

Transcript -- Diane Scola, class of 1959

Narrator: Diane Scola  
Interviewer: Lisa Cummings  
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Track 1

Lisa Cummings: -- at the Sarah Doyle Women's Center, and it's May 25th, 1988. Okay, I'd like to start with this short biography. I'm going to stick pretty much to this list of questions, but I also have some additional questions that I've made up from looking at your file. First question is just briefly about your family background. Your mother's and father's education it says, and occupations. Where you grew up.

Diane Scola: All right. I'm really steeped in Rhode Island. Both my parents were born in Rhode Island. Both of them went to grammar school together. Born in 1906. Italian American. Lived in a neighborhood, as all ethnic groups did, particularly Italians, in 1906. Were not very friendly in grammar school. [01:00] Then when my mother had graduated from high school and was out working, and my father was also out at that time, they were re-introduced through a cousin. And were married. My mother was graduated from high school. Technical high school, in Providence, which was the business high school. My father, being second to the oldest of eight children, had to leave high school in the ninth grade. Went for one year to Classical. And went out to work at Weybosset food market, so he began to -- we're in the retail food business. When he was 18, he opened up his own market, which was quite a feat, I think, in those days. They were married in 1930. First child born in 1931. Second one in '35, and I was born [02:00] in '37. Youngest, two older brothers. Brought up in a Roman Catholic environment. We were sent but not at all strongly, it was just a part of your Italian American heritage. I went to parochial school for eight years. And in fact, when I was graduating from grammar school, I was first in my class. And because of that, I would have been given the Paris scholarship to go to St. Xavier's, which was the Catholic high school that most Catholics went to. Females. My father did not think that was a good idea. I had eight years in a Catholic education, and that it was about time that I went out and met the rest of the world. And refused. And my brothers had already preceded me, and [03:00] the oldest one was at Mount Pleasant, and my other brother was at Classical. So I went to Classical. It was always assumed, which is rather strange, in an Italian family, that I would be given the same opportunities and education as my brothers received. It was always assumed that I would do well. So, when I went to Classical, there was never any doubt in my mind that I was going to college.

(break in audio)

DS: Okay. So, I went to Classical. And there was never any doubt in my mind at that point in my life that I was smart. So, when I did go to Classical, you just assumed that good grades were going to come. However, Classical, even then, had the crème de la crème of the state, because [04:00] non-Providence members could go to Classical for a very slight fee. It was like, \$80. So they came from Woonsocket, and Central Falls, and Warren, and Cranston. Many people who could probably have afforded to send their children to Moses Brown, or Lincoln opted for Classical because they really thought they were getting a better education. While I was at Classical -- I really enjoyed Classical. It was a tremendous school. It was very, very competitive. And the competition stemmed from your fellow students, not from the teachers. But in addition, there was a wonderful sense of camaraderie. You always did everything together, in a big crowd. You went to basketball games, you went together. You went to football games, you went together. You went to dances, you went together. Or, but there something else that did brew within me [05:00] at this time. I was fat. So, it was good that there was a camaraderie, but I never had dates. So I compensated for that by becoming very active in organizations in school. Although there weren't that many. (inaudible) sports. There was the Bowling Club, the Swimming Club, but that was it. I was an officer of the class, a couple of years. I always worked on committees. In the meantime, I was doing all right in schools. As and Bs. One C. In Chemistry.

LC: You still remember?

DS: Oh, yeah, I was pretty bad in chemistry. Took four years of Latin, because there was a difference between an English diploma and a Classical diploma. Had to have four years of Latin. Met a lot of [06:00] good people, and I have very pleasant memories of the people I met, of the friendships I made. Still see them around; several of them have remained sort of friends, in a peripheral sense, not close. Because my close friends, well, they moved away. And although they're awesome I send Christmas cards to who I really don't see. There were also, as I mentioned before, some very bright people. In fact, Johnny Down (inaudible). And they have achieved. And it was that kind of a school, where you achieved. And we were all very similar in background. Italian Americans, Jewish Americans. Some white. [07:00]

While I was at Classical -- well, actually prior to that, when I was probably about six or seven years old, my father left the market and he started a jewelry company. And he took in two brothers, and it did flourish. So, that sort of compounded the fact that I could go to college. And there was never any doubt in my mind that my parents were unable to afford it. We were a very, very closely knit family. Holidays we were 36 people. And the women always do all the work. I was brought up like that. My mother really never worked. She was always home. She always did the cooking. She always did the cleaning. And [08:00] yet, she was, as I look back, probably more in control of a lot of things than we gave her credit for. She still is. Is still alive, by the way. They celebrated their fifty-eighth wedding anniversary

And my mother says, if she had to do it all over, she probably would. She would be a little more independent. In her own way, she was independent. She was doing what she really

wanted to do at that time. So, I was brought up with that kind of a role model for women. Except that being the only daughter, I was my father's favorite. Still am. So, I could really get anything I wanted from my father. And (inaudible) do pretty much what I wanted to do. Given, within the major rules. [09:00] Of how to bring up a family. So, my father was the disciplinarian. He was the strong one. Overtly. While I was at Classical, you always aspired to go to an Ivy League. I mean, that was inevitably really what -- URI was like, fifth option. And I say that because you didn't apply to all the colleges. I did have my older brother -- I was a freshman when he was a senior. He was accepted to Harvard. And he did, in fact, go. So, I, at that point, decided that I was either going to go to Radcliffe or Wellesley. So, always because my brother and I were very, very [10:00] close, and we shared mutual friends, and we did things socially together. And my brother was rather shy, so I compensated for that. I would get him dates with my girlfriends, and he could get a date with his (inaudible) sister. So, it worked out kind of well. And we did things. We were always, always together.

So, when he went off to Harvard, I became friendly with his roommates, and friends, and I would go up and visit him, or they would come down, and we would do things together. And so while I was in high school, I did very, very well in math. And history. And so I automatically felt that whatever I did in college would involve math. I was not good in English, nor languages, although I had taken [11:00] four years of Latin and three years of French. I had really trotted my way through Latin. Basically because I had a very, very poor Latin teacher the first two years. A very, very poor French teacher the first year. So it was sort of hard to catch up.

LC: You would fall behind?

DS: Yeah, it really does. So, when senior time came along, and you took your college boards then. And you never, never, never asked what they were. You never asked what your IQ was. You never asked your college boards. So, you just went with everybody on Saturday, went to Brown, took the college boards. And you applied to colleges. So I applied to Radcliffe, Wellesley, Pembroke, and URI. It was always automatically assumed that if you went to Constance you got into Pembroke, in those days.

LC: So, can I just ask you a question? So, the other girls in your high school -- you were not unique in that you were encouraged to go to college?

DS: No, no, no.

LC: Everyone at the school?

DS: Well, if you weren't going to college, [12:00] you would never go to Classical. Ninety-nine point nine percent of the class went to college. For some, maybe, reason because of your financial burden -- even though, in fact, there was one girl in the high school who was very bright. (inaudible) I was, who came to South Providence. It was our neighborhood. And scholarships were scarce in those days. I mean, hard to come by. So she did not go to college.

But that was the exception, and not the rule. And we all knew why she was not allowed to go to college. And, she couldn't even go to URI because of the fact that she had to go out and work and bring money home.

So, when college application time came, I applied to those colleges. And, shock of shocks, I was refused at Radcliffe. I was refused at Wellesley. I was refused at Pembroke. I was absolutely devastated. I didn't know [13:00] what in the world I was going to do. So, the scurry started. And I had a phone call with (inaudible), who taught at Providence College. And we had a priest in the family, who really felt that he had pull particularly at the college. So, we had a meeting, and "What to do with Diane." And it was really a terrible, terrible shock. And, so what we did do was, Father Scola went to the Dean of Admissions, Roberta Brown, and talked with her. If my application could be reconsidered. And she agreed. However, I had to take my college boards over again, because my English was so bad. And that was going to happen in August. [14:00] In the meantime, I had to now scurry to get colleges to go to. But the school -- Classical - - recommended that I apply to RIC or Salve Regina. Well, I did not want to go to RIC. At that time it was RICE -- Rhode Island College of Education, because that's where you went if you wanted to become a school teacher. I did not want to go to Salve Regina, because it was reputable for being a very young college, and very, very provincial. And 99% of the student body was Irish Catholic. And I was no longer used to that homogeneity. So, what I did do, I also found out that Catholic colleges would be more readily acceptable at that late date. Because now we're talking about May. So I found New Rochelle [15:00] (inaudible) And I would be backtracking, again. Neither could, having come from an Italian American village, I was not allowed to go to (inaudible) school. The only reason I could go to either Radcliffe or Wellesley, had I gotten in, was that my brother could have come. Because he could watch over me.

LC: Protect you.

DS: Yeah. And if I would have been accepted at Pembroke, I would have had to have commuted. The reason that I could go to Albertus Magnus, or New Rochelle, was that they were Catholic colleges. And heavily disciplined and controlled. One was a Dominican, and one was, I think, Sisters of the Ursuline, or something. (inaudible)

So, I did, in fact, apply to both Albertus Magnus and New Rochelle. And was accepted. And I decided that I would go to -- I guess it was Albertus Magnus. And I could make out that it was a little better [16:00] than New Rochelle. And besides, next door was Yale. And was starting. I wrote to a roommate, to getting things ready. During that summer, the summer of '55, it had been my parent's 25th wedding anniversary, the preceding April. And what my father wanted to do was see the country. He was always very fond of being American because he was brought up by immigrant parents, who never, never, never wanted to go back to the old country. Because in the old country, people had nothing. The new world had put food on the table. And he had felt that America had given him opportunities that he could achieve. So he wanted to see the country.

So, the five of us packed bags and drove across the country. And I packed my college board review. And every day, five weeks, I just studied. [17:00] Mostly vocabulary, and crazy

little multiple choices. What this did do to me was it made me absolutely petrified of English, and absolutely petrified of ever taking the exam. Particularly any kind of universal kind of answer.

LC: Standardized?

DS: Standardized testing. It really did a number on me. So, I did that. I came back and took my college boards over again. And six days before freshman year, I just got a letter that I was accepted at Pembroke.

LC: Pretty close!

DS: Yeah, pretty close. So, I wrote to Albertus Magnus and I became a freshman at Pembroke. Took all the battery of tests. And felt that I was going to be a math major. [18:00] So, of course I had to -- I don't know if you know about the writing -- If you didn't pass your English proficiency you had to take English 1, 2. All those kinds of things. I did not -- of course I didn't pass my English proficiency. And I didn't pass my French proficiency exam. The courses that I decided on was English, because (inaudible) English. French (inaudible). Biology D1, D2. And English, French, Biology, and Math. Math D1.

LC: So, of course now we have our new curriculum. You know, as Brown students. What were your requirements like, at Pembroke at the time?

DS: You had to take all. So many social sciences, so many social studies. So many sciences. [19:00] And so many English. And it added up to 12.

LC: So you had a core curriculum?

DS: Yeah, and that's where the Ds came from. When I say French D11, D12. Or History D1, D2, or anything like that. That applied to the distributions. The English 1, 2 would not apply. And once you get rid of those distributions, you could go beyond them. There were some, however, and I've forgotten what they were called, who, I guess if you got a certain average in your tests that you took freshman week, you didn't have to do that. I've forgotten. I never did it, so I don't remember. So, I took those courses. And if you passed English 1, you didn't have to take English 2. I naturally did not pass English 1. I took English 2. I took French D11, D12. Took Math D1, which was [20:00] logic, or something in it with (inaudible). And a lot of my friends who were either brighter than I was at doing that, or had done better in it, actually flunked. I got by with a C, and I was pretty proud of it. Then you had to take -- I took Math D2. And I got a C in that.

LC: So, the turnoff.

DS: However, I found out -- no, it didn't turn me off yet, but I found out that you had to take physics if you wanted to be a math major. And don't forget chemistry! So I knew I was not going to do physics. So now, here I am, at the end of my freshman year, and not really knowing what the hell I was even interested in, let alone considering a major by the end of the year sophomore year. So I just continued on my merry way. I took History D1, D2. I took music. I took psychology. I took political science. [21:00] And actually, the distribution classes were wonderful. They forced you to do things that you would never do. And in some ways, they opened avenues that you never knew were even there.

So that, by the end of my sophomore year, I just enjoyed everything. I even took philosophy. And I decided I didn't want to decide on a major. I was really having a good time not deciding. I mean, I knew I wasn't going to be in science. I knew I wasn't going to be in math. So, I actually (inaudible) out on American Civ. I mean, that was --

LC: We have a lot in common!

DS: When you didn't know what to major in, you majored in American Civ. And there was a nice little core of us, who did do that. I went, for the rest of my years, taking courses [22:00] and praying that they didn't write papers. Because I was still kind of --

LC: Yeah, I write a lot of papers! In my Am. Civ. courses.

DS: And did extremely well in political science. Art history. Philosophy. Never too well in English courses. They used to have a course, English 41, 42. I don't know if it's still there.

LC: American Literature?

DS: And you used to have to write on seven by nine cards, a critique of what you had read that week. And there were, like, 12 weeks, say. I'm not sure, okay? And what you had to do was write 10. But if you wrote 12, they would take the 10 best. So I wrote the 12. I attended every single class. I had copious notes. Everyone knew that if you cut a class, [23:00] Diane had the notes. I was so petrified of English. I'm really building this up, because it really is relevant, later. It decided (inaudible). I did fairly -- I mean, I certainly didn't set this place on fire. I did my work. I never really did more than my work, but I always, always did my work. I always had my papers in time. You know, if you had three cuts that's all you took were three cuts. But if you had unlimited cuts, you just did so many, and you never, never pushed it.

Once in a while, I would do the extra reading. Once in a while, I'd do that. But I really enjoyed -- there were some questions down here about the best memory, the worst memory. And if you were to ask me, what did I learn in college? I learned to [24:00] (inaudible), how to think and put it together. High school, they taught me how to study. Classical was wonderful. Really taught you to discipline yourself to study. College taught me to learn to think. To learn to begin -

- to begin -- to assemble, and dissemble, material. I have always been eternally grateful for my college education. It has always come in handy, and I don't know how else to say it. But it's put me in a good state. And I'm very glad (inaudible).

LC: We'll talk more about that later, a lot. That's kind of a reason to focus, is how Pembroke affected your life later. But I wanted to just go over a little bit more of your social situation at Pembroke. There's some questions down here about your roommate. [25:00] Just generally, your living situation. I saw that, I think, you lived in West House, but I don't know where that is --

DS: Well, I was in the West House. I was a commuter. Don't forget, I had to go home every night.

LC: So, you did commute. OK.

DS: I commuted. And the saving grace of commuters was West House. It was a rallying point. It gave you an entity on a campus where 90% were dorm students. I mean, we always felt -- brown baggers. We felt we were brown baggers. I think we were also looked upon as brown baggers. I think we were separated from the rest of the campus.

LC: So, you lived at home all four years?

DS: All four years. But at least -- and I do give credit to Pembroke for providing West House -- that it did give us some sense of identity. Some sense of a community within a community to which you belonged. I mean, we were West Housers. You were another West House girl. Maybe we weren't Andrews, [26:00] or George Street, or something like that. But we knew that we were. And so that there was that sense of togetherness. There were very few social functions involved in West House, because we always went home at night. It also provided some opportunity to stay on campus. And I particularly used to love to stay on campus, because you could go home at 1:00. If I stayed home, I had to be home at 12:00. And for four years, I never told my father that. (beeping) (inaudible) And that was true of many other West Housers, that we would have had to been home earlier had we gone home. So we stayed on campus.

LC: So, meaning you slept over?

DS: Mm-hmm, yeah. They had facilities like, for 16. Twelve or sixteen. And they provided sheets. They had bathrooms, showers. So you could stay. You could bring an overnight bag and stay over. It was also a place [27:00] to leave things. Your gym suit. And we did do that. So, to change for gym. It was a place to change.

LC: So, where was it, exactly?

DS: The house on the corner of Brown and Meeting. The brown house. It's still there. So, and there was never any question that I had to commute. In addition to which, many Rhode Islanders were not allowed to stay on campus because it was very crowded. And oftentimes, we were accepted with that stipulation. And we always knew that. And you were quickly putting on a waiting list, when a room opened up, at some point. You might be given a room. And sometimes I did have one. But we never ate dinner together. I never knew about the [28:00] advent of teas on Sunday. We were never included in that. I do blame Pembroke for that. They could have done something for us. They could have integrated us a little more in the dormitory life. Because it did make us feel like outsiders.

And because of that, you didn't really join certain things. You didn't join the student -- yes, there were those from West House who did that, but you had to be a really strong person. And if you felt like a second-class student, you needed that much more to become a joiner. So, we did join things. Like I belonged to Young Republicans club. I belonged to the Women club. I belonged to an organization when you went and worked with kids. I went to things like that.

In some ways, [29:00] the Women club certainly was a very provincial club. The Republican club had a lot of Rhode Islanders in it. And the other, the social club, or the social welfare kind of program, you did outreach in the community. So that was pretty safe. But I never did any of the other things that I think perhaps a dorm student might have done. In addition to which, you had to come back and many of us didn't have classes. So, it was a matter of staying here and taking the bus home, or to find yourself other transportation. Have your parents pick you up, or something like that. I was fortunate in that I did have a friend who lived on the way to [Kenneth?] Park. And so that if I did things that she did. She'd give me a ride home. But I did, I [30:00] met her. Now, those people are still my friends. The group of women that I'd commute with. Our bridge crowd. We played bridge. Do you have any other questions?

LC: Oh, yes, so many, I just wanted to --

DS: By the way, you know, the Brown boys -- and they were boys -- looked at us differently, too. They looked at us as being townies. Which therefore meant it was easier. And they liked the fact that (inaudible) car. They felt that we could get home later.

LC: Which was not true. (laugh)

DS: Which wasn't that late, yeah. Which we never told. So that you were looked upon a little differently.

LC: In general, how were the relations between the male and female students? [31:00] You didn't have any classes with each other?

DS: Oh, yes.

LC: They were already -- I didn't realize that. I thought it was...



DS: The classes might have been held on the Pembroke campus, but they were still co-ed.

LC: They were all integrated.

DS: We were taught cooperative. We had no faculty.

LC: Okay, so, how did you feel in the classroom with the (inaudible)? I guess you were used to that, having gone to a --

DS: No problem, no problem. Absolutely no.

LC: OK, so your main sense of separation came from your commuting status.

DS: Basically, yes.

LC: Okay. I had some other questions, myself... One is just a kind of factual question. I just wanted to, before [32:00] I saw that you had gotten a Master's degree in 1969. And what subject was that in?

DS: English.

LC: English. That's interesting. OK, so we'll get to that a little later. But back to the undergraduate years. Nancy Duke Lewis, I saw, was dean of Pembroke at the time. And in the yearbook, there was a quote about her reminding the Pembroke women of --

Track 2 [00:00]

LC: OK. I was going to ask someone about Nancy Duke Lewis, as a kind of role model. And she'd mentioned, you said, freshman week, your responsibilities as an educated woman. What did she think --

DS: Nancy Duke Lewis embodied everything in a woman I did not like.

LC: (laughs) Great, all right. That's a strong statement. So elaborate.

DS: She was a southern belle. Educated, and an education, but still a southerner. A real... If I ever felt I was ethnic, I felt it with Nancy Duke Lewis. Considering that she had a somewhat small college the only time I ever met Nancy Duke Lewis was when I had cut chapel more than three times. And she called -- or, she didn't call me. I mean, she would everyone [01:00] into her office. And reprimand you. And that is the only personal encounter I ever had with Nancy Duke

Lewis. She was always standoffish. She was always a lady. She was never a role model. Not for me!

LC: OK. So, what did she consider that an educated woman was, or should do?

DS: To me, it was just crusty. I don't think that throughout my Pembroke career, that there was really a woman who stood out, or up for, ideas which maybe I didn't even know I wanted, but I realized, looking back, I felt, I think, the men at Brown did more for me than any woman did.

LC: Interesting. Keeney was president, right?

DS: Keeney was president, but –

LC: [02:00] Who else?

DS: There were men like Professor Hedges. Who had a reputation for being tough, strong, no nonsense person, and very bright.

LC: In what subject?

DS: History. And that's the kind of influence I felt. That I learned to be tough. That if you wanted something, you had to do it. You had to go get it, and not to take any nonsense, and to face facts in life. And if the facts were in history, face the facts in history. But he was able to convey the feeling into your own life. Barry Marks, English, 41, 42. Elmer [Colon?]. I mean, he was wonderful. These were the people that I remember -- Elmer Colon, Mike [Parenti?]. Irwin Levine. [03:00] They were in the political science department. And after Poli. Sci., we would all go and have coffee, and continue the conversation. And your idea was as important as anybody else's, and that's what I got here. That's what I learned here. Not Nancy Duke Lewis, knowing the white gloves and the proper dress, or not too much makeup, or not too much this. It was the other side of the campus that taught me, not this side of the campus.

LC: Interesting. There were no women professors?

DS: No, I never had one. I mean, I didn't even know of one. Oh, yes, Professor [Kellogg?], education. And I would never take education. To me, that was a waste of the money that a course would cost. Those are the people that established role models. [04:00] I think those are the people that basically made me a feminist. Because I felt that I was able to do it, and sex was not going to stand in my way. And I think that that's with (inaudible) and them.

LC: So, implying that -- did you consider yourself a feminist?

DS: Oh, never.

LC: Surely, the term wasn't even in existence. But were you conscious of your -- no, you were kind of --

DS: Well, in some ways. But I wouldn't have termed them that. I mentioned a few social things, for example, that we always thought were absolutely ridiculous. You could wear Bermuda shorts. You had to wear a raincoat on top of it. And yet the boys could walk into class with Bermuda shorts on. We were allowed to knit in class. I mean, I don't think I would, today, allow a woman to knit only because of the image that she would be projecting. Particularly in those days. [05:00] I think that that, well, those were the kinds of things that sort of got you angry, but you didn't know why. You didn't really think about it. As far as careers, I guess because I didn't know what I wanted. So I didn't really think in those terms then. I was thinking more social, then. Because I had no idea.

LC: Did you assume that you would get married?

DS: Yeah.

LC: Let's see, I have a few other questions. This is another kind of proscription question. What do you feel about, just the society of Rhode Island and Providence, in the 1950s? [06:00] Proscribed for you, as a woman at college. How was that different than, say --

DS: I don't think it was any different than the national proscription. That you got married, had children. Stayed home. Lived in suburbia, because you were college. Married somewhat of a professional. You certainly, having gone to Pembroke, you would not marry a garage mechanic. That you had been taught how to think. And because you knew how to think, you would not want that. I don't really think it was a case of snobbery. It was a case of, you couldn't be happy intellectually with that type of person, because if he had wanted more, and could do more, he would be doing more.

LC: Okay. Also, looking at the yearbook, I notice that American Civilization seemed to be a popular major, [07:00] despite its small size. Also French and art, literature. And I came across one woman who was an engineer, and that really stood out. Just because she was the only one that I could find. And just a few [SCBs?]. What did they tell you about majoring? Were certain majors encouraged? Were certain classes encouraged?

DS: I don't think that they were discouraged. I really, as I said, I came here as a math major. Which was not common. There were a couple in the class. But it was not a common major for a woman. I remember freshman week, which was probably the only time that you talked to somebody about what to take. And it was a male, and he said, "You did very well in your math." I never did find out what I ever did. I mean, it was still a secret, even afterwards.

LC: You mean, on the test?

DS: On your SAT. And when I had said I wanted [08:00] to be a math major, he said, "Well, you should be good in math." In addition, when they came here for interviews in your senior year. Now, as I said, I had no idea what I wanted to do, and so the easy thing to do was you became a buyer in a department store. So, I did apply for that, and I did get accepted by Jordan Marsh, and I forgot. One in New York. I can't remember. But I also interviewed at Douglas Aircraft. And I did get that job. So, I never felt that -- I mean, that was, I don't think, the school's fault. It was society's fault. Because I hadn't been bred to think in other areas. I had always liked business, and that is probably why I chose Jordan Marsh and the other one. [09:00] But I didn't feel it overtly. It might have been in some sort of subterfuge that I wasn't aware of.

LC: Okay. So, you said most of the women gravitated toward business? Toward buying. Isn't that what you told me?

DS: I did.

LC: You did, OK.

DS: I did. But that was an easy thing for women to get into. I mean, if you weren't a schoolteacher and you weren't a nurse, what else were you going to do? And so that was an area that women were easily accepted into.

LC: Okay. So there really wasn't much, then, career counselling.

DS: No.

LC: I would imagine. Okay. And you didn't receive that, except for freshman week. Okay... Just one other question. One thing I was interested in, is that I also noticed in the yearbook that quite a few of the seniors who were listed as "Mrs. So-and-so." They'd recently gotten married. How was that viewed by the administration? Did they disapprove of it?

DS: [10:00] I think that those were the years, I think, maybe seven or eight years before that, that might have been a problem. But I guess because I didn't do it, I didn't know if they had been a problem. In fact, a friend of mine who had graduated the year before, accelerated courses -- she had taken five courses a semester, so she could finish earlier, so she could get married. And she did not seem to have a problem. And we were good friends, and I would have known it. By the way, we did have a doctor in our class. We do have a doctor in our class. An MD who knew she was going to be an MD when she was here. And there were several nurses.

LC: Right, I noticed that. Nursing... Okay. Before we go on [11:00] to the history of your career, they wanted us to ask about some of the traditions of Pembroke. Again, being a commuting student, you may not have been as involved in those. But this May Day, Ivy day.

DS: Having been steeped in tradition, I always liked tradition. And even though I was a commuter, we did participate in May Day. We did participate in Spring Day. I don't remember the Sophomore Mass, and I don't know Ivy Day. So, obviously I didn't participate, and there must have been a reason which I don't know about. And the funniest thing is, I don't remember my commencement march. That had come to me a number of years ago, because I had marched, since then, and was so impressed with everything [12:00] and so surprised that I have no memory of it. I remember commencement day. I remember sitting in the church. I remember sitting out on the green. I remember it was a beautiful day in the morning, and it rained in the afternoon. I remember all that. I remember the baccalaureate service. I don't remember marching.

And yet, when the first time I marched after commencement, which was maybe about 10 or 12 years ago, I got goosebumps from marching. Where the lines opened up. Now, I remember we did that, where the line opened up, and the line opened up, and everybody else marched. And then you folded back together again. But maybe I was just caught up in graduation, that I didn't catch everything else because it's so impressed me since then. It's really a goose bumpy experience. It's one of the finest commencements I have ever been to. [13:00] But the traditions that I participated in, I mean, we always went to Spring Weekend. I mean, God, that was a drinking brawl! You had to.

LC: It hasn't changed! I can assure you!

DS: Homecoming, you always tried to get a date. I don't remember anything else. By the way, right here under "curricular and career counselling," I had a, "Ha!"

LC: "Ha!" Right. That's why I asked you if you seemed to think there wasn't much.

DS: My worst memory of Brown is when Professor [Lewalksy?] accused me of plagiarism.

LC: Oh wow. What subject was it in?

DS: Russian. I had taken this Russian literature course, and that was the year that Doctor Zhivago came out. So I did it on Doctor Zhivago. And it was very, very, very -- I mean, the only thing you could get were like Time Magazine reviews. That [14:00] there was nothing done on it. And he accused me of plagiarism. I had written like a 12-page paper. (inaudible) This is why I hated English.

LC: It's actually kind of a compliment.

DS: And I said -- that's exactly what I said to him. I said, "There's nothing written. What could I plagiarize?" He finally agreed -- I had an A. He gave me a D on the paper.

LC: So, he didn't believe you, and --

DS: Well, he didn't, he didn't -- he could have just given an F. So, he didn't do that. So he just gave me a D. And a D was passing. And also, in English 11, 12, --D 11, D 12, I wrote a paper that he said was so bad he refused to grade it.

LC: This was not the same professor.

DS: No, no, no, that's another one. So, those are my two worst experiences at Brown, which gave me absolutely paranoia about writing. And after having [15:00] taken English 1, 2, obviously it wasn't very successful. If, after that, they had either A, refused to grade my paper, or B, accused me of plagiarism. Those are my worst memories.

LC: What about your best?

DS: My A in a political science exam that was brought up in front of the class. That was really nice. And I had forgotten about that until I had to think about it.

LC: (inaudible) to concentrate all on the bad. Okay.

DS: Contact with Pembroke deans and faculty.

LC: Right, you mentioned that there was no faculty, really --

DS: None.

LC: And that the dean did not strike your fancy too much. I think we've pretty much covered a lot here. Except this important question. Your feelings about the merger of 1971, having gone to Pembroke.

DS: At first, when they first talked about it, I was very [16:00] antagonistic.

LC: Why were you opposed to it?

DS: Because I had always said I graduated from Pembroke. I was graduating from Pembroke. I was a Pembroke grad. I mean, you know, it was Polly Pembroke, or whatever you wanted to say. But then, after having read some of the literature that had been put out by BAM [*Brown Alumni Monthly*] and things like that, it was absolutely true. Our degree was a Brown degree. It was not a Pembroke degree. And it was really only a campus. That's all it was. And what was most

convincing was, "Just think. We could actually have as many applicants, and as acceptances, as possible." Whereas before, it was always very small. It was four to one. So, I became for it. And I immediately, after that, said I was a Brown graduate. So, I guess I couldn't have felt too strongly about it.

LC: So you kind of weighed the logic? [17:00] Okay. I think we've pretty much covered your, I guess your experience at school, unless there's anything more that you can think of with that. And I'd like to go on to the history of your family and your career, and just your life in general after that. And you got your Master's degree in English, so I'm very interested to know, after your terrible experiences, how this --

DS: I was graduated, and obviously my father was not going to change in four years. He did not want me to go away. It was not the appropriate thing for a young woman to do. So, I had to scurry around -- in addition to which, my father has a very innate sense of logic. That is completely, not at all school. He sat me down one day, and he said, Okay. I was offered this job at Douglas Aircraft, \$320 a month which in those days was a lot of money. And again, my math had done me a good stead, because they had given me a test, and I was going to be an engineer's aide, and they would send you to graduate school. It sounded really exciting. And as I look back, gee, it might have been pretty good, you know. Gotten into math and those kinds of things.

And he sat me down one day and he said, "Now, look at. You're going to make \$320 a week -- a month -- and that's shy of \$80 a week. Now you're going to have to get an apartment. The apartment's going to cost you \$150, \$200 a week. A month. You really have to buy food. That's going to cost you \$30, \$40 a week. And you're going to have to pay utilities." He said, "You'll never be left with \$20, if you're lucky. You can't buy clothes." And I loved clothes. So he said, "Well, now, if you get a job at home --" I said, "Daddy, I can't get a job at home. They don't pay."

LC: So wait, where was the Douglas Aircraft [19:00] job?

DS: In Hartford. And Hartford was a fairly expensive city in those days. I mean, it wasn't Manhattan, but it was more expensive than Providence. So he said, "If you get a job here --" And I said, "Well, what can I do?" He said, "Well, if you can get a job for \$45 dollars a week," he said, "It's all yours. You'll live at home. You won't have to pay room and board. You don't have to do this, you don't have to do that. You can have the use of the car." Sounded pretty logical. And in addition to which, I knew he didn't want me to go away. So I stayed home and the first thing I tried to do was an uncle of mine knew someone in the insurance business, so I went and I studied. I took a -- what do you call it when you write to a place and you take a course?

LC: Correspondence course?

DS: Correspondence course. For life insurance. And I took the correspondence course, and I got my license to sell life insurance. [20:00] Well, I went out three times to sell it, and I found out I can't sell life insurance. You have to drop dead to get it, right? I didn't believe in it. How could I sell it? So that was that. Now, in the meantime, you must also understand that my father -- and his two brothers -- had a very profitable business. And I had asked my father if I could go into the business. And, true to the Italian American heritage, the daughters didn't go into the businesses. The sons did. So, my oldest brother was in the business and I was not allowed to go in. That was the only time my father, I couldn't get what I wanted. And basically because he had two brothers.

So, I started looking around here. I can't sell insurance. So, I decided, well, I'll do a department store here. And I got a job at Gladding's, downtown, which was the nice -- at that time -- the nicest, and the oldest, women's specialty store in Rhode Island. And in fact, the oldest one in the country. So I [21:00] got a job there, being an assistant buyer. No training program. I mean, this was not a Big Apple type. What you really did was you went and you counted stock, and you gave the inventory count to the buyer, who in turn bought. It was really very little training. But I kind of enjoyed it. You got dressed every day. There were chains, and so I went to the various chains, and things like that.

In the meantime, I did meet somebody, through the Brown graduate center. They used to have a TGIF party on Friday nights. And I met a young man, from New York, who was here working. He was a pharmaceutical representative in the area. And we started dating. And I was kind of enjoying things, you know. He had money. Believe it or not, \$40 was some money to go out [22:00] and do things. I got discount on my clothes. So, life wasn't bad. Not thinking about the future. At all. And not really seeing anything too closely, the future of anything marital. And one New Year's Eve, I went out with this young man. And I got pregnant. Which I knew, four weeks later. And so, on February 27th, we were married. And my father, when we went to tell him, my father said to me, "Dianne. You don't have to marry him. You have options. You can have an abortion, or you can have the child and not be married, and give it up for adoption. Or, you can have the child and keep it." Which was pretty liberal.

LC: I was -- quite! I'd imagine. Quite liberal.

DS: Because he said, "I never want you to get married feeling you have to [23:00] get married." So, now, he was supposedly gallant. And we were married. Had a wedding, wedding.

LC: So, you wanted to get married? Or was it anyone else's influence that persuaded you?

DS: No, no, no, I figured that that was the next step in your life, is that you got married. So we got married, and we bought a little house out in the suburbs. A little Cape. And I played housewife. I kept a very, very clean house. I cooked. I did everything. And I found out that it was not appreciated. Neither by society nor our husbands, because he expected it. And I was bored. I was terribly, terribly bored. And I came from a background that cooked. [24:00] And you cooked. I married a meat and potato man! Put ketchup on his food. We never put ketchup on our



food in our lives! So, if I cooked, it wasn't appreciated, because he wanted either a hamburger or a steak, with a baked potato. I mean, that does not take all day to do. I found that, yeah, you can do his shirts, but it's always the same. Week in and week out. So I started taking courses. I took art courses. I took real estate courses.

LC: Where were these courses?

DS: URI. Extension. I took literature courses, because I figured now I can go and enjoy it, and they won't give me shit about what I'd done. And I had a daughter. [Bettina?]. Born in September. And then I had another daughter, Bianca. [25:00] And meanwhile I'm getting more and more unhappy. I don't know why I'm unhappy, I just am not happy with fighting a little more. You know, he'd be -- he'd come home and if I was sitting at the table with -- "What are you sitting there for? Why aren't you doing something else?" Or, and it was a strange marriage. I've even forgotten half the things, and yet he loved it went we went to a party and I was in the living room talking politics.

LC: He loved that?

DS: Oh, yeah. He was very proud of that.

LC: So, what was his education like?

DS: He had gone to Iona, which was not far from New Rochelle, which is kind of funny. And... Not a bad guy, really.

LC: So, he liked it that you were educated.

DS: Yes, yes. But I also thought, I think he felt that because I had gone to Pembroke, I was a little better than he was.

LC: Uh-huh, so there was that tension. And how did he feel about you taking your courses?

DS: Fine, [26:00] fine. In fact, we took the real estate course together. I asked my father for a little job. He sent bookkeeping work home at night, so it was a little extra money. My husband was doing the checkbook, and doing a lousy job of it. I took it over, and I did a fine job. I was balanced. The bills were paid.

LC: And so, what was your husband doing at this time?

DS: He was pharmaceutical.

LC: He was still doing that? Okay.

DS: I was stashing money away because I was earning this extra money. In fact, we bought some stock. And we just kept fighting a little more. And I can't even remember what the hell we fought about, before the war.

LC: So, about what year was this?

DS: 1960 -- well, this is from, we were married in 1960, and we were separated by 1964.

LC: Okay. [27:00] It's just because I'm trying to place it in kind of, shall we say, feminist history that I've studied.

DS: I still wasn't into feminism. I mean, you know --

LC: Not, I guess, at that time. It's just reminding me of *The Feminine Mystique*, which I think came out in '64.

DS: Right. And I didn't read -- I never read *The Feminine Mystique*. After that, I said, I lived it, I don't have to read it. I did the coffee klatches. I did all those things. I did baking cakes, and doing all those kinds of things. Where you ironed with the woman next door. Coffee klatches were good, though. It really was wonderful. Too bad men never had them. It taught you how to open up. And if your husband was working at night -- for example, one of the women next door to me, her husband worked at night, and another one, her husband was in the submarine business, so he used to be way out on the subs. [28:00] We would take our ironing boards over. Leave the doors open. Run home every half hour to check the kids. They were sleeping.

LC: So, were these women that you were friendly with, your neighbors?

DS: All in the neighborhood.

LC: Were they also educated? College educated, rather?

DS: Most of them were college educated, yeah. All staying home and having families. I had my second child, and he was in the reserve. And he learned to fly a plane. As I always said, I lost my husband not to another woman. I lost him to an airplane. And he would go off weekends for reserves -- National Guard. Or he'd go flying, at the Guard center. And I'd be home. I had the goddamn kids all week. I did not want kids. And besides, which, on a weekend other people's husbands were home. You couldn't coffee klatch. And he couldn't understand it. So, [29:00] I guess the straw that finally broke the camel's back, is he wanted to leave his job, and Vietnam had started. And he wanted to become activated. And I told him I did not marry a military man. And that my grandmother had always told me, you don't leave a candle in the window.

So, I said, "Absolutely not. I will not follow you. I'm not a camp follower." So, I served him with divorce papers. And you know, it was very funny. In that time, when we would have an argument, my father would come over and he would say, "You know, Bob. I sent my daughter to college to learn how to think. You can't expect her to sit home and wait for you." And I guess it was my father, too, that had -- all of a sudden I realized, "That's what's wrong with me. I've learned how to think!" [30:00] And I had become active in the Young Republicans board and I was on the executive committee, fighting for Barry Goldwater. I say that now, because I'm now a Democrat. I mean, I even voted for McGovern. So, anyway, he left. And although I -- he left without getting served the papers, so I couldn't get a divorce because he went under the Soldier's and Sailor's Relief Act. So, there was like, a limbo for a couple of years. And he left with the money. That I had saved. So, what forced me, in the meantime -- I was very, very friendly with a priest who taught at the seminary. So, he asked me if I wanted to correct English papers. English papers, of all things.

LC: That surely threw you into a quandary.

DS: So, I started correcting English papers, and found out [31:00] that I might not be able to write English, but because I couldn't write, I knew how to correct. Because I knew what was wrong. So, I became his corrector, and I met some of the students. And we would talk about their papers, and all that. I had to go get a job. Now, I had one child who was a year old. And one who was three years old. What do you do? You become a schoolteacher. Now, I would never take an education course. Remember that? So, the only place I could teach was in a private school. So I went and taught at a private school. I went to apply. I (inaudible) was an American Civ. major, right? I'd be able to teach history or English. So, because they already had an English teacher at this one school, I got the English teacher's job. Now, I am teaching exactly what I'm petrified about. And I remember I walked into the classroom, and I was handed -- because you didn't have anything like [32:00] any sort of preparation, when you taught in private schools in those days. And I was subbing.

Track 3 [00:00]

LC: Okay, you were talking about how you were teaching English, despite your great reservations about what career in the subject.

DS: Yeah, I started teaching English in grades six through nine. And I taught there for several years. I started working for \$3,200 a year.

LC: Now which school was this?

DS: St. Dunstan's Day School. It used to be down on Benefit Street. It's now someplace up there, I don't even know. I think it's --

LC: So, it was a Catholic school.

DS: No, no, no. It was originally Episcopalian affiliated, but they had severed their relation with the Episcopal Church, although their tradition was Episcopalian. They still had the choir, and all that, and the graduation was held in an Episcopalian church. But it wasn't really sponsored by the church, as it had been prior to when I had been there. And teaching there, I really found I loved English. That what had been wrong was I had had the wrong [01:00] teachers. And that what I was going to do was going to rectify that for my students. So, I became an excellent English teacher. I took students -- and St. Dunstan's had been in financial difficulty. So they accepted a lot of students who were below par.

But, since you had to pay for the education, there were students who A, came from a fairly decent environment, and parents who were interested in education. And B, frequently children with learning disabilities. A lot of dyslexics. And they had been in public school. Perhaps they'd even been put in ungraded classrooms. And I found out that many of them were just learning disabilities, and that it was not a matter of mental retardation, as some of them had been focused in on. In fact, many of them have become lawyers, etcetera. I am very, very proud of them. So, [02:00] I taught there for three years, but as I said, I was paid a very, very meager salary. And I was head of a household. Two children.

So, after several years, I went down, took my courage in hand, and went down, and confronted the headmaster. And I had started a carnival. I had started a school newspaper. I had done all these things. I had started graduate school, at URI. Nights, in English. And I went downstairs, and I -- in fact, by the time I had left there, I had met my Master's degree. By the way, URI graduate school -- if Brown taught me to assemble and disassemble, URI taught me how to put it down on a piece of paper. Finally. Finally took graduate school. And I did very well in graduate school. And now, I could write any paper. [03:00] I mean, I learned the skill.

So, I went to the headmaster, and I said, "You know, I've got a Master's degree. I'm one of the few members of your faculty that does. I have raised money for you. I have done this, I've done that. And I'm making \$3,000 less than the male members of this faculty." I said, "I can't --" "Well, that's all right, they're men. They have a family." I said, "You know damn right well!" I was becoming a feminist. All it takes is money. I said, "That's not fair!" I said that I'm the head of a household. I've got two kids I've got to support. I said, "Either I make more money or I have to leave." He said, "I guess you're going to have to leave." He did that to me. And I even had several members of the Board of Trustees. He would not budge. And he wasn't my enemy. I couldn't believe it.

So, I had to get another job. So, [04:00] I thought, at that point, that since I was going to go out and get another job, I had always sort of liked business. I might try the business world. I went to banks. In banks, I was offered jobs. I would be a branch manager. Trained. But of course you know that you would make less than a man. I said, "No, I don't know that." So --

LC: They made a point of telling you that?

DS: They even told you that.

LC: Because you said you had a family, was that --

DS: Yes, yes.

LC: And just to interrupt you for a minute. Why did you not seek another teaching job? Because of money? That, and you could've, I guess, been certified, or --

DS: Well, I still hadn't taken education courses, okay. And I also felt that maybe the business world was still a place I wanted to be. And I thought also I could make more money. So I tried, and I found out I wasn't going to make more money, because they weren't going to give you more money! That \$7,000 -- now, you must remember, public school teachers were making like \$16,000. That if I were going to make [05:00] \$7,000 in a private school situation, \$7,000 in business and you'd work 50 weeks out of the year, and I still had two small kids. I couldn't afford the childcare in the summer. So, I gave that up. In fact, I was offered a job with [Van Dam?] at Brown. In the math department. He was just starting his work with computers. And he had even offered to take money -- increase the pay, with money, that he would pay me, personally. And I couldn't afford it, because it was like \$6,500, and I just, I couldn't afford it.

So, I got a job through a friend at St. Mary's Academy Bay View. Which is a Catholic girl's school. Private school. That diocese, in East Providence. And I started teaching there. It was high school level. [06:00] And after the first year, I was made chairman of the department. And I was responsible for the curriculum for grades seven through twelve. And I really enjoyed it. Those were wonderful, wonderful years. Society was in turmoil. Education was in a turmoil. The feminist movement was in a turmoil. And it was really exciting, and wonderful teaching. I mean, you were challenged every single day. It was wonderful, going into a classroom. I loved it, and I did a lot of things. I was president of Rhode Island Council Teachers of English. I became very involved with Brown, at that time. I became president -- the first female president -- of the Association of Class Officers.

LC: Right, I was thinking to that, too.

DS: [07:00] In fact, they merged. I was part of that merger, where it used to be the Association of Class Secretaries and then it became Class Secretaries and Presidents. And then Class Officers. And so I was very involved at Brown. I was still taking courses. I was becoming a reading specialist. And I became certified. I was working towards administration. Administrative certificate. I was there until 1976. And a friend of mine, who was an assistant superintendent of schools in North Kingstown, offered me a job in the North Kingstown school system.

And at that time, my daughter was a junior in high school. And I saw that college was coming around the bend, and [08:00] no way. I had married. I had married a teacher from St. Dunstan's. Who was also in education. And who was, at that point, working for the state. And we were making a combined salary of like \$18,000, and I knew that no way were we going to send a kid to college on that, even if I got help from my father. So, I decided I would take the job

in North Kingstown. And I taught sophomores and juniors. And because I was a reading specialist, I taught low level. I taught kids who were reading at a second, third grade level. Juniors in high school. And I was really enjoying it. I was beginning to work with [Anne Nostrand?] on a writing program. I initiated a writing program into the North Kingstown high school. I was [09:00] very happy with my career.

However, I also saw that there was no principal of a secondary school in this state that was female. There was no superintendent of schools that was a female. The only thing that I could ever aspire to be was a chairman, again. And I had been a chairman. I had done that. And I knew I didn't want to stay in classroom. I didn't like five classes a day. It's a heavy load for me. When you're a good English teacher, it's a terribly heavy load. I mean, I would be up till two o'clock in the morning correcting papers. You didn't entertain on a Sunday, because you had papers to correct. You didn't do anything during the week, because you had either papers to correct or classes to go to. And you never did anything social during the week.

What did happen, was I slipped a disc. And I was in terrible pain. To the point that I was forced to [10:00] take a leave of absence. And to have an operation. And the doctor did not want me back in the classroom for at least a year. North Kingstown was willing to keep my job open. While I was in the hospital, because I had forced myself to continue teaching and I shouldn't have -- I used to put a heating pad on my back -- I gave myself third degree burns, and I couldn't be operated on. So I was bed-ridden for like six weeks. I couldn't walk because of the (inaudible). I couldn't move in the bed because -- so, I was on all kinds of drugs. I became a junky. That's what I became! Was popping pain pills all the time. I did a lot of thinking, and I thought -- my father, in the meantime, and his brothers, had sold the business. And I thought, "Hmm, let me apply to the new owners for a job." [11:00]

LC: Kind of round about!

DS: After I was operated on -- and it was like a miracle operation. The operation happened, and two days later I'm walking straight again. Oh, it was -- compared to -- I never believed pain could be like that. So I applied to the new owners. My brother, who was still working for the company, with the new owners, and I, drove up to Newton, Massachusetts, and I got the job, as assistant vice president of sales and marketing. And I went to work. I liked that, too. I could see, however, that the writing on the wall was that the new owners didn't like remnants of the old owners there, and that, once again, I would never be president of a company. Or, I wouldn't have the opportunity to be president. That's what bothers you. It's not that you can't make it. It's that—

LC: Right, it's that you couldn't if you -- did.

DS: If you had the ability to be. So, I talked my brother [12:00] into starting a new company. So, on January 1st, 1979, I had given my notice already. And we started another jewelry company. Scola Enterprises. In direct competition with the old company. I was brought to court. They tried to close us down. They weren't successful. Because I had no contract. And I've quickly brought

you to the present. I did that very quickly, OK. I have two daughters. My oldest daughter is in the process of getting a divorce. I hope to God that doesn't ruin the family. I divorced my second husband, too. And I must say, it's very strange, as I look back. Both of my husbands were supportive of me out in the public world. Sometimes at home, they weren't so supportive. [13:00] In ways which are more important to you than out in public.

LC: What ways do you mean?

DS: Well, my first husband wanted a wife who was going to stay home, and keep the house clean, etcetera. My second husband wanted a wife who was going to divorce her two kids. That's basically what it was. And I just couldn't take it. I mean, I should have done it years before that, because my kids were not very happy with their stepfather. And I just thought that in the future, grandchildren and everything would come along. And it was just never going to end, because he wanted a woman all to himself. And that's old world, too.

So, well anyway, my oldest daughter was married for two years. Has an absolutely, absolutely wonderful child. And I'm a grandmother. And it's one of the happiest things that's ever happened to me in my life. My second daughter is -- neither one went to Brown, [14:00] and I hope that someday somebody does. Maybe my granddaughter. And she's a sales rep for [Spinedale?] and I see her as being a chip off the old block.

LC: I was going to ask you about your daughters. Just a little more, how your education, and where it was, may have directly, or kind of indirectly, affected them. They both went to college?

DS: Yes.

LC: Okay. And did they go to women's colleges, or where did they go?

DS: Yes.

LC: -- where did they go? They did, okay.

DS: But that was their choice. My oldest daughter was 17 when she was graduated from high school. And she went off to Goucher. She had never done -- neither one had done -- splendidly in school. And in many ways, I ended up a good teacher for other peoples' kids, and not my own. I never had time to work with them, [15:00] and sit down, and help them, and do things with them. I always, always had to work. I think that I short-changed them in that respect, in that area. But in other areas, I gave them something else. I mean, they have a wonderful role model. In fact, maybe too strong.

But they were really short-changed on opportunities. I never had the money to afford them to do things that might have been helpful. I never had the time -- I mean, that was one of my complaints, was I had time to take other peoples' kids to Trinity, and my own kids, never.

So, then, that really affected their education. So the oldest one, who never really set the world on fire in high school, went to apply to college and she was accepted at Goucher. And she [16:00] applied there because my sister-in-law had gone there. Goucher is in Baltimore, and we went down to see it, and I really felt that she shouldn't go there. I thought it was too competitive for her. I felt it was too far away, and she was too young.

That was a horrible day, when we drove her down and left her. Terrible, leaving your first child. She did not do well. It was too far away, and it was too competitive. And she was too young. What I really should have done was put her someplace for a year. Or make her go out and work. Do something. But not send her off like that. So, college was a devastating experience for her. She ended up finishing up at Emanuel in Boston, which is a Catholic girl's college. I mean, it's just a place to go to college. She hated it. And now she looks back, and she wishes that she had done better at Goucher, because she identifies more with Goucher. And she went to the reunion. Her friends are Goucher [17:00] people.

My second daughter is well disciplined, in that she knows how to study. So, she was accepted at Wheaton. And she went to Wheaton, and she had a wonderful experience at Wheaton. She studied abroad for a year. She studied in Paris. Which really broadened her horizons. The only thing that my education really did for my kids is it made them realize they needed an education. I think that they may feel a sense of failure, in some ways. Because I went to Brown and they didn't. They feel that their mother's much smarter than they are. I mean, I can tell them, I was refused at Pembroke. It doesn't matter. They don't see that, because they see the bottom line. They see where I am today, and not where I was. I may tell them that I couldn't write, but they don't know that because I learned how to write. [18:00]

So, if anything, in some ways, it might have been detrimental to my kids, because it made me too looming a model. And not one that they felt was attainable. But my daughter is telling her daughter that she's going to go to Brown. So, as I said, maybe that's the generation that will follow. Because I would like someone to go.

LC: Okay. I wanted to ask you some more about two things. One, your business, because I don't know how jewelry business works, and I'm sure that's very competitive here in Rhode Island, because it seems to be a big industry here. And I'm interested in knowing just a little more about that. What you do, what your function is as the co-partner, and how --

DS: Well, Rhode Island and the Attleboros is the costume jewelry center of that world. I don't know how long it's going to be like that, because of imports. [19:00] It has been in the jewelry industry for 100 years. You know, it started with silversmiths who were in Massachusetts. Most of them are, in fact, family owned. Family run. They're owner operated. It is manufacturing process. We do have a factory. We employ about 45 people. Basically, my brother and I sort of divide responsibilities, in that he takes care of the financial end of the business, and I more or less take care of the sales and marketing, and then we have two other key people who do production. Although we're in charge of that, too, because of course it all overlaps. We do market -- we have four salesmen that travel the country. So we are national. [20:00] We have a few customers that we export to. We consider ourselves the best of the costume jewelry, because



we're ring manufacturers. Ninety nine percent of our product line is rings. We make very, very few earrings and pendants. It's a more expert area. It's a more skilled area. And it's a bigger investment. But it doesn't change as fast. When we first started out, I did a great deal of travelling, because my brother and I were the sales force. I liked traveling. I liked going -- all cities are great. You feel the air, the sunshine, and everyone's nice. I mean, like Chicago became one of my favorite cities. I liked Minneapolis. I did not like Toledo. [21:00] Atlanta's great. You know, Philadelphia's fun.

LC: San Francisco?

DS: No, my brother took the west coast. However, I was out in San Francisco a year ago. He took the west coast, because he had been familiar with the west coast, so he took the west coast. But then as we grew, we found out that we did need a sales force. We weren't attending to the market. So, we did hire, so we do have four sales people. What else would you like to know about the business?

LC: Do you do any designing, or any of that? Or do you hire people to do that?

DS: Well, in the costume -- don't forget, you're in the costume end. On the costume end, we're not in high fashion costume. We're in bread and butter products. That it's really basically, you copy what sells. And you copy a lot of solid gold that sells. All right, our best item in our line, [22:00] the best seller, is still the one carat engagement ring. So, the rest is all frou-frou that keeps the customers coming back. But, I mean, your one carat solid tier, and your wedding band. Are bestsellers. But those are your bread and butter items, and we have good quality, and we're affordable. Have a very good reputation in the industry.

LC: Okay. I also wanted to ask a few more questions about your activities involving Brown, because you seem to have done -- I have a list of what you've done from the alumni publications, and stuff. One thing I was confused about, in 1980, I think, you ran to be an alumni trustee?

DS: Mm. I did.

LC: Did you do that? You didn't do it.

DS: I ran, but I didn't win.

LC: You didn't win. Okay.

DS: If I were to do that all over again, I would not have laid back [23:00] the way I did, because I found out there's a lot of politicking that goes on, and I never knew that. And I would never do that -- I wouldn't sit back.

LC: Sit back meaning, what?

DS: When you run for a trustee-ship, you politic. You call up people. You solicit votes.

LC: So you're saying you didn't like that, and you wouldn't do it again?

DS: If I were to ever run for trustee again, I would politick.

LC: Oh, you would do it! To take advantage of it.

DS: Because you lose! You lose.

LC: I see what you're saying. Okay. All right. Okay. I was talking with Karen Lamoree about just the role of a trustee person, and even though you didn't end up doing it, she thought it would be a good idea to ask you why you, at that time, thought yourself qualified to be a trustee. How would you've been involved with Brown. What you expected to give to Brown in that position.

DS: Well, number one, [24:00] I have been involved in practically every aspect of the volunteer network of Brown. So I know that. I'm also in business, and I've been in education. I think that that's a fantastic combination. Why not?

LC: No, well just -- right, I mean --

DS: I've covered every field. The only thing I haven't covered is the law. And there's enough lawyers on the board, anyway.

LC: Okay. And your other -- I have here, the Association of Class Officers. You mentioned Brown Club, Committee for Faunce House. Brown Fund, and [NASP?]. Can you tell me anything about any of these, or --

DS: I worked for NASP. In fact, I was territory chairman, for a year, co-chairing, for a year. I really didn't like NASP. I didn't like interviewing young, starry-eyed kids who were dying to go to Brown, and you knew damn right well they weren't going to get in. Particularly in Rhode Island. I mean, fine, I'd go work [25:00] on NASP in Oklahoma. Not in Rhode Island. I mean, they're all in the upper 3% of their class. They're all president of student council, class president, they've done this, they've done that. They've got 1400 on the college boards, even though they're not going to get in. You know, did you work on the Klondike? I mean, that's what you've got to do, in Rhode Island.

LC: (laughs) We have a big joke about that, too.

DS: You know, go move to the Philippines for two years. Become a citizen, and you'll get in. But not from Rhode Island. So, after a couple years, I really emotionally could not handle it.

LC: So, you feel very tied to Rhode Island that way?

DS: Yeah.

LC: I can see why. Okay --

DS: But I like the international flavor of Brown. I'm not denigrating that. But at the same time, it's pretty tough --

LC: No, I know. I joke with this about my friends all the time. With my friends. So I know what you mean. You kind of have to be colorful, in a certain way, a lot of the time. Okay. [26:00] What made you get so involved with Brown? Because there seemed to be a lapse between your own graduation and your involvement --

DS: At the tenth reunion, we had a class meeting and I was voted class president. So that started that. So that made me automatically involved in reunions -- subsequent reunions -- and some fundraising. Then, I became friendly with Dave Zucconi and he's the one that got me involved in Association of Class Officers. And that's what got me involved. All it takes is somebody to call up and say "Hey, why don't you do this?" And I did it. And from that I was on the board for the Associated Alumni. From that, you get involved in development. From that, I got into NASP. From that -- the only problem, as I've always, old volunteers don't die. They just fade away. [27:00] Because the whole group of volunteers that were active when I was active -- I mean, when I was really active, when I was here twice a week -- have faded. They're not active anymore. That's the only sad thing about it. And you know, I developed a lot of good friends from my volunteer years here. I mean, I don't really consider I'm doing much. I mean I'm on the Pembroke council, but it's not what I used to do.

LC: What is your function on the council?

DS: I'm one of the directors, and I'm in charge of the forums. The career forums. And membership.

LC: Okay. So, what is your impression? I don't know if you spend much time, really, observing Brown, now. Or observing the students of Brown. What's your impression?

DS: You must remember, I'm a Rhode Islander. So --

LC: You do, you're conscious of it.

DS: You observe it by living here. [28:00]

LC: Right, that's true.

DS: I also have a niece here. In fact, it's a very nice story. Last night, my brother and sister-in-law were over. They're on the Brown faculty by the fact that they're both physicians.

LC: I'm just curious who they are.

DS: Scola.

LC: Okay. I don't --

DS: This is my maiden name. And I've resumed it. In fact, my daughter took it, too. And their daughter has just completed her freshman year, and they were over for dinner last night with a friend of hers, who comes from White Plains, New York. He was a young man, and my sister-in-law asked him, "How do you like Brown?" He said, "I just love Brown." And that's the feeling. I mean that's, I think, the general feeling on campus. And I think that's the kind of feeling that pervades. I'm proud of it. Once in a while, I get upset that they're not more community involved, because I am a Rhode Islander. They get tax [29:00] breaks, all this and that, for med school, and everything. And yet when they want a head of a particular medical department, they pull from the outside. I don't like that. Very few Rhode Islanders still get into the med school. Very few Rhode Islanders get into undergraduate school. I don't like that.

LC: That surprises me, because I know a lot of PLME students who are Rhode Islanders. I always thought there were quite a few. I don't know. It's hard to say.

DS: But, you know, my brother was involved. He was on the board for the applications of the med school. When you live in Rhode Island, and particularly if you've gone to Brown, you become involved. This will be one of the few commencements I haven't been to. I usually go to campus dance, and Pops night. [30:00] The only reason I'm not going this year is my significant other has a son who's graduating from Colby. So, he's going up to Colby, and I don't want to go alone. I have gone, in prior years, I've gone. With friends.

LC: You can compare it to Colby's, I guess.

DS: No, I'm not going to Colby.

LC: Oh, you're not going. So, you're just not going. Okay. Okay, I think we've covered a lot. I think we've covered pretty much everything. Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about, yourself?

DS: No, not really.

LC: Okay.

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