

TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

Amanda Roth: Today is July 15, 2002, and we are in the Special Collections Reading Room with Stephanie Sayago Bell, Class of 1973. Thank you for being a participant in Lafayette's College's Oral History Project.

Stephanie Bell: You're welcome.

AR: First can you tell me a little bit about your family, your childhood, and where you grew up?

SB: Well I grew up here in Easton. In fact, right on College Hill¹. My father was a civil engineer for Bethlehem Steel². My mom was a homemaker. She worked part time. Had an older brother who went to Penn State³. I have two younger sisters who were adopted when I was a junior in high school and they were eight years old. I don't know. I guess I had a, you know, basic middle class upbringing. I went to Easton High School. I was a local girl.

AR: Can you tell me a little bit about Easton High School... the nature of it?

¹ Referring to the northeastern section of the city of Easton. It is literally a hill on which Lafayette College resides.

² The second largest integrated steel producer in the United States. Its headquarters are located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

³ The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

SB: Well I guess it was a real typical high school back then. It was, it was very large for the time. In fact, now I realize that it... there were over two thousand students in the school which seems unbelievable now that, that that building at that size could have held that many kids. But it was very structured, you know, you never, you didn't step outside, the track you were in. If you were college-prep that was the only thing you could take. Girls didn't take, shop classes or anything at all unusual. Girls could not wear pants to school when I was in high school. Boys couldn't wear blue jeans. It was, real typical. I think, it was the 60s, but it was a very typical of a 50s kind of atmosphere. Things changed very radically in the next two years after I graduated from high school. Very radically.

AR: How many or did a lot of female students from your high school go on to higher education?

SB: You know, I don't know how many there were because I was in the A-track. Everybody in track A went to college. So no one I was friends with didn't plan to go to college. But I don't know about everybody else. It was kind of a narrow experience I guess. There were ninety kids in the A-track and ninety in the B-track, and I didn't know anybody who wasn't in one of those two tracks, so... You know, we all went to college. That was what was expected. Now not everybody finished, but everybody started.

AR: So then did you know from when you were a child that you wanted to attend college?

SB: It wasn't so much that I... something that I wanted as that's what you did after high school. I mean, that was the expectation in my family. In spite of the fact that my mother didn't go to college and none of her sisters went to college, but all of her brothers had gone to college. But everyone in my generation... my mother's one of twelve... everybody in the next generation... everybody went to college. That was just the expected thing.

AR: What was your process of finding and choosing schools to apply to like?

SB: Well when I was in high school when I was picking a college for my freshman year I was really guided by... by my mom I think, which is kind of ironic considering she was the one who didn't go to college, but... There were zillions of all-female colleges then, and I had a boyfriend in high school, and so I thought, "Why would I want to go to a coed college. I don't care, you know. I'll just go to an all-girls school." And so we applied, we looked at all these girls' schools and...*(Laughter)* I naively was sort of seduced by the fact that Chestnut Hill⁴ had these underground tunnels so you never had to go outside in the wintertime. So it was like, "Well this is just as good as any other school. I'll just go here." Well I wasn't there two weeks when I realized I'd made a huge mistake. I hated it there. So I didn't really... I wasn't very sophisticated about how to pick a college. I don't think anybody was back then to tell you the truth. My husband went to Penn State and was just... I don't think, I don't think he really looked at many other

⁴ Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA.

schools either. It was... “Okay, I’ll just go there.” So I think it was the time. It was enough that you were going to college. It didn’t really matter which college you went to.

AR: Did you have much advice from a guidance counselor?

SB: (*Disgusted sound*) Absolutely not. They were useless. Useless! In fact, when I... I’m sure we’ll get to this about transferring here. But, when I went back to, you know, get the paperwork and everything together to transfer he said to me, “Oh you’ll never get into Lafayette.” So, how ’bout that? (*Laughter*)

AR: Can you tell me a little... about your overall experience at Chestnut Hill.

SB: Well it was an all girls Catholic college. And most of the girls that went there had gone to all female private high schools. And I was really unusual. Having gone to public school. So I didn’t really have a lot to relate to with the girls that I went there with. And in fact, one of the things that I did back then was... they sent this communication home to your parents over the summer asking parents to list the names and the addresses of the places where you were allowed to go for weekends. And my father wrote a letter back that said, “My daughter is eighteen, and she’s an adult. She can go where she wants to” basically. You know, he gave me this blanket permission. I was the only girl in the entire freshman class that had that permission. So my college roommate my freshman year couldn’t come home for a weekend until her father wrote a letter saying it was okay. I mean, how antiquated is that? And academically it was really very, very much like high

school. And I really didn't want that at all. I was done with high school. I had had it. And I was... I mean, I wasn't bad at all, but I was probably the most rebellious girl there, which was not, I mean, not saying I was really that out of the mainstream. But I was really different from the other girls that went there.

AR: So how far into your freshman year did you know that you wanted to transfer?

SB: I'm telling you, I'm not exaggerating. It was two weeks when I realized, "This is not gonna work." (*Laughter*) And so I probably started talking about it with my parents right away. And I'm not sure exactly when Lafayette announced that it would go coed for the following year, but my parents were quite excited at the idea of my going to Lafayette because my dad had gone here. So it was, and not only did my father graduate from Lafayette, but I have five uncles who went here. So it was like I was gonna be the first girl in the family to go to Lafayette. It was a very big thing in my family. So I was quite excited at the idea of getting away from Chestnut Hill.

AR: Was Lafayette the only school you applied to to transfer?

SB: No. I think I applied to four, but I can only remember Dickinson⁵. I also applied to Dickinson, and I think Gettysburg⁶. And I don't remember what the fourth one was. And I got accepted at two and turned down at two. And probably the reason I got into

⁵ Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

⁶ Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Lafayette is because I had all this family that went here. (*Laughter*) I wasn't that great a student so that probably really helped. I was a legacy.

AR: Before you got here how did you feel about being in the first class of women?

SB: I thought that it would be really, really neat. I fancied myself sort of a rebel, you know. I got sent home from school in high school for wearing pants to school my senior year. I went to the prom in a pants outfit which was very avant garde then, and so I thought I was, you know, this little rebel. So it would be very cool to go to a school that had just gone coed.

AR: Did that kind of thinking continue once you got here?

SB: I think it did. You know, I made a small group of friends, of close friends. And we were not really in the mainstream of Lafayette life. So yeah, in a lot of ways it did. And my colleagues today would probably say that it has continued throughout my life. That I, you know, I definitely... I say what I think, and I am not always, you know, in the mainstream.

AR: What was it like coming into Lafayette as a transfer in your sophomore year?

SB: It was, that was kind of scary. I look back on it now, and I think of myself as being kind of shy in high school and college, and so I look back and think, "How did I even do

that?" I mean that was... But the plan was, originally the plan was that I was gonna live at home and just come here for classes so it... that probably sort of reduced some of the anxiety maybe. But I don't know how I ever thought I was gonna be able to make friends that way. But as it turned out they had an opening for... One of the girls who was a freshman actually, her roommate came and spent three days here, and college was not for her. And she left. And so the Dean of Students... I think Miss Hermann⁷ was her name... she started contacting the commuters... in the order of which they had paid their tuition, and I was second. The first girl said, "No, I can't afford to live on campus." So they contacted me and said, "You know, if you want to live on campus there's a, there's an opening." And my parents said, "You know, maybe you should do that your first year. You'll make friends that way." Well I never went home after that because the young woman I moved in with, she and I hit it off immediately. And she is my best friend to this day. I still talk to her almost every day on the phone. She's the godmother to my son, and we're still real close. So I never really went, really moved back home again after that.

AR: And you lived in New Dorm and Watson?

SB: Yeah. It was New Dorm, and then I guess they named it. They finally named it something. After my first year they named it Ruef. And then, and then we lived in Watson Hall for two years til I graduated. And then the year after I graduated the friends, the girls that I lived with moved over to Watson Court. That was the first year it was open, their senior year, so... yep.

⁷ Suzanne Hermann, Assistant Dean of Students.

AR: And what were your experiences like in the dorms?

SB: Well actually my first year I guess all the girls lived in, in New Dorm. That was, that was the only housing they had for women. So all hundred and fifty of us, whatever there were, were all in that one dorm. So that was, you know, it was good because even if you didn't get to be close friends with all the other women, which obviously you didn't, you know, you knew who they were and to say hello to them, that kind of thing. But like I said, my roommate and I really hit it off and got along really well and became very, very close friends. So that was a lot of fun, and you know, we had very similar sleep patterns and that kind of thing so that went real well. And I never minded living in a dorm, although I have to admit that when we moved over to Watson there were four of us in the suite, and we had our own bathroom. That was great.

AR: What kind of regulations did you have concerning male visitors?

SB: Well they didn't quite know what to do with us when we first got here. And so they let us vote on what the rules would be. So there were no rules. You know, the dorm was open, I think it was even unlocked, twenty-four hours a day. And you could have, you know, any visitors that you wanted anytime of the day or night. So there were no rules that first year. And in fact, I don't remember any restrictions at Watson either. So maybe... you know, it might have been after I left that they finally figured out that that

probably was not a good thing to do, have these open dorms all the time. So there weren't any regulations.

AR: Do you remember if you were here when Watson went coed?

SB: No, I was definitely not.

AR: Would you say there was adequate housing for the women?

SB: Yeah there was on campus housing. You were guaranteed, I guess guaranteed, I don't know everybody had a place to live on campus. We wanted to live off campus my senior year, and we were not allowed to. It was the next year, I think, that they, they allowed women to live off campus. Which, I look back on that and think like, "Hey, the men were allowed to do that. Why weren't we allowed to do it?" But it wasn't something that was really worth fighting cuz we didn't really mind living in Watson although the food... Food was definitely a problem, because the food at Marquis was not very good, and the options... I don't know if you want me to talk about this now, but... One of the options was, I guess after our first year they didn't, they wanted girls to eat somewhere else because traditionally the boys had, you know, the freshman boys would eat in the dining hall and then they would all join fraternities or social groups or whatever. And so they weren't... They didn't have that many students to feed. But with us they, they needed to do something cuz they didn't want everybody eating in the dining hall after our first year so... Fraternities courted the women as dining members. And so

we went to different fraternities of guys that we knew and ate a sample meal. And of course they gave you the best meal that you could get, but then when you signed up the food wasn't very good in the fraternities either. But I did eat one... I can't remember if it was one year or one semester at Kappa Sig cuz we were friends with those guys. And then, one year or one semester I can't remember, we cooked cuz there's a kitchen in Watson. And we had a little refrigerator in our room for the four of us. And I think three of us went together, and we would buy food, and we would cook dinners together a lot of the time. And that worked out pretty well. And then there was a semester that I didn't sign up for any meal plan, and I went home for dinners. My parents only lived six blocks from campus so it was very easy, and my mom's a great cook. So I did that for a semester.

AR: What was a normal mealtime like in Marquis and how did that compare to a mealtime in the fraternities?

SB: I hated those cafeteria style things. I always hated it. Even in high school I hated it. In college I hated it. And I hate it now. I don't know why. I just don't like that whole cafeteria atmosphere. It's too noisy. I never know who to sit with. It's just like this whole anxiety thing. So it was not fun. But the thing I didn't really like about the fraternity was that there was a set time. And you had to be there at that time or else you missed dinner. Last summer when I went, when my husband and I went with our son to look at all different colleges I thought, "It's so different now and it's so much better.

You know, you get these cards. You can eat at a million different places anytime you want.” It’s so great. I didn’t like the whole food thing in college.

AR: Did you feel like the administration knew that women didn’t like the food situation?

SB: Oh no I don’t think they had any idea. And I’m not sure they would have cared if they did know. I never felt the administration was flawless while I was here. I mean, we were new. And I have a perspective now that I didn’t have then. You know, they didn’t quite know what to do with us. And I don’t think it crossed anybody’s mind that they would have to do anything different for the women than they had done for the men as far as eating went. I just don’t, I think they, that’s one thing that they just didn’t even think about.

AR: What kind of things did you do for fun?

SB: I hung out a lot with like I said, a small group of close friends. And I had some friends from town who, who were home a lot or whatever. But my friends from Lafayette became friends with them, and so we had this little social thing. There was a group of guys who were students here in the class behind me I guess who were a great band. I can’t remember the name of their band, but they were just great musicians, and they played all over campus a lot. And so a lot of nights we would just go wherever they were playing and listen to them. You know, I went to a few fraternity parties but that was never, I was never really into that. You know, we just hung out and listened to music and

did some stuff we probably shouldn't have. (*Laughter*) But I, I remember I, you know, I felt I had a lot of fun at Lafayette. Probably had more fun than I should have had at Lafayette. But I really cemented friendships, I think, that way. I bonded with a few people very closely... that's probably how.

AR: What kind of music did you listen to and do you think music played a significant role in your Lafayette experience?

SB: Well we were into like The Grateful Dead⁸, and Crosby, Stills, and Nash⁹, and all those hippie bands from Woodstock¹⁰. Very into that stuff. We went to quite a few concerts. You know, whatever was here we went to. We went... We traveled a lot for concerts. We went out to different colleges that our friends went to or siblings. We went down to the Spectrum¹¹ for a number of concerts in college. So that was a big social part of my experience anyway, going to concerts, listening to music, you know, getting new albums or whatever. But, you know, I was, I can't, I was not talented in any way. I was not into classical. I wasn't into any other kind of music then. I became interested in other music as I grew older. I mellowed some. You know, I wasn't so narrow minded about it.

⁸ The Grateful Dead was founded in 1965. Some of their most popular recordings include "Truckin," "Touch of Grey," and "U.S. Blues".

⁹ Band of the 1960s and 70s which released their first album in 1969. They are known for songs such as "Teach Your Children" and "Ohio".

¹⁰ A three-day long music festival which took place in upstate New York in August of 1969. Approximately 400,000 people attended to see performances by groups such as The Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, The Who, and Jimi Hendrix. Billed as "three days of peace and music" it has been associated with the hippie movement of the '60s according to today's popular culture.

¹¹ The First Union Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is the home for several Philadelphia sports teams and a venue for concerts and other events.

AR: Would you say that the women generally stuck together?

SB: No I wouldn't say that. There were definitely cliques. We had this little... We were like the hippie clique. You know, we wore blue jeans and flannel shirts, and we were definitely the hippie clique. And it was just we were a small group. And then there was... another group that we used to call the color co-ordinates cuz they were these girls that looked as if they'd all gone to prep school. I don't know whether they all did or not, but they all dressed, you know, very, very nicely in that old fashioned kind of way that girls dressed in when I was in high school. Everything always matched. They had these perfect villager sweaters with the flowered...the pastel sweater with the flowered blouse, and then they had the Papagallo shoes that matched the sweater... like pink shoes and green shoes and blue shoes. And I was not that into that. So they were, they were a clique that we didn't talk to at all. And then there was, you know, there was, another group of girls that were very studious. I wish I could say I was studious, but I wasn't. They were very studious, and they were going places. Those girls became, you know, engineers and doctors and such. So I... the girls were not... the girls were definitely not close like that. And there were no sororities then to promote that kind of bonding. Although in my case I would have turned my nose up at sororities anyway. So...

AR: Would you say that there were any divisions among the women based on race, class, religion, or sexual orientation?

SB: There definitely was based on race. You know, the black girls hung out together, and they... Many of them, there were a couple, but many of them did not interact in any positive way with the white girls. And I can't say that we made any overtures either. And there was a, you know, obviously the black kids were a smaller group, like a subgroup within the whole women's thing. So... but other than that, I mean, I, I wouldn't say that there... I never noticed that anyway. Of course it could have been just, I was oblivious to that but, you know, I never noticed there was any other division.

AR: Would you say that the racial divisions held true for men in the same manner they held true for women?

SB: I can't say I know the answer to that. Probably not. When my friends moved over to Watson Courts the year after I graduated there were a group of boys who lived next door to them and that was a mixed racial group. So I don't know. You know, the boys, boys seem to bond over different things. I think athletics kinda obliterates those lines more easily for men than it did for women. We didn't have that. You know, you weren't on a team with girls that weren't like you. You weren't in any kind of experience that helped you bond with those kids who weren't like you. Whereas I think the boys had more opportunities for that.

AR: Do you still keep in contact with other people who you were friends with other than your roommate?

SB: Yeah, I do. I have another real close friend that... She moved to New York City after college, and she was... There were four of us in the suite, and she was one of the four. And we're still, I would say in pretty close touch with them. Our families have become very friendly, good friends, and we go on vacations together and that kind of thing. We go see them. They come see us. So I think it helped that our husbands also hit it off. And then another... another girlfriend moved to Washington, D.C. and, although I have not seen her since we graduated, or probably since one of our weddings which was a couple years after graduation we still hear from each other once or twice a year. Now that we have email, we have been emailing, and, so yeah. And then there's a guy I was friendly with. Actually he was the roommate of someone I dated here at Lafayette, and he and I are still in touch. So, you know, I have two friends that I would say I'm still close to, and two or three other people that I'm still in touch with.

AR: Would you attribute the... these lasting relationships to the fact that there were so few women here while you were here?

SB: It's probably one reason. My roommate, her name is Nadine... I think she and I... that was one of the reasons why we bonded so well because there weren't that many women here. And we, you know, we were a lot alike and so we did hit it off. The three years that we were here together really cemented that because, you know, there was a small group of women, and when you found your friends you kind of stuck together.

AR: How was social life different for women than for men?

SB: I think the guys drank a lot more. You know, fraternities were a really big thing then and that was the social life for men. And they also still, a couple times my first year they still had these mixers where these girls came from Centenary¹² and Cedar Crest¹³ and stuff. I mean, okay there were only a hundred and fifty women here and there were, you know, eighteen hundred men or whatever so obviously the men were not gonna just date the women who were here, but... I, I felt very weird about that. You know, ostensibly it was open to all women, but all these girls got bused here from these girls' schools. That was so weird. So I never wanted anything to do with that. You know, I wasn't gonna meet somebody like that. How, how bizarre. They catered more, the college itself catered more to the men, but, you know, we were new. They still didn't quite know how to really integrate the whole coeducational thing.

AR: What was the role of drugs and alcohol in the social life here?

SB: Oh very big. Very big. It was the 70s, and I was just saying yesterday, to my parents in fact, that when I was in college I didn't know anyone who didn't smoke pot. I didn't know anybody. Now I'm sure there were kids, but I didn't know em. So that was like a, you know, that was just the normal thing. And everybody went to fraternity parties and everybody drank beer. Except I have to say that I never did, only because I didn't like beer, not because I was virtuous. Just cuz I didn't like it. And I still don't like it. I sort of always wished I did cuz it's so cheap, but anyway. But yeah, that was a

¹² Centenary College, Hackettstown, New Jersey.

¹³ Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

really big part of... And there was no, there was very little policing going on. You know, fraternities would start the keg parties on Thursday night. It was... it was probably really bad, but that was the accepted thing.

AR: How did you feel overall about fraternities?

SB: Oh I thought fraternities were sort of, I don't know... I didn't really like fraternities, and I thought it was like this creepy male bonding thing and... The fraternity that I... if, if you could say I hung out at a fraternity at all, the only one that I really spent any time at was Kappa Sig, which isn't here anymore. But the only, and the only reason for that was cuz one of the girls that I lived with had made friends with some of the guys that lived there, and so that made this connection. And Kappa Sig was known as the drug fraternity because they got busted the year, the spring before Lafayette went coed. So spring of 1970. Someone there got a delivery of like a pound or two or something... I think maybe a key of pot, and they got busted. And everybody in their pledge class that year, which would have been my year, everybody but four guys de-pledged their fraternity. So somehow we made friends with those guys. And the four who were in my class, you know, I was kinda friendly with the four of them. They were kinda like the outcast group so they kinda bonded with our little female outcast group. So we were friendly with them. But fraternities in general I didn't have much use for.

AR: How then did you feel with the overall social life? Was it satisfactory? Were you unhappy with it?

SB: I wasn't unhappy, although... and, you know, I probably could have made more friends here and... I can't say had a better time, cuz I had a good time. But maybe I would have made more friends if I had been a little more open to doing different kinds of things. But I, it was me. It wasn't the school. A guy in one of my English classes invited me to the faculty show, and I am ashamed to say that I stood him up for that date. And I don't why. Like that... I'm, I'm not that kind of person... I don't... I guess I was then, but... I mean, now I look back and think, "God, what an awful thing that was to do! Why did I do that?" But I just... I, I was not... I wasn't very outgoing, and so, you know, I had this group of friends, and we had a lot of fun and that was really all that I was interested in. There was tons of stuff going on here that I should have taken advantage of and never did. And that's one of my regrets about college. And that was my fault.

AR: How would you compare social life at Lafayette to social life at Chestnut Hill?

SB: Well there was no social life at Chestnut Hill. I mean that was... It was nonexistent. Everybody went somewhere for the weekend... or went to the mixers. They, they did have a couple mixers. In fact, one of the girls I knew there she met... I guess more than one girl, probably a lot of girls, met the guys they married through that means. We did go into Philadelphia some from there. You know, it was a fifteen minute train ride. I saw my...not my first big concert but... maybe the first concert of really somebody really, really famous. Well I saw my first concert unchaperoned let's say.

Cuz in high school I had gone to see Bob Dylan¹⁴, but a parent took us. So I saw Simon and Garfunkel¹⁵ in Philadelphia which was really... I mean that was like so exciting. This group of girls by ourselves, no parents. That was fun. But other than that, you know, there was not much going on at Chestnut Hill.

AR: Can you describe how well women and men related as classmates, friends, acquaintances, and potential dates?

SB: Well, I can't say that I related very well to men in class. I just wanted to be invisible in class because a lot of times I was the only woman in the room and that was very uncomfortable. And I had, it was something I had not anticipated and I hadn't really thought about how I would handle that. Outside of class, I mean, you know, we were... We had men that we were friends with. There were a couple guys from Kappa Sig who would come over before every vacation, and we would cut their hair so they could go home because their parents would go crazy cuz their hair's too long. So we got to be friends with them. You know, it wasn't... There was no dating or anything. It was just, we were just friendly. I dated some. I guess everybody that I, all the women I was really close friends with, we all dated Lafayette guys to some extent or another. I was quite serious with someone my senior year here and then the first year that we were both out of school. But ironically, I don't know anyone... I shouldn't say that. None of the women I was close friends with in college married a Lafayette classmate or a Lafayette, you know, graduate. None of us. And I'm not sure exactly what that says. But it says something.

¹⁴ Singer/musician of the late 60s known for songs like "Tambourine Man".

¹⁵ Rock group formed in the 1960s. Known for hits like "Sound of Silence" and "Mrs. Robinson".

Maybe it just says that we weren't ready to get married. Like in my mom's generation if you went to college, you went to college so that you could find somebody to marry, and you got married right out of college, and then you never did anything with your degree in general. In fact, one of my aunts said to me when I came here, "Girls just have to get Cs." Cuz you're there to find a husband. But none of us got married right out of college. So none of us, married somebody from Lafayette. Kind of funny.

AR: Was there any difference in the way women could relate to upper class men versus the freshman men?

SB: Oh yeah, definitely. The freshman men were a lot more accepting and a lot more friendly to us. The upper class men didn't quite know what to do. And many of them had girlfriends from other schools or from home. They were not at all interested in us as, you know, far as taking us seriously. But the freshman... I guess the freshman boys came here knowing that they were gonna be in classes with women, knowing that it was gonna be a coed school. So they were fine. It was good. They were friendly. They were funny. They were nice.

AR: There was a lot of emphasis placed on the male/female ratio that supposedly would mean a lot of dates for women. Did this turn out to be true?

SB: I would say no. That was really a... It was a myth. It was a myth. And maybe... I mean I can look at this now as an adult, as an adult who has dealt with adolescents for a

long time now. Maybe the men were intimidated a little bit by the women who came here in the beginning because you... It was so much more competitive for a girl to get in here at first because they accepted such a small number in the beginning. So I guess. You know, we had to have really high scores and good grades and all that stuff in order to get in here. So maybe they were a little intimidated by the intellectual level that the girls probably had. Not that they don't have that today, but, you know, I think that sort of set us apart a little bit. They were, they were afraid we were gonna eclipse them academically.

AR: How important was it for women to have a date for their social life?

SB: It wasn't important to my friends. We, we kinda, you know, hung out in groups a lot. So our having a date was not a big deal. That wasn't what we did. We didn't go on individual dates. You know, we went to parties, and we had parties in our room, and we went to the concerts and that kind of thing. But it was always as a group. So that was not, not a big thing at all.

AR: Was there any interaction between Lafayette students and students at other Lehigh Valley Colleges?

SB: I don't think there was much. There were some connections. A guy I... who was in my class here had a cousin at Lehigh¹⁶ and so I went to a couple of things that, you know, there were a couple of kids from Lehigh, and there were Lafayette kids there at the same

¹⁶ Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

thing. But, you know, I don't think that there was a lot of connection among the schools in those days.

AR: Did the women who transferred in, in 1970 kind of stay together or did they mix within the women who came in as freshman?

SB: I would say we mixed among the women who came in as freshman. My three closest friends were in the class behind me. I did make one good friend who was in my class, another woman. And I think one... that probably one of the reasons that we made friends was because she had transferred here also. But also we student taught the same semester even though we didn't student teach in the same school. And that helped to bond us too. But I think in general, it didn't really make that much difference what class you were in.

AR: Many women who were here in the 70s talk about the fish bowl feeling. Do you know what they're talking about, and do you identify with that feeling?

SB: Yeah to some extent. I definitely felt that in classes, that... I was in a class once where a substitute professor came in. I don't remember why. And I was the only woman in the room. And as I recall, I was smoking a cigarette as were several men. But he singled me out and ripped me up one side and down the other for smoking in his class. Well... and then someone said to me afterwards, "Oh, you can't smoke in his class." Well, how was I supposed to know that? You know, and why did he have to be so nasty

about it? Why couldn't he just say, "Listen, I don't allow smoking in my class." He was...he was probably one of the professors who voted against coeducation. Yeah I felt sometimes like I did go to college in a fishbowl. And I also felt that some professors were not very kind to the women. You know, they had issues. They had their own issues, and I was in those days too intimidated to, to kind of fight back. There's no way I would stand for that today. I'm really different than I was when I was in college, but I'm older. You know, I've had more experience with those kinds of people, and how to cope with them.

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

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

SB: No. I never really felt that way. I can't say that. Umm mm.

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." Now you graduated a year before these incidents occurred and you said you haven't, hadn't heard about them. But how do you think you would have taken them at the time? What do you think of them today? And are you surprised that they happened a year after you left, or do you think that the environment or atmosphere you were in was conducive to these kinds of things?¹⁷

SB: I'm not surprised, I'm not surprised that it happened. Sad to say I wouldn't even be that surprised if someone told me it happened now cuz I still see that kind of behavior in the high school in which I work, to a smaller extent I think but... So I'm not surprised that it happened. I feel outraged now. I think I would have been even more outraged then. That was the kind of issue that I would have really, I think, grabbed on to and, and been really upset about. It's easier now for me to say, you know, these guys are twenty, twenty-one years old. They're idiots. And I'd be willing to say that some of those men felt that way then, don't feel that way now. But it takes a long, long time to change those ingrained attitudes. And like I said a minute ago or a few minutes ago, when I came to Lafayette I had an aunt who told me I didn't need to worry about getting good grades because after all girls are just going to get married anyway. So, you know, those kinds of attitudes it's not that easy to change. It's disgusting, but it's not that surprising. And, in fact, not that long ago in one of my high school classes in the 1990s a kid said to me that

¹⁷ 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.

his wife would never work. He would never allow his wife to work. And I was appalled. How could you...? First of all, is it gonna be up to you? It's not up to you. You don't own her. I was, I was just shocked that in this day and age a male adolescent would say that. But most boys don't feel that way. You know, I've seen... in the thirty years I've been a teacher I've seen a huge change in attitudes so, you know, it's easier for me now to say, "That was then. You know, back in the day that's how people felt and acted."

AR: Why did you choose to major in English?

SB: English was the one thing I was really good at. I loved, I always loved English from the time I was really little I loved to read. I loved stories. I had several very, very good English teachers in high school. And they really inspired me. And also I hated high school passionately. I was very unhappy in high school. And I think I sort of subconsciously wanted to become a teacher so I could help kids have a better experience in high school than I did. And I think to some extent I did do that. I have done that. I'm real proud of that. But I really, I just loved English. I loved stories. I loved talking about what does it all mean and that kind of thing. And, and it was something I was good at. I didn't have to work that hard to be good at it.

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

SB: Oh it was, most of my classes were ninety-eight percent boys, two percent girls. I mean, I had... oh I had numerous classes where I was the only woman in the class.

AR: What was it like to be the only woman?

SB: It was very uncomfortable. I hardly ever said anything in class. And I had plenty to say. I had been very verbal in high school in my English classes, very verbal. And, and I was encouraged at home especially by my dad to express my opinions and ideas. And I... I was so intimidated by that. I don't know if I really was able to articulate that then, but looking back on it I know that that was it. You know, I was in a class with all these men. The professors were men. I had two female professors the entire time I was at Lafayette. One taught anthropology. I had one course with her. And then she left. And the education professor... Dr. Clay¹⁸, I can't think of her first name. And that wasn't till my senior year. Those were the only female professors I had here. So it was... being in class with all men and a female, and a male professor was very intimidating to me.

AR: Would you say that being the only woman then affected your academic performance?

SB: I don't... I'd like to be able to blame it on that, but, but it's probably more fair to say I didn't work anywhere nearly as hard as I could have and should have in college. I had a wonderful time, you know, a lot of fun, and I made very close friends because of that, but I really didn't work as hard academically as I wish I had. So I, I don't think it was that. I just think it was... I didn't have the self-discipline, and I didn't have the

¹⁸ Clay Ketcham, Education Department.

motivation, and didn't... I just was kinda lazy I think. That was my fault, not the fact that I had all these men in my class.

AR: Was Lafayette a very competitive place academically?

SB: I didn't feel that it was particularly competitive. I felt that if you, you know... I felt that if you worked hard you would be rewarded academically. And I never felt that... in general, I never felt that as a woman I was held back academically because of the school. You know, there individual professors who I don't think really wanted women here, but I never felt that I was graded on that basis.

AR: So you mentioned that women came... it was more competitive for women to come into Lafayette. Did you notice if women performed better in the classrooms or grade-wise than men did?

SB: I think a number of women did, especially in the class after me. Some of those... some of those women were really, really sharp and really worked hard. They knew where they were going. You know, some of those girls, like I said, became engineers and doctors and lawyers, and, and they had that goal in mind. Maybe one of my failings was that I didn't have any long-term goal in mind. I got that later. I got that much, much later. When I left Lafayette I said, "I'm never taking another course." Well, you know, and I try to tell my son that, "Never say never" because, you know, within ten years I had my masters degree. And another couple years later I got a... I went back for fifteen more

graduate credits so I could get another certificate in New Jersey. And I, you know, I have a very responsible job now that when I was in college I would never in a million years would have thought I would be able to do. You know, I manage a department of twenty-five people. I do all the hiring. I do... I do all the evaluating of them...so... I forget what your question was. How'd I get on that? (*Laughter*)

AR: It was competition between men and women in the classroom.

SB: Oh right. Well, I never felt that way in class, so... I don't know. I don't know if other people felt that way or not. I didn't feel that way.

AR: In general how did professors treat you?

SB: In general I would say we were treated fine. Just probably the same way as the men, or I assumed so. I had a really nice advisor. Dr. McCluskey¹⁹, he was very, very nice, and easy to talk to. And in general the other professors also were, were pretty fair and polite and okay. It wasn't until after I left Lafayette actually, after I got married and my husband was a student at Moravian²⁰ that I found out that there were schools that, where the professors actually invited like all the kids over for dinner and that kind of thing. And I never had that experience here, although I think Lafayette likes to portray itself as that kind of school, and maybe today it is that kind of school. It wasn't then. The only social interaction I ever had with a professor was the semester I student taught, one of the

¹⁹ Donald McCluskey, English Department.

²⁰ Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

education professors invited the student-teachers, there were about twenty of us I guess, to his house for some kind of social gathering which I thought was really nice. You know, maybe they didn't do that as much back then. Maybe they, for a couple years they didn't quite know what to do because they didn't know how to handle the coed thing. Maybe they do that more now. I don't know. But I never felt like I was mistreated by professors except for that one who yelled at me for smoking in his class. But I never, I also never felt like I had a really like friendly relationship, and I knew guys who did have a more friendly relationships with professors. But it never, it never bothered me while I was here.

AR: The two female instructors that you had, was that very different than having male instructors?

SB: It wasn't for the anthropology course. Cuz she... I think she taught just... Teaching has changed a lot too in the last thirty years. It's really, its really different now than it was then. Like then there was like one way you did it. The professor presented the material, and the students soaked up the material. It's real different now. So she taught the same way that the male professors did. Dr. Ketcham was different. That was her name, Clay Ketcham. She was different. But she was teaching something different too. She was teaching education, and, and the way that it was set up in those days we had all these little like mini-courses we had to work through. So it was a whole lot more hands-on, show them how to do it, and then let them practice it than, than any other class I had ever had. So she was different, but I think it was the nature of the subject.

AR: Were there many men who were in those classes where there were female instructors?

SB: Oh yeah. The anthropology class was mostly men. And the education semester was also mostly men ironically. I wonder how many of those men are actually still teachers today. One of them I know is cuz he's the department head at Nazareth now. There were just a few girls in, in the education semester. They, they, they did that differ... well I don't know if you can even get certification at Lafayette anymore. Can you become a teacher?

AR: I'm not sure.

SB: Cuz we majored... I majored in... We majored in our subjects. I majored in English. But you would do this one semester thing called "the education semester" where you got inundated with every aspect of education and did your student teaching all in one semester. We used to say we didn't even have time to go to the bathroom because you were just doing school work all the time. But it was kind of neat too because you really bonded with those other people in your in the group.

AR: Do you think of the males that had those female instructors, did they interact any differently with them than the male professors?

SB: I think there were, there were men who... Yeah, I, I think they, they, to be blunt, flirted with the female professors. I do. The one I had for anthropology was a very attractive young, youngish kind of woman. And I think guys tried to flirt with her. I don't know how successful they were. I never paid attention really. But... and Dr. Ketcham I think they sorta like tried to play up the mom kind of thing. You know, she was an older woman. And I definitely think they... they interacted differently.

AR: Did you ever notice females doing the same kind of thing with male professors?

SB: I had a friend who graduated in the same class as, as mine who actually her senior year second semester she had four courses all taught by men. And she had a B in all four of those courses. She went to each professor and batted her eyelashes and said, "You know, if you give me an A, I'll have a 4.0 this semester" and every one of them did it. So yeah there were girls who definitely played on that, you know, like either the helpless female or the, you know, the femme fatal thing. Yeah there definitely were women like that.

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

SB: Lafayette was probably more rigorous. You were, you had to be more self-motivated and self-disciplined at Lafayette. You were expected to be, you know, a lot more independent. Chestnut Hill was a little too, like I said before, a little too much like

high school. It was just they were a little too hovering I thought. At the same time, you know, I didn't have a lot of self-discipline. I probably would have benefited from somebody giving me a little more, you know, nudging about getting your school work done. But, you know, I got my degree, and it taught me, it taught me a level of... it taught me a level of independence. Like you're gonna have to do this on your own. And then I did very well in graduate school because I think I finally figured out that I was on my own. So I think it was more, Lafayette's more, Lafayette was more rigorous, and it probably is more rigorous today than a lot of schools, certainly more competitive to get into.

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

SB: No. I can't say that. I felt a little detached from the faculty and the administration. I don't know whether that was me, whether it was the time, whether it was the staff didn't quite yet know how to nurture girls or whether they should do anything differently. I don't know. But I... There was no one. I didn't feel that way. And like I said before, there, I know there were men who felt there were professors that took a special interest in them.

AR: What kinds of classes did you take outside of your major?

SB: I took a lot of history courses. I figured out later that I probably could have double majored with two more courses. I took a lot of history. I took some... I took a lot of humanities kinds of courses. When I first came here there was no... There were no requirements outside your major. Which was wonderful for me because I've always said if I had to take a college math course, I couldn't be a college graduate. So I didn't take any math. I didn't any science, you know, I don't know what you call it... real science. Like I took psychology and that kind of thing, but I didn't take any lab sciences. I stuck with the stuff I liked.

AR: Do you remember what the most popular majors were for men and women?

SB: I don't know if this is true but my impression was that engineering, that a lot of, that most boys did engineering... That they came here thinking it was an engineering school. I don't know. I think there were a significant, not significant, there were a number of women who went into the humanities kinds of majors. English I think was probably pretty popular. Psychology. But of my close friends one was a German major, one was a psychology major, one was a math major. I was an English major. One of the guys that I was friendly with was an economics major. Another one was a history major. So it was all, really all over the place.

AR: Did you have any very positive or negative experiences that you haven't mentioned yet academically that stand out?

SB: Not academically. No.

AR: Do you have any socially or anything else?

SB: I have one experience that was very negative, and it, I, it really colored my whole memory of college life until relatively recently. When I was a junior living in Watson I woke up one morning to a group of black girls, five or six of them, standing over my bed. They ripped the covers off me and were yelling like maniacs at me. And I had, was awakened out of a sound sleep so I had no clue what was going on. And then my roommate came home from class. I no sooner started tell her about it, then they came back and did the same thing to her. And what had happened was they were in the room I think above us. And sometime during the night, the previous night, we... No one locked the doors in those days, so... Two white girls had gone into the room of these black girls and dribbled warm water on their wrists. The idea was that it would make you pee in the bed. Okay. I don't know why they thought it was us, but apparently they thought it was us. And it wasn't us. And we went to the Dean of Students about it and then, and then to Dean Kissiah²¹. And we were told to apologize for having done this, but we didn't do it. And then the two girls who had done it, who were actually the year ahead of us, seniors, they came forward and said they had done it, but they had gone into this room thinking it was friends of theirs. And they were in the wrong room. And we were still told to apologize, even though we hadn't done it. And I was so outraged. And I was absolutely crushed by that, that I would be wrongly accused and then told to accept it was just so outrageous to me. I went home and told my dad, and he wanted to go down to the

²¹ Herman Kissiah, Dean of Students.

District Attorney's office in Easton and swear out a complaint against these girls for basically verbally assaulting us and intimidating us and all that stuff. And I wouldn't let him do that because I was too terrified that there would be some sort of... I mean they threatened to beat us up. I was, you know, four feet eleven inches tall, and I weighed a hundred pounds in those days. I mean, these girls were, they were big athletic girls. And I was terrified that they really would ambush me on campus at some point. And I was so outraged cuz I saw it as, as the college trying to kowtow to a particular ethnic group. I was just outraged over it. And that's part... I have never ever given a nickel to Lafayette. And that's why. And we contribute regularly to Moravian where my husband got his degree. So that really has definitely, you know, skewed my feelings about Lafayette. Not about the academics, but, you know, about the overall tone of what was going on here. So I never felt like I was mistreated because I was a woman, but I definitely felt that I was mistreated because I was white.

AR: Were you involved in any kind of activities while you were here?

SB: No organized activities. No.

AR: No sports?

SB: No sports. Oh my God, no sports. (*Laughter*) When I was growing up there weren't a lot of sports for girls. And, I was very unathletic, but my, my parents... my

mother tells me today that she actually actively discouraged any interest in sports cuz she didn't want to have to be driving me places. (*Laughter*) So we were not athletes.

AR: What would you say the relationship between the College and the city of Easton was like?

SB: I don't think there was much of a relationship then. From what I read in the paper now and what I know of, I've sent a number of students here that I've taught. I know that it's a lot different now. Kids do a lot more than they once did. I think... I don't think there was much going on in the way of interaction then. Those of us who were gonna become teachers, and that was really a relatively small group, you know, we did tutoring and that kind of thing as part of our... as part of our preparation. The year before, I think the year before we student taught we had to go and do a short term tutoring thing at one of the elementary schools, something like that. So I think there's a lot more interaction between the town and the school now.

AR: Were you very interested in political and social movements?

SB: Oh in a, in a detached sort of way. You know, I mean we, we paid attention to some extent to what was going on in Vietnam, but we were really isolated and protected in a college environment. But I do remember that I was, I was at a Neil Young²² concert at

²² Rock singer and songwriter known for songs like "Southern Man". He continues to produce records and tour to date.

Madison Square Garden²³ the night that they announced, that Nixon announced that he was withdrawing troops from Vietnam. And it just stopped the show for a half hour.

You know, that... I remember that as a real significant event.

AR: What was the city of Easton or even Easton High School like in terms of the politics of the early 70s and late 60s?

SB: I, I can't say I even remember. I... you know, I wasn't... I guess I wasn't that interested. Or else, you know, I just... (*Laughter*)... I just can't remember. I, I can't, I can't respond to that. I don't know.

AR: Did Vietnam have any effect on your time at Lafayette?

SB: There were protests, you know, there were sort of mild understated kinds of protests going on. The big, the big protest came in May of 1970 right after Kent State²⁴, and I was home already for the summer. And I knew that I was coming here in, in the fall. And I remember coming over here one night early May after Kent State which I guess was May 4th, I think 1970. And there was a big, you know, gathering of students on the quad and students speaking against the war, that kind of thing. And there were a bunch of guys who I guess had been streaking cuz they were standing around naked. So there were those kinds of protests, but there wasn't anything... nothing major went on here that

²³ Famous concert and sporting event venue in New York City.

²⁴ On May 4, 1970, four Kent State University students were killed by National Guardsman during a campus protest by two thousand students against the Vietnam War.

I know of like it did at other schools like Columbia²⁵ where the students actually took over the administration building²⁶ and that kind of thing. It was kind of a... you know, this was kind of a... The kids who went here were from very well to do families in general, and they weren't that political.

AR: How would you characterize the racial relationships on campus?

SB: Well... (*Laughter*) It was, it was not great among the girls. I mean my impression, and it's, it's colored by that incident, is that the black girls who came here in the beginning were, were the very militant kind of in your face kind of women. And they probably were because, you know, they had to be... both racially and gender-wise. You had to be that way to survive at a school like this I think then. But the black girls did not interact much with the white girls that, that I ever saw. I think it's, it was different for the boys. I don't remember any... Well I remember the kid- the kid, he's a fifty year old man now- who, won the Pepper Prize from my class was a black guy named Eric Moody²⁷, and he was a great guy. He was very friendly, very outgoing, you know. He knew everybody, and everybody knew him. And, you know, you never felt that there were any issues with him. The black girls I always felt like there were issues.

AR: Did you know of any students who were homosexual or bisexual?

²⁵ Columbia University, New York City, New York.

²⁶ On April 23, 1968, Columbia students staged a rally and protested against the schools participation in the Institute for Defense Analysis. The demonstrators marched to the site of a proposed new gymnasium and eventually took over five buildings. A week later police stormed the buildings and removed the students.

²⁷ Eric Moody, Class of 1973, A.B. Philosophy.

BS: I didn't. I... we knew one student that we thought probably was gay, but he was not out of the closet, and it was something that we just, in those days, didn't, really didn't talk about too much. I don't know that anybody would have cared that much if somebody had come out of the closet. We were pretty... I think we were pretty liberal about that.

AR: So you think your group of friends would have accepted it or the whole campus?

BS: I think my group of friends definitely would have. I grew up in a very open minded home. My parents were very... always, always taught us to, you know, be tolerant, accept everyone. And my dad is Venezuelan, was born in Venezuela and grew up in a very, you know, old world kind of ethnic home, and yet... maybe because of that became very, very accepting of everybody. He was great that way. And so, you know, I think that it would have been totally accepted by my group of friends. And we were, I think also because we were sort of... they probably... my friends would probably die if they heard me say this, but I thought we were sort of the outcasts. You know, like this little detached group. And so maybe that would have made us more accepting of other people who were sort of out of the mainstream. I don't know if they all felt that way, but I did.

(Laughter)

AR: To your knowledge was religion ever a cause of division among students, and specifically are you aware of any issues which Jewish students in particular may have faced here?

SB: I don't remember that being an issue. I do, I do remember that there was a very active, even then, Hillel Society²⁸. I had an acquaintance who was Jewish, and she was active in that group. But I don't remember religion ever being any kind of issue. We were not regular participants in our own religion, you know my friends. When I went home I went to church I'm sure with my parents, but when I was at college I didn't. And I don't remember that ever being any kind of big issue.

AR: Did you think anything about feminism while you were at Lafayette? And what do you think about it now if anything?

SB: I was quite adamant about, you know, equal pay for equal work, and equal opportunities for women and that kind of thing. What do I think about it now? I think that... What I see in the high school girls that I teach is that they take for granted a lot of things that some of us in my generation and the generation before me really worked hard to get. They take that for granted. But isn't that why we did it? So that it, so that it would be something you can just expect. But I've also seen vestiges of, you know, the whole chauvinist good old boy network in my career not that long ago. I... we were doing a search for a new administrator in my school district, and I went to the principal

²⁸ Hillel Society is an organization dedicated to education and activity within the Jewish culture and religion.

and suggested that he have at least one teacher... this is when I still just was in the classroom I guess... "Why don't you have a teacher on the committee instead of just all administrators?" And so he invited me to be on the committee, and when I went to the meeting I was the only woman in the room. And that was shocking to me cuz that was about eight or ten years ago. I mean, it wasn't that long ago. And we interviewed three candidates. This is kind of an interesting story. And as each one came in I said, "Do you notice anything unusual about this room?" And there were two men and one woman. And the men were clueless..."No." I mean, they really didn't. And the woman got it immediately. So I still, I still see that, but, you know, and in fact when I go to administrative meetings now there are only three women in the room and about eight men. I'm in a group of five... two of us are women. So I still see that, that, regarded, you know, we still have, we still have some room to improve. But at the same time I think I'm, I'm regarded, very highly regarded in my school district. And I know that I'm one of the people that gets things changed and gets things done. And I have a very good friend, a guy that I work with who was the most old-fashioned kind of guy, and he and I had to work together very closely. He was the assistant principal. I was the dean of students, and we were the only two administrators in the school for a year, and so he had to work with me. And he tells me that I completely changed the way he looks at the girls, and the way he looks at, at professional women now. Which I think that's... like that was such a great compliment, that, you know, that I helped him see something differently. So I think, you know, there's still... Women take stuff for granted. They still shouldn't completely take everything for granted.

AR: While you were here was there any push for more female professors or for classes that dealt specifically with female experiences?

SB: I do remember people agitating a little bit for a more women's studies kinds of courses. I guess there's a major now in women's studies. I don't remember anybody... I remember our, you know, like students talking about the fact that there weren't any female professors. I don't remember us ever doing anything about it. But maybe in the couple years after I graduated the women who were here all four years, they were the ones who brought about those changes.

AR: Do you think having more female instructors would have positively affected your future like your own teaching and...?

SB: Yeah, I think it, I think it might have made a difference. I think it, it certainly could have made a difference in the way I behaved in class. That I might have felt more comfortable speaking out in class. Or a female professor might have been more aware of the fact that, "Jeez the women aren't saying anything. I need to do something to help bring them out." Yeah, I think that might have been better.

AR: Today some of the big issues for women are date rape and safety on campus. Were these issues for you when you were a student?

SB: No they really weren't. But I think it was more of a... you know, it was a more innocent time. It was a more... You know, you, if you were on a college campus you were pretty much protected and safe... we thought. And I don't know anybody... I didn't know anybody that anything bad like that happened to when I was here. Now that doesn't mean that it didn't happen. It just means that I didn't know about it. But I think cuz there were so few women that if something had happened to somebody we would have known about it. But I, you know, the world has changed a lot since then in general so... I do think we live in a more dangerous world than we did then.

AR: Do you remember if there was any campus reaction to *Roe v. Wade*²⁹ or any general views on abortion?

SB: Among the women I guess we were relieved at *Roe v. Wade*, but it wasn't something that you talked a lot about. So I, I, you know, I don't remember abortion being an issue that was discussed. But I do know that, you know, everybody felt a sense of like there's a safety net now that, that wasn't there before.

AR: Do you remember if birth control was available to women on campus as it is today?

SB: It wasn't available on campus, but there was a local Planned Parenthood clinic that was very easy to go to and get birth control. Everybody I knew was on the pill. And it

²⁹ *Roe v. Wade* was a Supreme Court decision issued on January 22, 1973, which declared that 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.

was real... It was really easy to go there, and they were really nice, and it was cheap, and it was close, and it was no problem.

AR: What do you think the Lafayette ideal was in the early 70s and do you think today's Lafayette idea is different?

SB: I, I would think that it wouldn't be different. The Lafayette ideal, you know, is a student who is intelligent and uses that intelligence for good and someone who has integrity and, you know, those are ideals. I think integrity and honor those don't, I don't think those change. Those are things that we aspire to and everyone should always aspire to. That's not, doesn't go out of style.

AR: Do you think the ideal has any social or political characteristics to it?

SB: Well I think that, yeah, and I think Lafayette does... My impression is that Lafayette encourages some sort of, you know, nobless oblige that if you have all these things you have a good education, you have the resources, that you should use them for the greater good. That you should give something back to your community, whatever community you're a part of. You know, whether it's your school or your town or state or whatever. So yeah I think those are the, the social implications of that.

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

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

SB: I think the Lafayette I attended was, there was a very liberal atmosphere. There was a very politically correct atmosphere. And I honestly can't say how it is today. I really don't, I don't know.

AR: What did you do right after graduation?

SB: I went to work. When I graduated I had a job for September, and I went to work at a Catholic high school in Phillipsburg³⁰, and I taught there for three years.

AR: When did you decide that you would attend graduate school?

SB: Well after I left Phillipsburg Catholic which was... I taught there three years. My husband and I moved to Vermont, and we lived there for two years. And I could not get a teaching job up there because we lived right near the town where Dartmouth³¹ is, and there were people with PhDs on the substitute list in those days. And, it was really hard to get a teaching job. There were tons of teachers. So after two years up there we decided that we had had enough of the cold and the winters in Vermont, and we came back here. And I decided that to make myself more employable I should start graduate school. So I started working on my masters in reading cuz that was, I don't know, I

³⁰ Phillipsburg, New Jersey.

³¹ Dartmouth University, Hanover, New Hampshire.

guess that was something that I thought was going to make me more employable, and, in fact, it did. So I did it. But my motive was to get a job. But I really got interested in what I was doing. So that's why I went to grad school.

AR: Other than your group of friends what would you say most women did after graduate school? Did they get married right away? Did they go out for a job? More education?

SB: I think most, I think, you know, some students, some women went to work and some went to grad school. I don't think most people got married right out of college. A few, but not a lot, you know, most... We had a good education here and it was comparatively speaking an expensive education, a relatively expensive education. So the idea wasn't that you wanted to waste that. You wanted to do something with it. But when I first started working I thought I was working at a job. I didn't know that I was working at a career for a while. It became a career after awhile, but at first I thought I'll just do this for a couple years, and then when I have kids I'll stop working. But then I realized when I did have... I just have one son... that I have more to be, to offer the world than to be his mother. Now, I have a lot to give to a lot of kids. It would be a waste to just spend it on one kid. So...

AR: Do you feel Lafayette prepared you well for your career goals and your other education socially and academically?

SB: I do. I, I do. Like I said before I should have, should have and could have worked harder academically. I regret that I didn't. I really, really regret that. But I do feel that Lafayette opened the intellectual door for me so that I was able to kind of compensate on my own because of the foundation that I had here. I was able to compensate on my own and teach myself everything that I needed to know. And like I said I did really well in graduate school, and, in fact, I have two incidents that stand out in my mind. In grad school questions I was able to answer in class that no one else knew, and it was because, I think, I had this, the foundation here. And one professor actually asked me afterwards, "Where did you go to... Where did you do your undergraduate?" And I've always been very proud to be able to say I went to Lafayette.

AR: Did your Lafayette... or would you say Lafayette failed you in any way?

SB: Well that incident that, you know, that happened with those girls who broke into my room. I definitely felt really let down by that. I felt that was really mishandled. I still feel that way today especially since I've been an administrator in a school, I know that could have been handled better. So that, but that's really the only way. The other... the other failures that I had were my fault not Lafayette's fault.

AR: Did your Lafayette experience have any effect on your feelings about being a woman?

SB: No. I don't think so.

AR: Do you think you would have felt differently if you had gone to a college that had been coed for a long time?

SB: My academic experience might have been different. I, it's hard to say. I'm speculating here, but, you know, if I had gone to a school where, where all the professors expected to see women in the classroom and, and were used, more used to interacting with them, maybe I would have had a little different academic experience. You know, maybe those letters that we read that were in the newspaper wouldn't have appeared at a school where girls had been there for a long time. I don't know. But it's hard to say too.

AR: Obviously since we're interviewing you for an oral history project we think that your being in one of the first classes of women was historically significant. What do you think about this?

SB: I think it was too. I... in my, in my work I encourage kids to use primary sources for research and for papers. And when I first got the letter I mentioned it to my officemate, and he said, "What do you mean you're not gonna do it? You're a primary source! You have to do it." And I thought, "You know what, he's right." So yeah, I guess it was. I never... I don't know, maybe we think the things that happen to us aren't that significant, but yeah I guess, you know, I guess it was. And that was one of the reasons why my family was so excited that I, that I come to Lafayette. You know, you're going to be part of history, and I guess I am.

AR: What would you say your best experience here was?

SB: Definitely the friends that I made. Without a doubt the friends that I made. And I'm proud to have followed in my dad's footsteps. You know, that's neat that he went here, and I went here. I would have encouraged my son to apply here except what he wants to do Lafayette doesn't offer so it was never, never a possibility.

AR: Would you do anything differently if you could do it all over?

SB: Oh my God, I would study harder, definitely. I would definitely study harder. And I would also go to more of the cultural things that maybe I wasn't interested in. You know, there were people who came and spoke here that I, lectures that I didn't go to, concerts of music that I wasn't interested in. I would do all that now. I would do a lot more of that. I definitely would study harder. (*Laughter*)

AR: I don't know how much you know about what's going on at Lafayette now, but since you live in the Easton area, is there any advice that you would give to the school? What they could do in relationships with Easton or just for themselves?

SB: Well like I said I have a number of my students that I've taught have come here over the years, and so I, my impression is that they do a lot of things better now than they did

back then. I know Pam Brewer³² rather well. She's the... she's the Director of Student Activities. And so I know that there's tons of stuff going on. And she works really hard to get... especially the freshman, you know, acclimated to college life. There was, there wasn't anything, like orientation was nothing when I came here. Maybe they did do an orientation for freshmen, but I wasn't a part of it cuz I was a transfer student. So I do think that a lot of things are done better now.

AR: What kind of advice, advice do you give to your students as they go off to college or as they're beginning their lives?

SB: I tell them to apply to the college that they really want to go to no matter what the college costs. Don't think that, you know, don't let how much a school costs stand in your way of applying there if that's where you really want to go cuz you never know what kind of package you might get. And I tell them to, I do try to tell them like go to everything. Do everything, you know. Take advantage of all the stuff that colleges, the cultural stuff that colleges offer. You know, have fun. But the better you do academically, the better your grades are the more options are gonna be open to you after college. I tell 'em that in high school, too. The better your grades are in high school the more options you're gonna have for colleges. The better you do in college the more options you're gonna have for a job, for graduate school, or whatever. So I try to encourage them to, you know, always do your best because you never know what you're gonna want to do later, and you don't wanna shoot yourself in the foot by, you know... I have a former student who just graduated from college who applied to all these law

³² Pamela Brewer, Associate Dean of Students.

schools. Well he didn't decide he wanted to go to law school until second semester sophomore year and his first year and a half were dismal. Well, you know, he didn't get into the school he really wanted to go to for that reason. So, you know, just keep your options open. You never know what+ you might want to do. I never thought I'd want to go to grad school. So you never know.

AR: Is there anything that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to mention?

SB: Not that I can't think of.

AR: Okay.

SB: Pretty comprehensive set of questions I think.

AR: Okay. Well then thank you very much for participating.

SB: You're welcome. Thanks for asking.