

TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

Amanda Roth: Today is July 16, 2002, and I am with Susan Bauman in her home. I'll start with my first question, and thank you for being a participant. Can you tell me a little bit about your family, your childhood, and where you grew up?

Susan Bauman: I grew up in Easton, Pennsylvania. Was born at Easton Hospital. And... I am the first of two children. My father is a self, was a self-employed butcher in Easton. And he did not have any college education. My mother... But he, he was from Philadelphia. My mother was born and raised in Easton. And she had been trained as a nurse, but she did not work outside the home. And we lived near 25th Street in Easton. And I have a younger brother who's six years younger than I am. And it was a typical middle class upbringing. I went to parochial school. I was raised Catholic. And as I mentioned before my mother was home full-time. My father worked a lot. But no one on either side of the family had gone to college before I did.

AR: Can you tell me about your high school, the academic and social atmosphere?

SB: I went to the local catholic high school. It was a coed school and a small school. I think there were about a hundred fifty students in my class. And... what can I say about it? I think as with a lot of other, for a lot of other people, I thought they were the worst years of my life. But that was primarily because I didn't like a lot of things about myself. I was a good student in high school, and I was shy, and... But I was in the band, and I

had a lot friends. And I dated the last two years in high school. So overall looking back it was a good experience I think.

AR: Do you think you were well prepared for higher education?

SB: Yes, I think so. I had a good solid education, and I felt prepared.

AR: Did most female students from your high school go on to college?

SB: That's an interesting question. Let me see. I would say a good percentage went on to college. Maybe not as many as now, but it wasn't unusual to go to college for a girl, but looking back I think just about every girl from high school who went to college was either going to be a teacher or a nurse. And that was my goal. I liked English a lot, and I was going to be a, an English teacher. So there weren't too many. There wasn't too much diversity in the, in the careers that the women were interested in.

AR: So at what point did you decide that you, you wanted to go to college?

SB: I don't know that it was a conscious decision. I think it was... I had always done very well in school and was at the top of my class. And so my parents assumed I would go to college, and I assumed I would go to college. But as I said, I assumed I would do something very traditional which would be to be a teacher. And my parents I think

assumed that after college I would get married and not work and, and stay home full-time. So it was very traditional expectations for how I'd live my life.

AR: During high school were you aware that a lot of colleges like Lafayette were starting to go coed, and if you were aware, what did you think about this?

SB: I didn't really think about Lafayette as a choice when I was in high school because I didn't want to be at home, so I was actually thinking of going somewhere else. And I had a lot of different ideas about where I wanted to go to school that did not include say an all girls school. I was interested in, either an experimental school.. I remember there's this school I think it was called the New College¹ in Florida that had just opened up. And I wasn't really a hippie or anything like that, but I was sort of interested in more intellectual experimentation. And I was also interested in going to perhaps a large coed school. I was interested in University of Pennsylvania². What happened was that my parents felt very strongly that I should go to an all girls' catholic college. And I think that fit in with their fantasy that I'd meet a nice boy from an all boys' catholic college and get married after college and live happily ever after. So actually they sort of sabotaged my investigation of these different schools. And I ended up going to a catholic all girls' college in Philadelphia, Chestnut Hill College³ for my first year... where I was very unhappy.

AR: What schools did you apply to other than Chestnut Hill?

¹ New College of Florida, Sarasota, Florida.

² University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

³ Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

SB: Oh they were, were pretty much all the catholic girls schools in Philadelphia. Immaculata⁴, Gwynedd-Mercy⁵, I think there's another one down there somewhere. I've kind of blocked it out. But I was pretty much railroaded into, into doing that. And didn't fight it, but ended up rebelling in my own way after I got there.

AR: Can you tell me about your overall experience at Chestnut Hill?

SB: I was rather unhappy there. And I didn't like being in an all girls atmosphere. And I didn't think it was very intellectually stimulating. And I was also questioning my religion at that point and reading a lot of... I was interested in... I mean, I thought it was radical politics, but as I said before it wasn't anything like the, the Weathermen⁶, the SDS⁷ or any of those things that were going on in the 60s. But it... I knew I'd have to transfer out, that I wasn't happy there.

AR: When did you decide that you were going to transfer?

SB: Well I think I decided fairly early on in my freshman year, and then I wasn't sure how to deal with my parents or how to pull this off. And then in the mean time in my

⁴ Immaculata College, Immaculata, Pennsylvania.

⁵ Gwynedd-Mercy College, Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania.

⁶ The Weathermen, a faction of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), were radicals known for using violence in their protest actions.

⁷ SDS, Students for a Democratic Society, was founded in 1959 and was involved in the civil rights movement and then the anti-war movement in the early and mid 1960s. At is became increasingly militant members were responsible for the occupation of college administration buildings. By 1969 the organization split into several factions.

personal life, I had a turn of events where I ended up eloping and had a baby at... It would have been... I finished up my freshman year at Chestnut Hill, but I got married, eloped, and had a baby the summer of that next year, so that would have been the summer of 1970. And so with all that going on in my life I, I decided to put college on hold for awhile. My husband was only two years older than I was and he was going to school part time. So I guess when my son was... He was almost a year old, I took a full-time job so that my husband could finish his college degree, and we moved back to the Lehigh Valley⁸. And I was still very interested in my own education, so besides working full-time and having a baby I took courses at Northampton County Community College⁹ in the evening school. And I picked courses that I knew would transfer somewhere. So I didn't know where I was going to go, but that was my long-range plan is get him through school, and then I would transfer somewhere, and I would finish up. But what happened was that it... The marriage failed, and we broke up when my son was two. So that was 1972. And I moved back in with my parents in Easton. And at that point my father said that I could live with him, and if I wanted to go back to school full-time that he would help me out so that I could do that and finish my education because I was ... I decided I was gonna get a divorce at that stage. So then the question came of where I wanted to go to school. So the whole decision was really driven geographically because I had to live at home with my father. So what I did was I looked at all the colleges in the Lehigh Valley... Moravian¹⁰, Muhlenberg¹¹, and Lafayette, and Lehigh¹² to see which one I

⁸ The Lehigh Valley refers to the region in Eastern Pennsylvania that includes Easton, Bethlehem, and Allentown.

⁹ Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

¹⁰ Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

¹¹ Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

¹² Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

thought would be the best for me. And... and at looking at all the schools I decided that Lafayette would be the best school. And frankly I don't remember considering much about their having gone coed recently so they would have had women there for just two years. I mean, I guess I knew that it was newly coed, but I didn't really think that, that much about that. I guess in a way I'm a very atypical student because at that point I was really driven not only by my desire to get an education but by some very practical considerations, one of which was that I, I had to live in the area and, you know, I was really looking at what I thought academically would be the best school without factoring in social life or extracurricular activities. I really didn't care. I think if at that age if I was single and never been married and looking at colleges, I would have had concerns about the fact that there weren't many women on campus, but for me it wasn't really an issue because I had other considerations.

AR: So Lafayette was the best then because of its location, and it was academically better than the others?

SB: I think so. I thought so then. Still do. (*Laughter*)

AR: So what was, it like coming into the school as a transfer student and also with your particular background?

SB: Well it was, it was a good experience. By that point I had been in two different colleges. I'd been in an all girls small liberal arts college, and I had gone to a community

college. And I was really excited to be at Lafayette because the courses were very exciting, and the professors were very good, and I think the students overall were a higher caliber... so I was really, I was really happy here.

AR: Was it easy to make the transition socially especially since you were living at home?

SB: Well in terms of social life I really did not get involved socially a whole lot at Lafayette because I... number one lived off campus. Number two was a divorced single parent. And although I was only one year older cuz I had, I had gone to community college for two years, so I was really one year older than my peer group. I should have been a senior that year and instead I was a junior because of the way I had taken my courses. I don't know. I just felt like I was in a whole different, different space and really didn't have that much time to socialize. I had friends in the Lehigh Valley from, from when I was married. And, and I really didn't keep up with friends from high school, but I did already have a network of friends outside of Lafayette. So I didn't need to socialize that much, and I didn't have that much time, but I really didn't get friendly with that many people.

AR: Did you ever eat on campus or did you eat all your meals at home?

SB: Hmm. Let's see if I can remember. I must have eaten lunch on campus, but I'm trying to remember. I don't remember much about the food. There was that little snack

bar down in the bottom of Marquis. It's, well I guess it was there up until the time they built the Farinon Center, and so had lunch there, but it was, you know, burgers and salads and stuff.

AR: Even though you transferred in and you were living at home, from the sense you got of the women there that you met did it seem like the women stuck together at all because there were so few of them?

SB: Well it's an interesting question. I didn't have that experience, but probably because I wasn't that involved. I, I made friends with a few women, and I made friends with a few men. And they were generally people that I was having class with at the time. So I didn't meet with more women than I did men. So I didn't have that experience. Although in the past, going back to high school, I had thought I was going to be an English major and had thought about getting a PhD in English and maybe being a college professor. I had changed what I wanted to do by the time I got to Lafayette and when I started at Lafayette I, I think because of my questioning my religion, doing a lot of reading, and being interested in more left-wing political developments and religious developments I decided I wanted to be a philosophy major and, and I did graduate as a philosophy major. But at the same time all these other things were going on in my life and my intellectual interests were changing. Number one I knew that as a divorced single parent I wanted to be financially independent. And of course this was the time of the women's movement anyway, so that's what people were writing about and reading about was feminism, and I was very interested in feminism. But I had the experience of having

been in a bad marriage, so I was very personally motivated to never have to be dependent on a man for anything financially. And so that made me think I better find a career where I can support myself. And so even though I was interested in philosophy and still in literature intellectually, I came to the conclusion that I really couldn't afford to just take a number of years to get a PhD and then hope I could get a job because the job scene wasn't very good for PhDs then. So that was one issue in terms of my career interests. And a second thing was that that same year I started at Lafayette my mother died of breast cancer. She was very sick and was in and out of Easton Hospital. And that was a powerful experience in a lot of ways, one of which was that that was the era when doctors didn't talk to patients about what their diagnosis was. And nobody was really talking about the fact that she was dying, yet everybody knew she was dying. And here I was just twenty-one years old, and I remember leaving the hospital one day thinking, "Well I could do a better job than those guys, than her doctors." So even though I really never thought of myself as a science person, I began thinking that perhaps I was the sort of person who could be a doctor, and might be a better doctor than the kind of doctors they were. So here I was looking for a career where I could be independent and also having some interest in medicine. This is sort of a long winded tale, but what I'm trying to get out is, is really answering your question is that although I decided to stick with philosophy as a major, I also decided I was going to take the pre-med courses I needed to go to medical school. (*Deep Breath*) You're asking about whether women stick together. I haven't forgotten the question. (*Laughter*) Taking pre-med courses meant taking... I had already had biology, so I had to take chemistry and organic chemistry, and physics. And that, that threw me in with other people who considered themselves

pre-med. And there are a fair number of people, there were then anyway, who were pre-med. And I was amazed to find out what a non-collegial group that was. Really... one could use the word cutthroat. In labs it was difficult to... People wouldn't work together... Most of the people wouldn't work together because they were so competitive. And I guess they thought that they'd look better if you look worse. So people didn't help each other. And there weren't many women in the science courses, but with... The women were a little more collaborative in working together. But that was my overall impression that as a group pre-med students, whether they were men or women were pretty cutthroat. So it wasn't a very supportive experience that way... to finally answer your question. (*Laughter*)

AR: How did students or professors react when they found out that you had a son?

SB: Most of them didn't know it, because I didn't talk about it, and that was, I think that's... Although things have gotten better in thirty years in that regard I think it's, it's still the case that a lot of times that if women have extra responsibilities or obligations especially regarding children they don't even say anything about it. So the people that I took several classes with, the philosophy professors in particular, I mean they, they knew about it, but I don't remember it being an issue at all.

AR: Did you ever feel treated differently by your male peers because you were a woman?

SB: No. Not, not the students. There were, there were problems with faculty more than the students. I don't remember a problem with any of, of the students, you know, saying like even, even the pre-med students, the male pre-med students, the attitude wasn't, "Well you shouldn't be pre-med because you're a woman." It was just they were, you know, all trying to get their As in organic so it was based on that. It wasn't really sexist. But with the faculty it was.

AR: What kind of issues did you have with the faculty?

SB: Well I think what was the most annoying and still gets me upset when I think about it was that several different people, people that really didn't know me or anything about me that, that if I brought up the fact that I was interested in going into medicine that the automatic reaction was, "You shouldn't do that." And there were two examples. One was I went to see one of the science professors. I won't even say what department it was. But I went to see him. I'd never seen him before. He didn't know who I was. He didn't know what my grades were or my, my background or anything about me at all. And I just went to him with the... my general question was that I was a humanities major, I was interested in applying to medical school, I was definitely taking all the basic pre-med courses, but there were some other courses that were not required, and I was wondering whether he would recommend them or how important they might be. Things like biochemistry or physical chemistry, other higher level courses that weren't required. And the first thing out of his mouth was, "Well you have considered being a nurse?" You know, it was that kind of stuff which was really annoying. I mean, certainly he wouldn't

have said that to a male student. And one of the other faculty members who did know that... Well actually I don't know if this person knew I had a child or not but I talked to them and about being interested in medicine and this person was actually a woman, so it made it even doubly annoying. And... who had a career and a family. And I said I was interested in medicine, and she said, "Well, I don't think any women should go into medicine because medicine's not a job you can do part-time. And if you're a woman, you, you can't have more than a part-time job because..." You know, so, so it was distressing to get that kind of, I mean, the lack of encouragement is putting it mildly. And I think if I hadn't been so internally driven to do what I did, I just would have given up.

AR: Did you ever find that kind of sexism I guess on the part of the faculty when you were at Chestnut Hill since it was an all female school?

SB: No. But I mean, then again, I wasn't, I wasn't interested in being a physician at that point, so I wasn't asking the same kind of questions. I mean I did have... I did have the sense that, you know, in a way you're, you were certainly entitled and encouraged to have an education for, for whatever you wanted to do. Sorry if I'm a little long winded.

AR: In the spring of 1974 there were a few controversial letters and articles printed in *The Lafayette*. One news article on streaking stated: "Of course, the opportunity exists for the women of Lafayette to streak, but that wouldn't be too unusual. After all, dogs have been running around the campus naked for years." In the same semester a woman

wrote to the paper complaining that a group of ten Lafayette men had “rated” her as she passed them at lunch. A man calling himself Studly responded that she sounded like a six year old, that women’s lib has no leg to stand on, and that fifteen percent of Lafayette women are organ teasers. In later letters he stated in a somewhat joking manner after trying to seriously defend himself: “I’m all for Women’s Lib, as long as they are in the kitchen by five” and “Personally, I love girls; each guy should own at least two of them.”¹³ Do you remember these incidents, how did you take them at the time, and what do you think of them today?

SB: Well I don’t remember the grading episode at the, in the dining room at all. So can’t say anything about that. I remember streaking, although I can’t say I remember the comment at the end of the article about, about women streaking. Neither one really surprises me because I think it was my feeling then that there were a lot of very sexist and immature guys on campus, and basically I didn’t bother with them, and I didn’t have anything to do with any fraternities. I did have several male friends, and the male friends that I had were terrific guys, and they weren’t in any way sexist, so I just kind of ignored it as being ridiculous. I mean it was really... I guess it wasn’t so unusual for the time, and so I didn’t focus my energy so much on getting angry about that. I was more upset because I just wrote these guys off as being ridiculous little boys. I would get very upset with things that came from faculty members as I mentioned the faculty incidents before, and that continued on in medical school. So it’s kind of, it was kind of exhausting to get angry about everything, so I wouldn’t get angry about the students. I’d get angry about

¹³ For copies of the articles referred to in this question, see *The Lafayette* from March 8, 1974, and subsequent issues in March and April of that same year.

the faculty. And I just tried to associate with more mature people. And there were guys on campus that were not sexist at all. And they were just very non-sexist even feminist people themselves and very interesting people so, I stayed with them.

AR: When you chose to major in philosophy was that while you were at Northampton Community College or when you came to Lafayette?

SB: Well I entered Lafayette with, with that as being my declared major, so it was something that I had been thinking about before I transferred in. That was my plan.

AR: What was the male/female ratio of most of your philosophy classes at Lafayette?

SB: Jeesh. (*Laughter*) Not many women. Well, I don't know. I'd be guessing. Maybe... ten to one. Maybe not that bad.

AR: How did the philosophy classes compare to your science classes... just approximately?

SB: Seemed like they were about ten to one too. There were more women in the English courses I took and the psychology.

AR: Did you find that being in such a small minority affected your academic performance at all?

SB: No. Overall I don't think it did. One experience that, that was very helpful... if I was, if there were any area where I felt more hesitant and, and insecure about my abilities it would have been the sciences because I hadn't really, although I'd done well enough in high school science I really didn't feel as confident with my, my abilities there. And one really terrific thing was that there was a young woman physics professor, Mary Fehrs,¹⁴ and she taught the physics course. And that was, that was really great because she was, she... She, she didn't say anything. It wasn't that she said anything blatantly in the classroom about girls can do everything guys can do or that sort of thing. But there she was as a woman who, a young woman, who's attractive and really excited about physics. And I still remember in some of her examples it would be... Annie the astronaut. You know it... She, and it would just come out. You know, it wouldn't make a big deal of it. But it was... having an experience like that really made you feel better about things. So that was, that was a positive effect so it was, it definitely makes a difference, I think, to have women like that on, on the faculty and there weren't many at all, so it was terrific when you ran into someone like that.

AR: Did you have any other female instructors?

SB: In philosophy. Rea Rabinowitz¹⁵ was a philosophy professor, and she was also a fairly young woman. Looking back she was probably just in her late-twenties or maybe thirty... just out of school. And she was also a good role model in that she was living

¹⁴ Mary Fehrs, Physics Department.

¹⁵ Rea Rabinowitz, Philosophy Department.

independently and doing interesting things, and interested in talking about different things. So it was, it was nice to have her around too.

AR: Did you ever notice if a male students in a class where there was a female instructor related any differently to the women than they would have to a male professor?

SB: I can't say that, that I noticed anything in that regard.

AR: The women coming in in your class had, often had better GPAs and SAT¹⁶ scores than the men. Do you think that, that either the men or women were aware of this?

SB: I wasn't. That explains a lot. (*Laughter*)

AR: Was there any competition that was specifically between men and women?

SB: Not that, not that I noticed. I mean, as I said in the, some of the science classes it was just, it was just generally competitive. It wasn't sexist. And... in math it was, people were actually pretty collaborative.

AR: Generally, how did most professors treat you?

SB: I would say the way they treated the men. The same way without any problem. I mean really the negative experiences I mentioned before were, were outside of the

¹⁶ Scholastic Assessment Test.

classroom, more in terms of career counseling. And, but I never noticed any differential behavior in how they treated men and women in the classroom.

AR: How would you compare the academics at Lafayette to the academics at Chestnut Hill?

SB: Oh they were, it was a much higher caliber at Lafayette. I thought the professors were more interesting, and the students were brighter.

AR: Would you say you had any mentors or favorite people on the faculty or administration?

SB: Well the, the... probably my biggest mentor is the professor I ended up marrying (*Laughter*) who was also my faculty advisor because he was, he tried to talk me out of majoring in philosophy. He wasn't sure I was going into it for the right reasons. Thought that if I was interested in the big questions I ought to maybe go to the Religion Department instead. But he was always very supportive... as my advisor supportive and encouraging of pursuing a career in medicine and really did everything he could to, to encourage me to do what I wanted to do and to let me know that there's no reason why you can't sort of follow your dream and do what you want to do. So that was, that was very, very helpful. And Rea Rabinowitz was also very encouraging while they were there. They were probably the two that were most helpful.

AR: Are there any positive, very positive or very negative experiences that you had in the classroom that stand out in your mind?

SB: I can't say that there's any one thing. No.

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

AR: How would you characterize the relationship between Lafayette and the city of Easton during the 60s and 70s?

SB: Hmm. Well I grew up in Easton so I had the perspective of a townie having gone to high school in, in Easton. And the perspective of, of someone who lived in the town was that it was a, a privileged, rich, separate area from the town that the college wasn't very interested in the town per se, though it happened to be in Easton but it really didn't have anything to do Easton. And, you know, as a high school student we liked to go up there to try to socialize with college students. But, but it wasn't really viewed as being integrated with the city I guess would be the word and I think there was some friction between people who lived on College Hill¹⁷ and college people.

AR: Would you say you were very interested in political and social movements?

SB: Yes, yes, I was... very interested in both those things.

¹⁷ College Hill refers to the area of Northern Easton. It is literally a hill on which Lafayette College is situated along with a residential area.

AR: How did Vietnam affect your time in high school and also during your college years?

SB: Well I was very strongly anti-war from the time I was in high school. And I guess that's a lot of what I meant about being sort of interested in more leftist or radical political ideas. Not in a, in a violent way at all, but one of my distinct memories from that time period was actually participating in a demonstration that was held in front of the library at Lafayette. And I probably remember incorrectly. It must have been the invasion of Cambodia. I'm trying to remember what year that was, and... It was definitely May of 70, so if it wasn't the invasion of Cambodia it was some other big thing, big escalation point in the war that, that caused a lot of demonstrating. And the reason I remember is because that was before I was even a Lafayette student, and I was eight months pregnant and heard there was a demonstration going on there and joined, joined in on it. So I was very interested in, in peaceful anti-war demonstrations and campaigned for McGovern¹⁸ when he ran for president. So tended to, I think because of my political interests, also tended whenever I did socialize or seek out other students... went more for that sort of person rather than the, the right-wing or the people that were just oblivious to what was going on.

AR: What were racial relations like in Easton and on, at Lafayette?

¹⁸ George Stanley McGovern, a South Dakota democrat, was the party's 1972 candidate for president. He was a critic of President Johnson's decision to use military forces to fight in the Vietnam War.

SB: Well it, it was a feeling I think pretty much of just segregation. The high school that I went to had a few Afro-Americans and everybody got along fine, but... Most of the Afro-Americans in Easton, there were fewer then, but went to the public high school, Easton High. And so I don't know what, what things were like then. And I really, well it seems like hardly any Afro-Americans at Lafayette. Very few. So I didn't really get to know any of them.

AR: Do you know of any students who were at Lafayette at the time who were homosexual or bisexual? And do you think the campus, if not, do you think the campus would have been hostile to such a student or would have been accepting?

SB: I didn't know of anyone who was homosexual or bisexual. I think the, the climate in, in general then was that if people were, even if they weren't so to speak "in the closet" they still didn't talk about it much. So it was not, not discussed as openly even in, in circles that were more left-wing or artistic or whatever you want to call it back then.

AR: Did you ever know of any tensions for Jewish students at Lafayette?

SB: No. I'm not aware of any. I had a, a couple acquaintances who were Jewish, and it didn't seem to affect...

AR: What was the socio-economic status of most Lafayette students like? And how did that affect the politics and relationships on campus?

SB: Well my suspicion was that most people were upper middle class, although it seemed like there were some people that were there on scholarship. I was there almost entirely on scholarship, so it, it felt like... It felt like there were a lot of rich kids around, but it really didn't affect me on a day to day basis because it wasn't that I socialized so much, you know, so it, things like that come out in either how people dress or how they spend their money or... what restaurants they go to, and so I didn't notice that much.

AR: What did you think about feminism while you were a college student and what do you think about it now?

SB: Well I was and still am a feminist. And I, I think I was intellectually interested in feminism beginning in the late 60s, and then because of my personal life experiences, getting pregnant, getting married, getting divorced, that really made it very powerful and personal that how important it was to be able to get equal pay for equal work and have equal opportunity. So I was, I was quite a feminist, and I was also very, very pro-choice for the same kind of reasons. And... I, because I was a, a parent and living off-campus, I didn't join any Lafayette activities but I did do volunteer work at the Planned Parenthood¹⁹ in, in Easton as what they call the "patient educator" before the women went in to see the doctor they could, it was really to learn about contraceptive options and that sort of thing. There were a number of Lafayette women that were involved with that.

¹⁹ Planned Parenthood, a national voluntary health care organization, educates people on the issues related to reproductive health and family planning.

And the women that did that were all very committed feminists. So it was, that was a nice little support group.

AR: Do you know at all what the campus opinion on *Roe v. Wade*²⁰ or birth control was or any... among the women or even your personal reaction?

SB: Well I think among the women there, there was a... definitely an interest in reliable and safe and affordable contraceptive options. Most of the women that I was friendly with were, were pro-choice. And I'm sure not, not all the women were pro-choice, but a lot of them were interested in that sort of thing. And, and everybody knew that, I mean the word was out that Planned Parenthood was the place to go to get reliable information. That was also when *Our Bodies, Ourselves*²¹ came out as a book, and so I think there was a lot of interest among the women in terms of taking control of your body and having choices and not having to rely on male gynecologists.

AR: Do you think that having more female instructors would have affected your Lafayette and post-Lafayette experiences?

SB: Well it would depend on who the women are. I mean, the, the one of the, the two professors who was very discouraging about my career choice was a woman. She was an

²⁰*Roe v. Wade* was a Supreme Court decision issued on January 22, 1973, which declared a Texas law prohibiting first trimester abortion unconstitutionally violated a woman's right to privacy. The practical result of the decision was the legalization of abortion in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy across the nation.

²¹ First published in 1970, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* focused on women's health and provided honest information about women's sexuality. It also encouraged women to take charge of their own bodies in terms of health and sexuality.

older woman who had set ideas about what women should do and shouldn't do. So if there were more of her around that would have been bad news. So they would have to be women who weren't sexist. Although, you know... just having women of all sorts and beliefs is, would be, would be helpful I think.

AR: What do you think the Lafayette ideal was in the early 70s?

SB: The ideal. Oh I think it... Well, you mean ideal as, as stated by the College or what most students aspired to?

AR: Most students

SB: What most students aspired to, I think because most students were male it was to work just hard enough to get good enough grades to get through and to party a lot, and, and then when they finished to be able to make money. (*Laughter*) That sounds terrible doesn't it?

AR: Do you think that ideal has stayed the same today?

SB: I think it's changed a lot. I really, I really do. I mean I think that the, the tolerance for immaturity amongst fellow students has gone down a lot, and, and students are more mature. I mean, there's... there are still a lot of people who wanna do just enough to get through and have a good time. But I think that there are more and more people on

campus that are interested in other things, artistic endeavors, volunteer activities. I think there's more of an openness to ethnic and cultural diversity which I see around when I'm there talking to students. So I think the ideal has, has improved.

AR: How would you characterize the political atmosphere of Lafayette when you attended?

SB: I think it was pretty centrist to right wing in general with a, a minority, but a vocal minority of left wing people verging on hippiness.

AR: Do you think that's changed today?

SB: I don't know. I really don't know. It, it seems like there are probably... I mean I hate to use the terms right wing and left wing or conservative and liberal, but I don't know what other terms to use. My sense is though that if Lafayette were to be characterized politically it, it still would be considered more centrist to right than, than left.

AR: What did you do right after graduation?

SB: Right after graduation I got a job because (*Laughter*) I needed to earn money. I, because I had my pre-med courses late in my career, junior and senior year instead of

earlier, that meant I could not take MCATs²² until later. So I was really forced to take a year off between college and medical school which, which I didn't mind at all because I thought it was good because it would give me another year with a little more time with my son before I got really tied up with the with the work of medical school. So, so I got a job as a, as a bank teller because I was staying in Easton, and that was sort of the, the best thing I could get with my philosophy major (*Laughter*) from Lafayette. And, and I knew I only wanted a one year job, so, so I did that, and it was a very slow bank, and while I worked there I, I remember reading *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. Don't ask me why, but I think it's cuz I had some idea at the time I was going to be a psychiatrist, and I thought it was something I should do. It was awful. And, and then spent the fall applying to medical school which is a project in and of itself.

AR: What medical schools did you apply to?

SB: At, at that point I was remarried and had married a professor at Lafayette. So he was up for tenure that year, and since college jobs are hard to get, if he'd gotten tenure, he'd definitely want to, to stay there. So I limited myself, myself to schools in Philadelphia and New York with the idea that I would then commute. So there are five medical schools in Manhattan, and there are five in Philadelphia, so those are the ones I applied to.

AR: And which school did you end up going to?

²² Medical College Admission Test.

SB: Ended up going to University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

AR: Can you describe some of your experiences there?

SB: Well it... In terms of academics it was even more hard work and even more smart people which was good. The atmosphere was definitely more collaborative than what I found among the pre-meds at, at Lafayette in that they said... And I suspect that the pre-meds at Lafayette weren't different from pre-meds anywhere else because when we all started at, at Penn, the first thing the dean said was that nobody had to be competitive anymore because since we were admitted there they knew that we were smart enough to get out and they'd help us get through and, so we could all just work together. And that was, that was very nice. So that was the atmosphere at Penn. The other good thing at Penn was that they were at a time in, their... looking at their admissions and their admissions policy where they had made this very interesting, I think, decision to have a diverse student body. Probably because they had so many applicants. They had, you know, they had four hundred people with an A in organic, then they could say, "Well let's take someone who got an A in organic and is also a poet," which is basically what they did. So it made me, I think, a more attractive candidate because I was a philosophy major. And my good friends in medical school were people who had, one had been a concert pianist, and one had been a ballet dancer in Manhattan, and one had been a stockbroker. So there were a lot of diversity in background which was nice. And a lot of smart people which was nice. A collaborative atmosphere which was nice. There was still sexism, but it, it was, it was very different than Lafayette because it was almost never

the students. At Lafayette it was mostly the students and not the faculty, at least not in the classroom. But at Penn, if, if there were, there were any male students who said anything sexist they didn't say it again because everybody else including the men in the, in the classes... The class I think was two thirds male and one third female. And the men were even more feminist than the women were. So that was real neat. There were a couple very sexist male professors. And I'd never experienced that in a classroom at Lafayette. As I said before, never had any negative experiences in the classroom. But there was this... I don't know if he was anatomy or physiology professor who started the lecture with *Playboy* slides. (*Laughter*) And there were a hundred and, about a hundred and forty in my class. And he, he was booed so loudly. I mean, if people had had rotten eggs they would have thrown them at him. And two thirds of that audience was male. So it wasn't just the women, quote unquote "women's libbers" who were upset. Everybody was and so that, that was an interesting experience. And I don't know if the male students were so different because a couple years had gone by and, and more men were becoming attuned to the concerns of, of feminists or whether it was really a different subcategory of male students than they had at Lafayette, but it was interesting.

AR: Did you feel academically prepared?

SB: My, my short answer's yes. My long answer is... yes I was very academically prepared, but in one way I wish they had warned me at Lafayette about what medical school would be like. At Lafayette in the sciences it was very much, "Well understand the concepts and ask questions about the concepts." And the tests would be open book.

And, “You, you don’t have to memorize all the details because, you know, that’s silly and stupid and you just learn the principles.” Which is terrific as, as more of a humanities person that made sense to me. I didn’t... I mean in organic you had to memorize a certain amount of stuff, but, but for the most part it was more that attitude. So that’s how I started medical school, and in medical school you just have to memorize a tremendous amount of stuff so... But what I realized after the first test in physiology that I bombed is that, “No, you can’t just have a rough idea of the general concepts. You really have to know every single little thing.” So once I realized that then I changed my study style, but overall yeah, I think I was very well prepared.

AR: How did it work out for you having to commute to Philadelphia?

SB: Well that was stressful. That was very stressful, especially having a child. We lived halfway between Philadelphia and Easton in Doylestown. And my son was five when I started medical school. And if it hadn’t been for my husband I don’t know what would have happened. I really feel like I was not home for the next five years because it was just a brutal amount of work for the four years of medical school and then internship. And then finally things eased up a little bit after that. But it was it made it extra hard, and a lot of nights I didn’t come home at all. I just stayed at a friend’s apartment. And there were days on end when I wouldn’t see my son. It was rough. And of course I still feel guilty about that. So I, I joke that I’m probably one of the few people whose medical school was harder than internship because it really took up more of my time.

AR: In 1982 you opened a women's medical office on College Hill to help serve Lafayette women. Why did you decide to do that?

SB: Well that was really a continuation of my association with Planned Parenthood. I had, I had done volunteer work at Planned Parenthood, and I was very interested in what they were doing in terms of educating and providing health care for area women. And the, the woman who was the director of Planned Parenthood at the time, Marcy Lusardi, approached me with this idea when I finished my residency to do this. And it was a... The reason to do it on College Hill was because the women students at the time, as, as well as the women students when I was going to Lafayette didn't feel comfortable going to student health primarily because of the personnel. And I think that's changed a little bit now, but back in, back in the 80s that was the case. So it was to offer an option, another option, to women students on campus as well as the women in the College Hill community, and in particular women who may have less financial resources. So it was supposed to fill a niche that would be say somewhere between a clinic or student health and a private medical practice.

AR: Do you think if you hadn't have had the experiences of marriage and motherhood that you would have been able to have the drive to accomplish all that you did?

SB: Well that's an interesting question. I, I think that whatever I decided to do I would have followed through with it. And in I mean, at first I was going to say that, that if I didn't feel the motivation to have financial independence maybe I would have done

something that, that either took a little more training or was less financially remunerative like getting a PhD in literature. But then on the other hand I think a lot of my drive to become a physician was also because of the experience with my mother's dying and death. So... I don't know. (*Laughter*) Who knows what would have happened if things were different in the past? But my personality is such that I'm pretty determined to succeed or to do as well as I can do at whatever I decide I'm interested in so...

AR: Was there anything at Lafayette that you were unhappy with?

SB: Unhappy with? Well I was I guess unhappy that there weren't more women students. I was definitely unhappy that I was blatantly discouraged from considering medicine by faculty members who didn't even know who I was. So those things I didn't like. I didn't really like the, the fraternity atmosphere of the, that most of the social life revolved around fraternities. I mean, its... I've been saying that I really didn't get involved socially because I lived off campus and was a single parent, but there really wasn't that much to attract me to have a social life. I mean I didn't want to go to a keg night. I mean, I was beyond all that. But I, I did have some interesting friends who were interested in things like getting art films and jazz concerts and things like that. And I think if there had been, there was one fellow in particular... He was like a one man, you know, try to make an alternative social scene for Lafayette. And he was a very interesting guy. If there had been more of, of that kind of social life or more left wing political activities or that sort of thing I probably would have done more socially on campus. So I think it was very, very limiting socially for the people that went there. I

kind of felt sorry for the, for the coeds that wanted to do something socially on Friday night cuz there weren't that many options.

AR: Since we're interviewing you for an oral history project we think that you're being in the first class of women to graduate after four years was historically significant. What do you think about this?

SB: Well probably was historically significant in, in some small respect. And one would like to think that things that we said or we did while we were there perhaps made it easier for the women who followed or made things better in some way. Or at least the fact that we got through showed that it wasn't such a dumb idea to make the school coed, and that they had made the right choice.

AR: If you could do your college experience over again is there anything at Lafayette that you would do differently?

SB: Well if everything else were the same in terms of my personal life I probably wouldn't have had the time or energy to do anything differently. But being there without a child I think I probably would have done more to help start or organize some more, some different kinds of social activities or political activities.

AR: Is there any advice that you have for Lafayette now?

SB: Advice. Well, I think Lafayette is definitely headed in the right direction in terms of really trying to make the place more racially and ethnically and culturally diverse. And I know that their... They feel strongly about raising the academic level which is, which is great as long as you make it, have diversity in, in the academically talented people. And I think that... So they're making a good start in that regard. I think abolishing the whole Greek system would be a great idea, and other schools have done that. And I think another thing that would be very helpful would be to... They've done a great job in beefing up the, the art program, but I think now they should turn their attention to some other more neglected aspects of the humanities program such as perhaps the Music Department. That's one that comes to mind whereas if you really want, if you want diverse people you need to not just pick people who are diverse to begin with, but you have to have the diversity of academic and social offerings to attract the students to go, to go to the school so I think they need to focus on that too.

AR: Is there any advice that you would give to an incoming college student?

SB: Hmm. Try a lot of different things. I think that's, that's probably the most important thing. I think the biggest mistake that a college student can make is to think that college is vocational training, and they should just be focused on what they can do to get a job. I think it's, it's one of the few times in your life when you have the luxury and the ability to explore different things. And even if you know what you want to do, it doesn't follow from that that you should take all courses in that one area. I think it's really that's the heart of a liberal arts education is to, to open yourself to a lot of different

areas. I mean, I, looking back I wish I had taken an art history course and I never did. Or even an economics course. At the time I thought, “Yuck.” But, you know, that’s, that’s a good thing to do at that time in your life cuz you’ll never really have time again. And then I guess along the same line, as well as exploring different things academically, exploring different things socially and in terms of hobbies and people and just try to expand yourself and be open to different things. Work hard. Have fun. All that stuff.

AR: Is there anything we haven’t talked about that you’d like to mention?

SB: I don’t think so. No. I think you really covered everything.

AR: Okay. Thank you then for participating.

SB: Well thank you for inviting me.