they were very remarkable children. But, they've done very well. You can't sit and be bitter.

JH: Okay, we can, um, move. (break in audio)
Okay, a little (inaudible)

MD: But they are all educated; they all have college degrees.

JH: Let's see...there was something I was going to ask you...and now I just can't remember it right now.

MD: [14:00] Well I still plan to work on this literacy program, of tutoring people, and I'm going to do Meals on Wheels once a week. But we've had illness in the family that has sort of curtailed what I've been doing, and so that's the next...

JH: What is the literacy program that you do?

MD: Well you instruct on a one-to-one basis people who have difficulty in reading, so I thought that would be really good to do.

JH: Because I was telling you, that I just started volunteering at the Genesis Preparatory School, where I'm helping with the literacy program there.

MD: And do you enjoy that?

JH: Oh, it's been wonderful. So actually, I took a friend of mine down with me last week, and so the two of us are doing it now. And I guess there are several other Brown volunteers there.

MD: Do they give you a curriculum to follow?

JH: Actually, they have teachers there and then we go and, with the students that are having a [15:00] special difficulty with any of the things that they're doing, we'll go and we'll take them off and work on a one-to-one basis. It's been really interesting.

MD: I think that's very magnanimous of you, with all of your preparation as well to be doing...

JH: It's really good though, because I think you tend to get a little complacent up here, you know, you just forget that...

MD: There are others that need assistance.

JH: Right.

MD: That's very great.

JH: Okay, so then, let's see...oh, I was going to ask you, how did you feel about the merger of 1971 when the two colleges combined? That's just been a question I've been asking everybody.

MD: Originally, I think it's such that I tend to stay in my own little world, instead of being progressive. But I think when you look at it over a broader scope, it's much more sensible to combine. [16:00] And why not? It's just, you like the people to respect...for instance, Alumnae Hall, you finally are redoing it. But, I'd say about five years ago, it was in such disrepair that it seemed very upsetting to a great many older graduates than I, who helped put up the building. Do you know? They felt very upset that it wasn't in good condition.

JH: Right.

MD: We thought it was because—well, you hate to say because the men came over, but it seemed to be thrown open more, and not being preserved. But I think they're doing a very good job of remodeling and it's in very good condition now. And as far as their merging, that's fine,

and so many Pembrokers married Brown men that why not? It seems all right along that score. [17:00] My class, however, does not seem to want to merge. We've taken it up at every meeting and they do not. Why? I don't think there's any good reason, particularly, they like their private luncheon on Reunion Weekend, and I think they could still hold that and get along otherwise, but we do have some activities together. We have a cocktail hour and share the Campus Dance table, and things like that. But we have never merged...

JH: ...with the men's alumni? Being involved with the alumni organizations and activities, what trend have you seen in your particular class, of the women there, the women that you've gone to school with?

MD: What their reaction...toward what?

JH: In just the things that they've done with their lives since Brown?

MD: Well, all of them have definitely seemed to be [18:00] career-oriented. I don't know anyone who hasn't combined...shall we say...being a wife with being a mother with a career. Each one seems to have done that. And I think, done it rather successfully. Probably, it seems...in the beginning, for instance, when any of us would have taught and were suddenly married, you automatically were out of a job. You weren't expected to maintain your job if you were married. Whereas most of them have gone back to teaching, because that has changed, or gone back to work once their family would be in school. I think that has been the tendency with the people in my era. But I don't know of any of them that hasn't combined both careers and done fairly successfully at it.

JH: [19:00] Do you see a changing role for women since...I'm just asking this from my point of view. You know, with, like, me here at college in the eighties and sort of about to, you know, start out on, like, life, or whatever.

MD: I think definitely. I think, well, I think we were curtailed in the beginning, if you were married, for the most part. I don't think that's uppermost in any of your minds, today. I think

that life has swung full circle, that you think of both things on a par, that definitely you're going to have a career. Definitely you're going to have marriage, or, if marriage is in the way, forget it! You'll have a career primarily and be a bachelor girl, or whatever. I mean, seemingly.

[20:00] That seems be the trend, I don't...

JH: Hmm. Maybe.

MD: But I mean, maybe this isn't true at all. You can defend your status at this point.

JH: I think it is, you know, I know that everyone I talk to have definitely ideas about what they want to do as far as career goes, you know, so, I think much of their...

MD: Doesn't that seem uppermost? More than, I think in my era, getting out of college, there were so many that got married as soon as they graduated, that that seemed to be, well, they used to kid and say you go to college to pursue learning or learn pursuing, you know? Well, I mean, just what did you go for, and it just seemed very important that you would have marriage and children, and then, seemingly, the career [21:00] seemed to evolve in some instances, then, afterwards for people. Now I think it is uppermost in everybody's mind. More career-oriented to begin with.

JH: What sort of jobs did most women have after they graduated?

MD: Well, actually, we still had the nursing program at...here, when I was at college. Then they discontinued that a few years later. And people in my class had what they'd call a five year program. You'd have the fifth year and you'd go into nursing. So we had nurses, and we had teachers and social workers, and that would be about it. Because if you're going to be a secretary, then you went to Katie Gibbs, or you went to Bryant, or whatever. Although some then did take courses afterwards in one of these secretarial places, if you were going to be a secretary. But I think those were the three main professions.

JH: [22:00] Yeah, because most of the women that I have interviewed before have either done teaching, or some sort of social work. And that seems very predominant. It's going to be kind of interesting to see as I interview later alumnae, because when I go home, I'm going to be interviewing a graduate from 1968, and just to see what...

MD: Much different.

JH: ...to see what they've done.

MD: I'm sure it will be. Because I think you find probably the jobs that they're doing weren't even thought of when we came out. Of course, you have a great many now with the computers and whatnot, compared to my era.

JH: Okay, well...

MD: Are we still on tape?

JH: Yeah, we're still on tape. So, looking back retrospectively, how do you see Brown fitting into everything? Or, your years at Pembroke? Your college years?

MD: [23:00] My college years fitting in...

JH: ...with the rest of your life? How do you see that all connecting together?

MD: I am very grateful for having attended Brown; I've been very proud that I did. I think people hold you in great respect in Rhode Island if you did go to Brown University. Much more so than for some of the other colleges. I think Brown has an equally important part to live up to it, too, I mean, the respect that people have given it, I think it's important that they keep it. And that's why when you suddenly read something in the paper about students—probably students, it didn't say, defacing the portraits for this Elitist Movement, I think that is just horrible. And it must come from [24:00] inside. I can't imagine a group from outside doing it.

JH: Yeah, I think it was an inside group, and there has been a lot of reaction on campus to that, and most of it very unfavorable, just on the part of students.

MD: From the students? I would hope so, because if they feel that way, then there are hundreds who would love to have come and were refused. So then you have these people, they don't like it? Then let them get out. I think so many things, down through the ages, through the years, that have cracked up, that you just almost want to hang your head about, but, I mean that probably is part of life, too. If it isn't on this campus, it would be on another campus.

JH: I guess with greater freedoms, there is also the greater freedom to make mistakes and such.

MD: That's true. I think Brown has done well to expand it, with its medical college, [26:00] as well, that's certainly very important. Of course, it always bothered me that more native Rhode Islanders weren't accepted at Brown. I mean, the ones who live here are the ones then that keep coming to do the work for Brown, for instance. But years ago, we used to have Pembroke bridges and all, to raise money for scholarships for students. And it would be all the people who would be local who would do so much work. So that you always hope. For instance, last night I talked to one woman in Florida who had said her son wasn't accepted and she felt very, very bad about that, you know, and I said, "Well, you just can't go be bitter through life," I mean, nothing like preachy—being preachy, and all, [27:00] but she said, "And here my husband went to Princeton and immediately, my son was accepted at Princeton." So I mean you find so many of these people, you know, that will be upset along those lines. But naturally, it has the appeal to so many, and wants the cosmopolitan outlook, and I suppose that's why they're doing it, I don't know.

JH: Okay, well, anything else that you want to say or add?

MD: No, I don't think so. As I say, I'm very, very pleased to have met you, and I think you made a very charming interviewer.

JH: Well, thank you very much.

MD: You should be on NBC! I'll tell (inaudible)

JH: Thank you. Thank you very much.

- END -