

Interviewee: Catherine Woodbrooks
Interviewer: Molly Pietrantonio
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Abstract: Catherine Woodbrooks was born in Rumford, Maine on October 27th 1954, and moved to Worcester, Massachusetts in 2002 when receiving the position of Vice President of Student Affairs at Assumption College that she presently holds. She received her Bachelor's degree in speech pathology and elementary education from the University of Maine Farmington, her Master's degree from the University of Maine in Orono, and then went on to receive her doctorate in higher education from Ohio State University. Catherine married Mark Brooks while living in New London, Connecticut where she worked as the Dean of Students at Connecticut College. As the Vice President of Student Affairs at Assumption College, Catherine oversees co-curricular life at the college. She enjoys working in the college setting as well as inspiring students to achieve their goals. In the interview, Catherine discusses her struggle with losing both of her parents at a young age and her drive for continued higher education. Catherine elaborates on her Catholic upbringing and her new found faith that came in her later years. Catherine spends her time outside of Assumption College riding her horse Romeo, volunteering through her church, and supporting the Christian Rock radio station 90.1 Catherine also offers insight on downtown Worcester and the improvements she would like to see made.

Molly Pietrantonio: We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester woman aiming to collect stories of about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850's National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of woman's education, health, work, and politics/community involvement. We want to focus today's experiences with, we're going to be talking about your work and your education, and thank you for helping us with this project!

Catherine Woodbrooks: Your welcome.

Christine Marotto: Thank you.

MP: Okay, so what is your full maiden name and if applicable, your married name?

CW: Okay, my maiden name, well family name, I call it, Catherine Wood, and my married name is Catherine Woodbrooks.

MP: That's...

CW: Yea, I, I, Mark's name is Brooks, so I kind of just smashed them both together to make one long name.

MP: That's really cool.

CM: Yea it is cool.

CW: Yea it works, his name wasn't you know, "Improwsky," so, [laughs] it works with Wood, you know it's two syllables, it works.

MP: Your husband is Mr. Brooks and you're Woodbrooks.

CW: Yup, yea.

MP: I love it, you don't have a hyphen or anything.

CW: Yea, when women hyphenate their names or when they, they go by both names, people generally will knock off one of them, usually their family name, or what I tend to think.

[Everyone laughs]

MP: I really like that, I've never heard of that before. Where were you born?

CB: Rumford, Maine

MP: Rumford. What is that near?

CB: It's a very small town near -- in western Maine near Bethel north of the border, epicenter of Maine, little mill town.

MP: Tiny, tiny...

CB: Well I actually was raised; the hospital was in Rumford the town itself is Mexico, Maine.

MP: Mexico, Maine.

CB: Yea the population is about 1200, 1500.

MP: So you are married, how long have you been married?

CB: 23 years.

MP: Wow. Children? Grandchildren?

CB: No children.

MP: Romeo [her horse]

[everyone laughs]

MP: What culture/ ethnicities do you classify yourself with?

CB: Well I'm Caucasian, but my real cultural identity is Canadian. My grandparents were from, my grandparents and parents were born and raised in Prince Edward Island Canada and of Irish descent, so when the potato farms ceased to exist in Prince Edward Island Canada a lot of the Prince Edward Islanders came down to Maine to find employment so all the people came down from Prince Edward Island and hung out in the area and the little mill town of Mexico [Maine] so...

MP: You said that your parents were from Canada, did they grow up there as well, live their whole life there?

CB: My father yeah they had a working farm, a big potato farm but you know the transportation was horse and buggy and horses and no electricity and my grandparents on both sides were working on Prince Edward island. My mother when she was a little girl they moved to Mexico Maine, so she was born in the town, but all the people who they like I said they hung in that whole area so all the people from Prince Edward Island had this kinda hang out and a lot of the islanders married islanders yeah.

MP: Interesting, so did you, you never grew up in Prince Edward Island, you lived in Mexico [Maine]?

CB: No, yup yup

MP: Interesting, so did you, you never grew up in Prince Edward Island, you lived in Mexico [Maine]?

CB: No longer -- we sold the old farm, my aunt died my last living relative in Mexico [Maine], died about 13 years ago so we sold the farm.

MP: Yeah.

CB: We will go back...

MP: It's probably really pretty.

CB: Oh yeah its gorgeous.

MP: So you lived in Mexico [Maine], anywhere else?

CB: When I was 18 of course I went to college and my sister, my two sisters still lived in that area near Rumford, Maine so that is still kinda a home base, you know we gather there a lot, and we gather all of us a lot but when I left college I went on to, I went to college in Maine, and went on to some different places, and never went back.

MP: From Maine where did you go to college?

CB: I went to, I got an undergraduate degree in speech pathology and elementary education from the University of Maine Farmington, got a masters degree at the University of Maine in Orono, I took a year off in between and traveled, backpacked around Europe with friends while I was deciding what I wanted to do, and then got a doctorate in higher education at the Ohio State University.

MP: Maine to Ohio.

CB: Maine, Ohio, and then I was the dean of students at Connecticut College so I lived in New London, Connecticut for 11 years and now I'm here at Assumption.

MP: So, so this is your Worcester [Massachusetts] connection, how did you find yourself in Worcester?

CB: Well actually it was Assumption [College] that was the attraction .

MP: Really?

CB: Yeah because being the dean of students at Connecticut [College] for 11 years, and my husband also worked at Connecticut College and then this opportunity came open.

MP: After your graduation you said you went backpacking, what made you want to go backpacking?

CB: Oh, well when I graduated from high school my uncle who was really my father figure, who was a Catholic priest and he gave me a present of cash, it wasn't a lot then, but I also had a part time job, and it was to go to Europe and he really wanted me to go with my sister, and so he wanted me to go to Europe and I am the youngest of four girls, and he really wanted my sister, she's a few years older than me to do this before graduating, my older sister she had been several times. And when I graduated from college he said you know would you like to do that again, and I said sure I would really love to do that again. So I worked waitressing and bartending while in college and then I worked for a more extensive time during the summer and part of the fall and when I graduated college I had enough money so I could backpack for a more several months. I really did because I saw it as an extended education, and it was, I learned a whole lot more about the sweetheart roles, dreams, I also didn't know what I for sure wanted to do after I got out of school.

MP: What made you want to stick to the education field?

CB: Yeah well you're right they don't have an undergraduate major in student affairs, or higher education, so I was one of those Resident Assistant's [RA] I loved my RA job, I loved my student government work, I loved working in a college campus, and I thought this could be a really vibrant place to be, at a college. So my experience, and I grew up with education being

very intense and very important and my parents did not graduate from college or high school but all of lives they also said that we need to go college, had a real respect for it, and working class they saved money, had saving bonds, made sure we had a good jump start on our education. So education wasn't foreign, my other two sisters, one was a French major at Georgetown [University] and the other one to St. And my other sister is a writer. Education was not foreign. Anyway student affairs, fell in love with it, I thought I really wanted to do it, so my older sister said really, before you do that take a year off, and go think about it.

[Laughter]

MP: So going all of these different places, Maine, Ohio, what was kinda the challenges, and the hard staples of dealing with your college career, you were in school for a long time.

CB: Well, I did it in pieces, I took that year off between my undergraduate and my master's degree, and then I worked for eight years before I got my doctorate. But when it was time to go back to get my doctorate I loved being a student again; it was a whole lot of fun. But one has to be prepared for that. Mark [Brooks] and I were married a year before I started my doctoral program and you know needed to make sure we were all set because we were moving to Ohio. I had an internship where my tuition was paid and I got a small stipend but Mark [Brooks] needed to find a job, find an apartment, and we had to manage our budget really well. But it was really wonderful; I had a very blessed life, every piece of it, very, very fortunate. It was hard being a doctoral student your writing and writing, and it's a very intense program. It's four years, and uh you know for four years I worked very, very hard, made a lot of friends, learned a lot.

MP: That's awesome. So you mentioned your brothers and sisters can you talk more about them because you're the youngest?

CB: I am the youngest, and my brother who is the oldest is 20 years older. My mother and father had what they called two families, so my brother is 20 years older, and sister, Ann [Woods] is a very important part of my life is 14 years older, and then I have a mentally challenged sister who is five years older. All four the girls are very close, really close, we lost our mother when I was 20, and my father when I was eight so we were very close.

MP: So you have quite the support system...

CB: Very, very, when that happens to people your family can go one way or another. And you know... we were very strong, with strong values about family and caring, and in the household by the time I was born my father, my father, my brother, was a therapist and my father died when I was eight it was hard on the girls we needed to be very, very strong.

MP: If you don't want to divulge that's okay, but how did your parents pass away?

CB: Sure I don't mind sharing that. My father died very suddenly, he was 57, and dropped dead of a heart attack with no warning at all on his way to work. My mother, had a long illness. She, when I was in high school, she had a stroke and a heart attack that she had operated on and they found cancer, cleared that up. The stroke left her paralyzed, half of her paralyzed. So my senior

year of high school I was taking care of, we would have a nurse during the day, and then my mentally challenged sister and I would take care of my mother and she couldn't be alone we had to get her up out of bed, cook and manage a budget, so by that point one of my sisters was in Georgetown [University] and my oldest was in Connecticut, and it was very important that, but then when I went to college my oldest sister returned home to take care of my mother, so that I could go to college.

MP: That is a lot of responsibilities for an 18 year old at the time how did you handle that? It must have been intense?

CB: Well...

MP: The cooking and cleaning, and taking on the motherly role...

CB: Well you do what you have to, and when I was 17, I was living with my mentally challenged sister alone, because my mother was in -- at that time when people were sick no matter how young they were if they needed rehabilitation, they went to a nursing home with all of these old people. And she was there seven months, she was in a nursing home and in therapy which wasn't really therapy, so it was my sister Betty [Woods] and I together and then when my mother came home. But I'll tell you there was never, there was never a question how did you handle this, because there was nothing I wouldn't do for my family, and you know, and I loved my family, it was a great honor to do that.

MP: Are you fortunate to still be around your family, are they close to the Worcester area, where are they, they now?

CB: There are still in Maine.

MP: All still in Maine.

CB: Yup we talk to each other a lot and see each other a lot. And there isn't a month that goes by where I don't see them, either there down here or were up there. My husband and I have place in Maine up, way up north near the border of Canada. So we see them then.

CM: What kind of challenges do you think women are facing in Worcester?

CB: In Worcester?

MP: Yea in Worcester.

CB: I don't know if Worcester would have any different kind of problems than other towns in general. Worcester is a very contemporary city. It has great opportunities and I think that we live in a gendered world, and a gendered country but I don't know if I would consider Worcester to be any different.

MP: What about here on campus, because you do have a very pertinent role in our community our college community and has there been troubles with being a women and being in this position dealing with other people of authority when it comes to what you do on our everyday work life?

CB: Well I think gender and race are two things that enter into every conversation. Whether it be covert or overt or you know recognized or sub conscious. So you know if you look at the cabinet, I'm the only women on the cabinet. We have never had a women president at Assumption, there was one other female cabinet member for one year, I was the first female cabinet member...but yea you know I'm not 22, so I'm pre seasoned, in my work so that really helps, what helped tremendously is having a president who is extremely respectful and I never feel that there has been a gender issue at all. Which is a wonderful so that makes a very big difference and I work in a division with people ...and get a lot collaboration from them...

MP: Sorry if I'm repeating anything, how long have you been in Worcester?

CB: Eight years.

MP: Okay, now that you have gotten to Worcester, better then we have what kind of things do you like dislike, things enjoy about Worcester, any changes that you would want to make to Worcester?

CB: Well, Worcester, you know when your, you've mention that I moved around a lot, and I don't know if this is just Worcester or not, but when you come to an area and you find there are lot of people that have a lot of history in Worcester, your going to be an outsider no matter what. Worcester politics, I am engaged politically, I vote in every election, but I'm not in the inner circle, and there are people that are born and raised in Worcester and they know everybody, and they are very connected and it's just not going to happen to someone who has just come here. And I think about it if I had stayed in my small town, like everyone does, it's a great place to live you know people build a reputation and network and I would have it I was still there more.... so there's always gonna be. For me and the work that I have in higher education where I happen to be...I really feel that I was supposed to be there and because it's the job that I have, and there are so many hours involved and time in the job and my life and Mark's [Brooks] life, are really involved around the college and volunteering, a lot of time, so I'm not as connected to Worcester ans most, and what I would like to change I would like it to be more of a college town, more of a vibrant downtown for college students. It always comes back to my connection with my work.

MP: Coming from you know a small town, and then to Ohio State, and that is big, small town to big city, how was that transition for you?

CB: Oh it was lovely, I mean I was married and young and we have always been people who have liked change, there are people who like staying put and that's it and that's where they're gonna live forever, but we have always enjoyed those types of change. It was fun getting to know really any place, local fun.

MP: What does your husband do?

CB: He has a degree in electrical engineering, he was an electrical engineer for a while for a tele (?) company in Columbus, Ohio and then kind of moved into higher education into, services so he could be the manager of desktop for ...[tape cuts out at the end of the sentence].

MP: So, you talked about, you know, how this work really means a lot to be working with the students. Is there any more of that, that you want to touch upon, I know, if you can go into really what you do for the Assumption community. Sometimes when people say Student Affairs, what does that mean?

CB: Okay. Well, I guess in a nutshell my job responsibility is overseeing co-curricular life, or life outside the classroom. Along with that is the partnership with the academic experience, so an institution like Assumption [College], students should feel that experience of both academic and co-curricular life, and that partnership, and that happens through an infrastructure in place, and that infrastructure is that you have a Vice President for Student Affairs... There are all these people who report up for Student Affairs and we work very much with them. We meet regularly, and they do wonderful event planning and leadership training programs and to just make sure we are all communicating and that there are students who are rising to the top in leadership and help mold them and help guide their work. And then there are students who need a little bit of help. And the question is - and the whole question grew out of conversation that I had with students about five years ago, saying "I have a friend, and we want to start a club," and you kind of build that and build on mere strength and then you have this vibrant community and it's all very exciting.

MP: So outside of the Assumption community and you go back to your house, do you and your husband share the roles of up keeping your home, that kind of thing, when it comes - your busy, I'm sure he's really busy, how do you kind of make that work?

CB: That's a good question. Let me just say that in any household, where you add children, there is a different dynamic. So, people say, "Oh you know my husband..." And I'll say, you know, my husband is really great about doing his share and then some, and we don't have children. But when children are involved, I don't care what anybody says, the mother is doing a lot more than the males because it happens that way, so I have it easy in that way, where I have a great husband and we both work, and he is not a, he shouldn't be afraid to pitch in, or more than pitch in, because we always share. But for us, there are things that I like that he doesn't and vice versa. I really like to cook, so I like doing a lot of the cooking, for the week so I'll do a lot of the cooking on Sunday and that will kind of do it for the week. I am a person who has never had a cleaning lady. That's not where I want to spend my money. I like cleaning and I carve that out, that time to do it, and so does Mark, so we kind of figure out when, we like having a clean house so plan how that works out. But, he is the guy who does the outside work. I'm not, I don't like that stuff. I like having my flowers planted and then I can look at them, but I am not somebody who likes to toil away in the garden. I don't like mowing the lawn, so that stuff, and shoveling the snow, and he's out doing that and it's like, well I think, okay he's doing all that, I'm going to kind of pick up the slack. I can honestly say we've never had a conversation about all the work about you know, you're not pulling your weight here.

MP and CM: Yea.

MP: So what kind of hobbies do you have? We questioned your involvement here on campus, but outside of Assumption [College], how, other than your...

CB: Well, you know, I think balance is really important, especially in work like this, where you're spending a lot, like 60 hours is not unusual to be on campus for the week. So, in the church, and I have my horse that I board outside, so every Sunday afternoon I am there at the farm with a total different group of friends who are not at all associated with the college. And I do have a lot of friends at the college, but it's really nice to know people of all different walks of life. So, I spend time at the barn. I just got off the board of a local radio station, a Christian music station. So, I spend a lot of time with that and building that. I just stepped down from that because I put in six years with the board, and I felt it was time to move on. After I get this boot thing off my leg, my plan is to get trained and engage in local hospice services.

CM: Hmmm.

CB: I think it's really important.

MP: I felt that is a lot, if you want to go into hospice. What would that entail?

CB: I can feel lately, that I've been called to do it. I was involved with spending time with families who were spending their last times with their loved ones, and taking the time with the person who is dying. And what they are really looking for, people who...well they say they are looking for people who are caring and compassionate, and I think I can offer that. And I shared a little bit with you about my mother...but she died at home, and we were able to keep her at home right until the very end. And my uncle who I talked about, my beloved uncle, had to go into hospice, as a priest, for the last month, but, you know I feel that I've learned a lot from this experience and I've lived a very blessed life and it's a great opportunity to be able to give back.

MP: Its good you have that experience.

CM: You have the experience too.

MP: You've been talking about your faith and your religion, is that really a major impact in your life and the role of it?

CB: My faith is, and it's an essential in my life. I was raised a Catholic, but at 28... and I always felt a relationship with God, and always felt, you know the hand of God was in my life, and I had a very good Catholic upbringing, but it became what I would say, a born-again experience in my late twenties. My faith as a Christian and knowing I'm a child of God is essential in my life.

MP: What was that experience if you don't mind elaborating?

CM: Yea.

CB: You know, a lot of people talk about an experience, you know, where there's a physical transformation and they feel like they're born-again, and it wasn't with me. For me it was really a journey, that I was looking for more of a personal relationship. I found that through fellowship with all the young Christians and through finding a worship service that really felt like a real connection to me, and to me it was really important to find a church that we can be associated around. For many years we've been non-denominational, Christ-centered, in the church we practice at, as Christians, the church we go to Liberty Church in Shrewsbury [Massachusetts]. But for me it's important to be in a church that doesn't direct people and doesn't say anything assigned, I'm not talking about a church and I'm not criticizing that, but that church, you know, any way you want to worship is fine, and that's great. But for me it had to be Christ-centered church, but it's like where people were not put down and people weren't judged.

MP: How did you come about finding that church? What made you drawn to the one here in Shrewsbury?

CB: Oh, we did a lot of church shopping.

[everyone laughs]

CB: We knew when we were very active in a church in New London [Connecticut], and you know that's not very far from Worcester, so we talked to our pastor about different opportunities. I really would have loved the church to be in Worcester, because where I live I like to be as close as possible. But I just couldn't find a welcoming one, and couldn't find a church that we really felt that that was the place we belonged, and it was really important. We were going to a church in Fitchburg [Massachusetts] for many years, and we loved that church, but it was long haul and a disconnect, and the community service work doesn't overlap as much when your 40 minutes away.

CM: What kind of community service work do you do?

CB: For us, there have been church projects, like if there is a building project here in Worcester. I volunteered helping with the Habitat projects...for Humanity. We've done... after we were in New London [Connecticut] during the September 11th attack, so we went in a bus load to New York [New York] to help out. We were in Fitchburg [Massachusetts] and now we are in Shrewsbury [Massachusetts], there have been communities who have down outreach work through our church in our community, and then I helped at the radio station. It was really quite meaningful, but again, now that I'm stepping down from that, I'm looking forward to Hospice volunteering.

MP: Can you elaborate on your radio station?

CB: Sure! My first year here - I like Christian, contemporary music, so I was trying to find one, and I found an a.m. station, and I called this guy, saying, "Oh, I'm so proud there's a station around here," and he said, "Great," and we started chatting. Three weeks later he called me and

said, "I think I remember having a conversation with you, and we have this great concert and was wondering if Assumption College was interested?" They were really great. I said, "Well we'll see." Long story short, we had this great concert here at school. So at that time it was a small, it was in Worcester at the time, small, little a.m. station, and he asked if I would consider being on the board, and I said, "Yea." Then we got an f.m. frequency, which is very difficult to get and it was a real blessing because it is so hard to get an f.m. frequency. And the base now is in Charlton [Massachusetts]. So its 90.1 on your f.m. radio dial, and you know, we do a lot of fundraisers and phone-a-thons, and concerts. And they are doing really, really well!

CM: That's really nice!

MP: Being on the board of that, is that kind of what you were in charge of? Like the fundraising...? What does that entail being on the board?

CB: The board was really... the director reported to the board. So we had board meetings. They had board meetings about every couple weeks to make sure to manage the fiscal issues and anything like that, and make sure everything was working according to what the FCC ... and I learned a whole lot about the FCC and the frequency, and the rules, and the air and things like that. And we didn't do the - I did some of the volunteering for the fundraising, but there were a lot... the whole station was filled except for one and a half people, was run by all volunteers. We just kind of oversee that, much like the Board of Trustees at a college kind of oversees the overall operations, but on a much smaller scale. There were only six people on the board.

MP: I had no idea you did radio! That's cool!

CB: Well, I learned quickly!

[everyone laughs]

MP: It's the weekend, what do you like to do in Worcester?

CB: Oh, in Worcester?

MP: If you want to go out, where would you go out to dinner, or watch a movie?

CB: Friday night... if we get a Friday night and we are actually free together and it's not something with the college, we like to do a movie, at one of the movies. One of our favorite spots is (___?) seafood. We'll go to a movie in Worcester after. Ciao Bella, we like Ciao Bella, or Tortilla Sams.

CM: I just heard about them!

CB: Yea, they're a great restaurant! If it's something fancy, it'll be something like the Sole Proprietor.

MP: In your being here at Assumption [College], is there ways that you can help Assumption [College] tie in Worcester more? What kind of steps can be taken as the students, and people here, to help bring the college and Worcester together?

CB: Well, we do a lot of work with that. One thing I didn't say, too, is that the art museum, there is just beautiful things there, and the armory, great things to do. I served as the chairperson of all the (student affairs?) of all the different colleges for two years, and I'm still on that board, and we all do a lot of work for the Consortium. So, we do a lot of work in trying to make sure we are connecting Worcester to the colleges to work with each other. Mark Bilotta, a CEO of the Worcester Consortium, who used to work at Assumption, my good friend, he's got a great business, so our fantasy would be to have a real vibrant, visible presence with students downtown. I would love to see something there where students - where Worcester would be a destination place for students. One of the things we did was the Woo bus, but you know that, but that is relatively new. I think this is the fourth year with the Woo bus. And the idea was to get students on the Woo bus, they're going to the different plazas downtown and going to see other people from other colleges and universities. I worked to get in the job description of all of our directors at student activities some component that says that they will be connected to the Consortium, with each other, and that they are making that connection with other students. I really believe that students - you are here for four years, but I believe that you should be registered voters in Worcester. You are living in Worcester for four years, and I know that many of you go home every other weekend or so, but I really think that you should know who's running in Worcester, and the school board, and for the mayor, and so you'll see voter registration going on while you're here at college, and I think it's a great time in your life. That is the message we try to get across to the community of students. Students, not many, but some, go on and decide they want to build a life in Worcester, and you're living in a new town for four years. That's the message.

MP: Did you have a hand in the Shrewsbury Shuffle? Is that part Consortium...?

CB: That is Consortium. Yea, the Consortium, that was new when Mark took over the Consortium about five years ago. Yea, he coordinated the Shrewsbury Shuffle, and it's a great way to integrate people.

CM: It's very nice, and a lot of fun.

MP: Yup.

MP: So sort of as an ending question, what would you like Worcester to become - you said you wanted it to become a metropolitan area, is there anything else you want to see?

CB: I would like to see, I don't know about a metropolitan area, but I would like to see it become more, like Mark [Bilotta] said, but definitely making a place for colleges, and college students. I think that students who live up on the upper west side and Assumption, it's a lovely area of Worcester, but I would love them to get downtown more. I would like to see students support the local establishments and they get to know the whole area of Massachusetts. Not only going to Boston, but when you think about the whole town, like the art museum, and the

botanical gardens, you know it's not too far away -the armory, and all the great establishments and all the great restaurants.

MP: One other good question. What do you have to say to women who are in Worcester, or the girls that come in, that come talk to you at Assumption [College]. What can you say to them, what advice do you have for them, to enhance themselves as students and as teachers, women of America, women of Worcester?

CB: Well, I think one thing that I think, one mistake we make as women, I think that it was done with the best intentions when I was growing up. My mother would say things like, "You can do whatever you want to be," or she'll say, "You can do anything." I think with women, because we don't have a long history of doors being open, that you have to be very specific. So when I work with students I try to focus on the gifts that they have, and say, "I have really noticed that you are really good in this particular way. You are really good at organizing. You are really good at making sure all your ducks are in a row. And here you are as a sophomore on the Equestrian team, and a class officer or a senator position, and doing really well, and think about how that can translate to life." Once you get to know that person a little more, rather than, in gender studies we talk about the null environment. The null environment is where you don't do anything. You know, you really need to build - I really feel that as a woman, to really build women up really specifically, you need the courage in order to work.

CM: One fun question -You have a lot of books. Do you like to read? What's your favorite author?

CB: Oh! What a really good question! I love to read. I read a lot in my field with higher education. I'm really interested in life of African American women in higher education. One of my favorite authors is bell hooks. I've been reading, and I like that a whole lot, about a black woman who talks about the difference between a feminist and a black woman who is feminist. Saying that a black woman could be feminist because the white woman is... So I really like bell's books a lot. But I thought, I guess I have to say my favorite author is Monica Wood, who is my sister, and a novelist. I always like to read her books. I like reading a good mystery too.

MP: Is there anything you want to say to wrap up the interview?

CB: It was fun! I'm glad you guys got to interview me! Thanks!

CM: Thank you for letting us interview you!

CB: Your welcome. Your welcome.

MP: Once again, thank you so much, and have a good day!

CB: Alright. Thank you!