

Interviewee: Laurie D'Amico
Interviewer: Kelly Lund and Laura Sevilla
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Transcriber: Kelly Lund and Laura Sevilla



Overseen by: Profs. Carl Robert Keyes and Carrie Nixon , Assumption College

Abstract:

As a contribution to the Worcester Women's Oral History Project, we interviewed Laurie D'Amico who was born in 1955 in Rhode Island. Major aspects of Laurie's identity were religious views, careers, college experiences, social changes, and major historical events. Laurie addresses religion during her college years where she attended church regularly. Currently she views herself as a believer, rather than a churchgoer. Since college, her career has shifted from being a middle-school teacher to the Director of Literacy Volunteers for Greater Worcester at the Worcester Public Library. Between her two careers, Laurie not only educates children but also adults. During her college experience, being a part of the first co-ed class of Assumption College, she faced little sexism among her classmates, however, her teachers often discriminated against women during class. She also faced conflicting social views because of the generation gap between Laurie and her parents. She was often viewed as rebellious. Her "rebellious" activities intertwined with the Peace Movement, which Laurie was caught up in. This movement included events such as protests against the Vietnam War. All of these experiences led us to conclude that identity is made from experience and hardships that someone, like Laurie, overcame.

Quote: "I remember in my first English class at Assumption, I had a teacher that was very liberal, and probably a non-conformist, and he wore sandals to class. I thought that was outrageous, and he smoked cigarettes all through the class. One of the first things he said, and I remember this so clearly, and I was so shocked, he said, 'In order to grow up, you have to figuratively kill your parents,' and I was...a freshman. I had never been in any situation quite like that..."

[Before beginning the Interview we asked for her permission to record and she consented.]

LS: So, today is March 13, 2013

LD: Mhm.

KL: We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories 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 area of women's education, health, work, politics, and community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with Assumption College. Thank you for your help with this important project.

LD: Ok, my name is Laurie Theresa Sofia D'Amico Tigan.

LS: Two middle names?

LD: Two middle names.

LS: And, are you married?

LD: I am married. My husband's name is Mike Tigan. He is a professor at Clark University.

LS: When did you get married?

LD: We were married on Valentine's Day in 2001.

LS: Any children?

LD: I have two-step children. I have a daughter who is twenty-seven, she lives in San Francisco, and she is a Graphic Artist, and a son who works at UC [University of California] Davis in the police department, and he is thirty-one.

LS: So, in your life right now, what would you consider your ethnicities, and, cultures?

LD: My background goes all the way back to Julius Cesar. According to my father, both parents are first-born Italians in the United States. Both of their parents came in very young ages to America: at 16, and 15. And knew no one, and established themselves in neighborhoods in Boston where there were a lot of other Italians, and they started learning English, and from that they were able, then, to start to find jobs.

LS: And, What can you tell us about your parents and the way you grew up?

LD: Well, I would have to say that my parents were very conservative, and not strict Catholic, but they believed in the Ten Commandments, and made sure that we follow them, and brought us to church every single Sunday, and had very high expectations for education.

LS: Are you still Catholic?

LD: I am.

LS: Okay.

LD: Not a church going Catholic.

KL: Where have you lived during your life? Just in Worcester?

LD: I lived in Barrington, Rhode Island for most of my life; then I came to Assumption in 1973. I was in the first co-ed class and it was wonderful because there were more men than we can possibly imagine, and very few women, and I understand it's completely the other way around now, a lot more women than men. I loved living in Worcester. We spent some time in Lietrum's Pub, but after college, I went back to Rhode Island, and I moved to Newport, Rhode Island, and married an Assumption graduate, and that marriage didn't take, and, let's see, I became a teacher. I taught for 32 years in middle school. And, found that very rewarding. I liked working with little raging hormones all day.

LS: And, so, you said you became a teacher. Did you study Education in Assumption?

LD: I did! My major was history and my minor was education. They didn't really have very many education courses because at time, my class was the first class with women, so they didn't really didn't offer those kinds of programs to the men. So, they kind of put together a program as my class evolved. They added more and more classes so we could do our student teaching in the city.

LS: Ok. And why Assumption?

LD: I really shouldn't say this, but I really wanted to go to Clark [University] and I didn't get in. So, my fallback was Assumption and in retrospect, I am so glad I went to Assumption. I loved it. It was such a warm, inviting, exciting place to be in the 70's and that was kind of the hippie generation, and, there were a lot of people on campus who were experimenting with being flower children and, it was really a wonderful time to go there.

KL: So, the fact that it was a Catholic school didn't have to do with your choice of going there?

LD: Actually, no because Clark was predominantly Jewish at the time and, but... that's a good question. Did it have any play? I don't think so. I think I would have gone to Assumption even if it wasn't Catholic.

LS: And, like you just said it was a time of most hippies and everybody experimenting with being flower children, did religion play a part in your life by that time?

LD: During the war, the Vietnam War, there were a lot of protests, on campus and one of the protests was to occupy the chapel; to make a statement, and it was a very difficult decision for me, because I saw the chapel as sacred, but I also was very, very, very much against the war in Vietnam. So, I made the decision to join the folks who were camping out in the chapel and I don't know that it really made a difference, obviously, a small chapel in Worcester, Mass. Is that really going to make a difference in the war in Vietnam? But, it was important to feel that we were showing our government that we didn't believe in what was happening, and that the war was wrong.

LS: Did you have any challenges in education? In your education?

LD: In the education classes, or in education in general?

LS: In general.

LD: Well, I remember in my very first English class at Assumption, I had a teacher that was very liberal, and probably a non-conformist, and he wore sandals to class. I thought that was outrageous, and he smoked cigarettes all through the class, and one of the first things he said, and I remember this so clearly, and I was so shocked, he said, "In order to grow up, you have to figuratively kill your parents," and I was, you know, a freshman. I had never been in any situation quite like that, and I was wondering, like, what the heck did he mean, and as the class progressed, I realized that he meant that you really just have to separate. You had to have your own ideas. You had to become independent to be an educated person; that you couldn't just reflect on your parent's ideas of what is right and what is wrong. You have to make those decisions for yourself, and decide what road you're going to take in life. So, yes, in the beginning I found being in college pretty different than being in high school, at the time. Things were, at the time when I was going to college, you know, in high school you weren't allowed to wear slacks to school, and wearing jeans to classes was, like, something unheard of, and the minute I got to campus, I got a pair of jeans, and I was so excited 'cause I could wear them, and there were small things that seemed very exciting and daring. That you know, today, one would say, "God, that's ridiculous," but we wore, you know, we were flower children and we would wear headbands with daisies in them and, tried to be part of the generation.

KL: Now, is that part of the dress code, or did you just, was that just the social atmosphere at the time?

LD: It was the social atmosphere. People were trying to break out and become more liberal, I guess.

LS: You said that you came from, a conservative family and got to college, where the parents are not there...

LD: [laughs] Really, it was very, very different. I had a very sheltered life. I had never dated, so, being on a campus, with all of these, you know, exciting gentlemen, was really, you know, very different than anything I had experienced before.

LS: Okay. Did you have any favorite classes or...?

LD: I loved only History classes and Political Science. I thought they were marvelous.

KL: And were they difficult?

LD: Yeah, I though Assumption was difficult. It was challenging. It certainly made me think outside the box, and I thought, other than my first English professor, I thought everyone was really pretty wonderful.

KL: Did you go into college knowing what you wanted to do, or did that come to you as you took classes?

LD: My parents knew what they wanted me to do, and that was to become a teacher, and I didn't really have a notion of what I wanted, but as I progressed, I realized I did want to become a teacher. I loved History and I wanted to teach History.

LS: And, if you had not want to be a teacher, or you realized that you did not want to become a teacher, would you have become one anyway?

LD: Probably, I would of gotten the education that prepared me to be a teacher, because I wasn't paying for college, my parents were, and I felt that out of respect for them, I needed to pretty much follow their- their- what's the word I want? Their requirements. That's isn't the right word I'm thinking of, but I felt I owed it to them to do that.

KL: Were you able to find a job right out of college? I mean, was it a difficult field to get into?

LD: It was, and my first job out of college was a cashier at K-mart, and while I was there, I was applying to different school systems, and for a while, it didn't look like I wasn't going to get a teaching job. So, I decided that I would take the training to become a manager at the K-mart, but thankfully, before that program started, I got a call from a small town in Rhode Island called Tiverton, and they wanted me to interview, and in the waiting room, there were so many other people, and I thought, oh I don't have a chance for this, but after the interview, they didn't call right away. So, I was really worried, but then, I think about two weeks later, they called and they offered me a job as a fourth grade teacher.

LS: And as a teacher, what grades, or ages did you teach in all the time that you worked as a teacher?

LD: I started out as a fourth grade teacher for three years, and then, I really wanted to teach middle school, because then you could specialize, and I could teach History. So, after three years, I applied for the position at the middle school, and I got it, and it was a wonderful position, and I stayed there for 30.

KL: Did you ever want to go back and get your Master's Degree?

LD: In Rhode Island, in order to stay in the teaching position at the time, you had to take several courses every year. I think it was two a year, and they could pretty much be in any field of education, and a lot of my peers did get a Master's, and I didn't, because I enjoyed the flexibility of picking and choosing, but in retrospect, I really should have gone for a Master's because it

would have increased my pay, and my pension, but I wasn't really thinking about that at the time, and I just wanted to take interesting subjects.

LS: After those 30 years teaching in middle school, did you become, like, right now, did you start working at the library right after or...?

LD: Well, my husband had been a grant writer for HUD, which is Housing Urban Development, for many, many years, and at age 50, he had this epiphany that he wanted to teach college, and we decided, as a couple, that if he was able to get a PhD, you know, stick with the program, because that is not something that you easily take on at age 50, that we would move wherever he got a job. So, low and behold, he finished his PhD program and he applied to several places, and his first choice was Clark, and they hired him for the Graduate School. Which meant we were going to move, and in the summer I applied to several jobs in Worcester, and the job as Director of Literacy Volunteers was my dream job because, you know, because it involved literacy, it involved working with immigrants, some refugees, and, I knew it would be a challenge to use all the skills that I didn't use as a teacher, like marketing, and promotion, and fundraising, and I thought this was the time of my life to try those things and they hired me, and I've been here seven years, and it's another loved job. It is just... it's wonderful. I really look forward to coming to work every day. You never know whose going to stop in the office.

LS: So, what does your job actually, like, imply?

LD: Well, initially, I thought, as Director of Literacy Volunteers, I would be writing curriculums, planning classes. It didn't turn out that way. The job is raising money for the foundation and managing the office and my staff. I have a very small staff of two, but I have a hundred and twenty five volunteers who work one on one with a special person that is matched to them, and I would say that the matching and the fun parts of the job, I really don't get to do. I get to do writing grants, a lot of grants. I write about 30 in a year; and keeping track of all of the proposals that we send out, keeping our funders aware of what we are doing, but I do like that now. I didn't, initially, I thought I was way over my head; way over my skill set, but as I settled into it, I learned as I went along, and now I like doing those things.

KL: Do you miss teaching at all?

LD: Well, I still teach here. I teach a Work Force Readiness Class to 10 immigrants, and they are from several different countries: Dominican Republic, Albania, the Ukraine-I'm trying to think-Mexico, Sumbawa, Ivory Coast, and China. So, it's a really diverse group.

KL: Do you teach a specific age group? Like, I know you said you used to be a middle school teacher, but who do you teach?

LD: We only teach adults in this program. So, they range from the ages 18 all the way up to 75.

[At 18 minutes and 20 seconds the interview was interrupted by a man]

KL: What has this work meant to you so far?

LD: So many things. I think it inspires me. When I see people, like the two people you saw, who came into the office from Saudi Arabia. He has limited English, and probably extremely qualified in his country, and is willing, he and his wife are willing to come here and start a whole new life, and maybe for religious freedom, maybe because they don't agree with the government, or... and then I see lots of people who have spent time in refugee camps, and you see how dedicated they are to, and how excited they are of learning because they haven't had that chance.

LS: And, what has teaching meant to you?

LD: Teaching is kind of the flip side. In that, you try to inspire. You don't really teach people, I don't believe. I think you inspire them to want to learn what you are providing.

KL: How have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, and roles in your life?

LD: Well, because I don't have children of my own and, for the longest time I didn't have to split myself in so many directions like my colleagues did. So, many of them went home and took care of babies and, you know, children of all ages had to go to soccer games and all that, and I really didn't. So, in some ways I was well suited for doing more than maybe my colleagues could do at school. I had a lot of after school programs and initiatives for the kids.

KL: What kind of after school programs?

LD: Well, probably my favorite one was called the Scary Read off Contest, and it was open to any, just for eighth graders, and the deal was that they had to write the scariest story you could think of, but it couldn't involve violence. So, that kind of eliminated a lot of things, and the costumes had to be in keeping with your story and it could be something you bought or rented. You had to make your costume, and it took probably from September till Halloween for them to pull it together, and then I hired, not hired, I recruited other teachers to be judges, and, we had so many kids that were so into it, and year after year we get more and more kids involve. It was really fun, and then in my own particular grade, I had a program called Presidents and First Ladies and each student had to pick a political figure that they wanted to, portray, and they also had to make a little costume and they had to memorize a very personal speech about themselves. You know, they didn't, they acted as if they were that person, and that was really fun, and, I incorporated a lot of other disciplines. The band learned to play Hail to the Chief. So, they were there. We had artist in the Art Department do all the scenery for the White House. It was really pretty elaborate. It was really fun.

LS: So, would you consider that a benefit of the path you have chosen for life?

LD: I'm not sure I really understand that question, but I would say that those were certainly highlights in my life, things that you know, that I look back on and I could say wow, those were really great.

LS: And did you have those moments that were lows?

LD: Oh, sure. There were times that, I would feel that five classes a day. How many more days can I do this until vacation? You know, it was very, very rare and that would be difficult, and I also had difficult times when you have a child who just can't adjust to a program, and that makes it really hard for the other kids and you end up spending a lot of time, trying to engage where they can be a real time sum, and you sort of can lose yourself in one particular kid, while the rest of the kids aren't getting all the attention they need, and that—I had a student that had Tourette's Syndrome, and that was really, incredibly difficult, and I didn't feel that he should have been mainstreamed, it wasn't fair to the other kids.

LS: As a teacher, do you, what kind of differences do you see in teaching when you were a teacher and today?

LD: Well, when I—since I taught for such a long time, I can say that I think that kids got smarter as I developed in my teaching, and it wasn't because of me. I think a lot of it had to do with technology. I think parents started—I think the role of parents changed. I think the 70's and 80's parents weren't as involved than 90's parents. You know the helicopter parents that really spent a lot of time with their kids and made sure they did their homework and helped them with projects and all of that really made a big difference.

KL: Do you think that has changed today on how now kids have iPhones in schools?

LD: See, I don't know, but I will say, I have a niece, two nieces, and, both of them spend an awful lot of time on their iPhones, and, you know, I ask them, "why don't you go to your friend's house?" "Why don't you do things?" And you know, they're really not interested, and I think that's sad.

KL: Is that a concern you have as a teacher?

LD: Well, I'm not in the classroom anymore, but yeah, it worries me you know that kids are now spending so much time with technology, too much time. There was a point when it was really wonderful, and now it has become obsessive.

LS: And you said that your husband worked or volunteered in the...

LD: He worked for HUD.

LS: Did you play a role in that in any time?

LD: No, I didn't. Our roles were pretty separate.

LS: Okay. So, did you ever do any volunteer or community service in any time?

LD: Well, frankly since both of my jobs were so intensive in giving back, I really felt that that's where I would give all my energy, and so no, I didn't pursue outside of my jobs.

KL: Did you have a lot of paperwork to grade, I mean as a teacher?

LD: Yes.

KL: Even in middle school?

LD: Yes. Lots, and you know, you can get really tired of correcting spelling papers but I really enjoyed essays and thought they were fun to correct.

LS: And how did you balance your family and social life with your career?

LD: I don't think my career interfered with my family life or my social life.

LS: Okay.

LD: Some of my best friends were teachers. So, we would do things together.

KL: Do you consider yourself active politically?

LD: I'm very interested in politics, but I don't think I consider myself politically active.

LS: Would you consider yourself politically active in college?

LD: More so. Yeah. I was willing to hold a sign, sleep in the chapel, but I wouldn't do either of those things now.

LS: Now, were there any health issues that impacted your life or those in your family?

LD: I think... Oh my gosh, I'm going to have to stop for a minute, these people look so lost, wait.

[At 27 minutes and 53 seconds the interview was interrupted again]

LD: I'm sorry. What was the question? Health issues? No, I can't say that. There are health issues now that are pretty serious, but as I was going through my career no.

KL: Are you responsible for any one's health besides your own?

LD: Right now? Well, I don't know that I'm technically responsible, but my sister is going through colon cancer and I feel very connected to her and I try to spend as much time with her and cook food for her so that she can eat, and my parents, my mother is 88, my father is 90, they are living at home and they have health care, but they still need a lot of attention. I don't see anyone as (living???) family, all of their relatives; their contemporaries have passed away, so I do feel very responsible for them.

LS: Now that you mention health care, was it different back then, when getting healthcare and what they provided?

LD: I have always been covered under Blue Cross Health care and I have never had anything rejected. So all of my health care has been taken care of.

LS: So, you would say the quality hasn't changed?

LD: No, I don't think it has.

KL: Do you live close enough to your parents where, if anything happened, you could get to them, or are they up in New Hampshire?

LD: They are an hour away, so that is sometimes difficult. If they need something right away, I usually call another family member and say: "Can you get to them?" But usually I try to see them once a week. I try and contact them before hand to see what they might need, need to bring or... but they're pretty—they have health care workers during the day.

LS: How was your experience as a first co-ed class at Assumption?

LD: It was wonderful, it really was. You know, guys then were a lot more polite, and mannered, and I think Assumption attracted the kind of men that were respectful. I mean, they—they chose a Catholic college, and it was very Catholic at that time. So, they were fun to be with, they were protective of us because we were the only girls on campus. They made sure to include us in a lot of things. I got to be coxswain on the crew team. I was statistician for the hockey team. I got to be a DJ on the radio station, I don't even know if they still have it, but the boy- the men were very welcoming and they were so excited to have women on campus.

LS: So, you wouldn't say there were- there was any type of discrimination or...

LD: No, just the opposite.

LS: Really?

LD: Yeah.

LS: And what about the teachers? Were they just as including?

LD: You know, that I'm not sure about. I think some of the Brothers were probably not comfortable having girls in their classes. I'm not sure they were as accepting.

LS: Do you ever consider yourself, or feel when you said something in class, that you were going to be judged because you were a woman?

LD: Oh yeah. Definitely. I'm not sure that we were discredited, but I think that they were surprised at our opinions of things.

KL: Do you feel a lot of girls were eager to go to the college since it had been an all-boys school before and they wanted to try this?

LD: I think so. We were all pretty excited about being there. They had built the dorms on the hill for us. They were brand new. Everything, well all the dorms that are there now, are so unbelievable to me. I mean the college is huge compared to when I was there. There were like six buildings, that was it, and La Maison was where our library was; and it was tiny, and the cafeteria was really small. The athletic department, I marvel at it now, it was just this little dinky gym. The college has become so huge compared to what it was when I went there. I could even get lost now. You couldn't possibly get lost when I went there.

KL: Now, you mention the athletics, were you ever involved in any sports or anything?

LD: There were very few available to us. They had bowling. They would take us to bowling alleys 'cause they hadn't really figured that out yet, and then as I progressed through, you know, freshmen, sophomore, they offered more.

LS: And how many-how many students, do you think, were in the class who were in the school?

LD: There were 100 women in my class, and I believe there were 600 men in the school when we got there. It was really pretty small. What's the enrollment now? Do you know?

LS: About 600 per class.

LD: Per class?

LS: Yes.

LD: So, about 2,400?

LS: Yes, plus graduates and-

LD: Right, so, it's a whole different school, really.

LS: And, where did you, on-in-in college, where did you hangout? What did you do?

LD: [laughter] That's a good one! There used to be a little coffee shop, snack shop, in the gym, downstairs, and it was called Zipps, and everybody used to go there, and then, if you were really daring, you would try and get into Leitrim's and my senior year, I figured I could do that, and I did get in, and it was fun.

LS: And Assumption, right now, offers so many activities for people to get involved and people to hang out. Was it the same back then?

LD: No, there was, there were very few activities.

KL: Could you start your own? I know today we can make a little group and start an ol- a new club. Could you do that back then?

LD: I bet you could, but we didn't. We kind of just—we didn't want to rock the boat. We accepted what the men allowed us to do in terms of what clubs do we – well they weren't really clubs. Yeah I guess they were clubs. What they- what they allowed us in those were the ones. You know it was a very different time, and we were careful about our place on campus, and I think we tried to fit in and make ourselves accepted. Even though we were accepted, but we wanted to be really part of the school.

LS: Was it still an athletic school?

LD: No – the basketball team, that's all they had, really, and they were amazing, in those days. I don't know how they are now but...

LS: And were you into going to basketball games?

LD: I did, I used to love to go to the basketball games. They were really fun and...

KL: Did you like to go anywhere in downtown Worcester, to ever get off campus?

LD: Very few of us had cars. I didn't have a car and occasionally we would actually walk downtown. I don't think too many people do that anymore, but, there really wasn't a whole lot downtown for us to go to.

LS: And now that you live in Worcester, how has the city changed? You used to walk downtown so...

LD: Well actually, I live in the neighborhood of Assumption now, and I wouldn't dream of walking downtown. I barely walk to that little pizza place, that-what is it? That Corner Grille, which I love but (_______???) I think Worcester has changed slightly, I don't think it's changed

that much. There was a Galleria Mall, that's gone, but now they're trying to you know, bring in the city square notion of having shops and condos and all of that downtown, but, I don't really see the physical side of Worcester that's changed; I think it has changed in my estimation of the population. We are an international city, and I don't think that was the case when I was in Worcester, as a student.

KL: Do you think that might be due to the colleges? I mean, Laura is from Puerto Rico, but a lot of students like to study abroad. Do you think that has anything to play in it?

LD: Well, I think, now that Worcester is a national resettlement site, people are brought to Worcester from all over the world by our government, so we have people from Albania to Zimbabwe. You know, every single country is represented in Worcester. We have 90 different languages here, so I think that that is developed over the years and I don't remember seeing, when I was in college, people from so many different nations, and so many different clothings, outfits, that you see now.

KL: Did you ever have the chance to study abroad while in college?

LD: No, I didn't. I would have liked that.

LS: Where would you have liked to go?

LD: Hmm. Probably Rome, I would have liked that.

LS: You told us that you-you got your first pair of jeans

LD: Mmhm

LS: The fashion, was it like you said, rebellious and completely out of norm?

LD: Well, I-I the first vacation, when I went home, I wore a pair of jeans which had a patch on the knee and an alpaca jacket that had, you know, like fringe hanging from it, and I walked in the door and my mother took one look at me and she said: "What on earth! What are you doing?!" and I said, "Well you know this is how kids dress in college," and so, she accepted that, except when I had come home for Christmas and there was a concert at a college near where I grew up, and I wanted to go, and I wanted to wear jeans, and I remember we had such a fight. She wanted me to wear a dress! She didn't understand you know that it's not like the philharmonic, you know, that I was going—I was going to a Jefferson Airplane concert, and oh God did we battle., and then finally, I just- I ended up wearing jeans.

KL: Now, you mention concerts, did music play any part in your life?

LD: Oh, in the 60's and 70's music was everything.

KL: Did you want to be in the band, or did you just like listening to it?

LD: Just listening. It was big; a big part of our lives.

LS: So, how did your parents, apart from your dressing, how did your parents react to your change in college as a person?

LD: They were excited to know what I was learning and very curious about courses and to know what I liked and what I was... What kind of projects I was working on.

KL: When you were home, when did you- where did you spend your time?

LD: When? When I was in college? Or when I-

KL: When you went home for the weekends. Not just in college. Did you have any favorite spots you liked to go to or...?

LD: Newport, Rhode Island was a big place that I spent a lot of time. I really like that a lot, I loved the beach, so that was really special.

LS: Did you do any extracurricular activities in college apart from-?

LD: Just the ones that I had already, you know, told you.

KL: Did you go through any difficult transitions moving from high school to college, or childhood to adulthood?

LD: I think everybody does. I think everybody goes through these little inner debates on, you know, you want to be grown up. When you go to college, you don't want to be a kid anymore. You are- you- you're starting adulthood and you want to be treated that way, and you want your thoughts to be valued, and I think I thought I was pretty sophisticated in college.

LS: Were there any major events in Worcester that occurred while you were here?

LD: Yes, the Rolling Stones came to a little bar here, in Worcester, to try out some new music. I didn't go, I didn't even know about it until afterwards, but that was totally exciting that they had been here.

LS: And you mention the war in Vietnam, and how you were protests and stuff like that politically apart from the war wer-were- how else were you involved?

LD: I don't think I was involved any other way.

LS: Okay.

LD: No, I do remember wanting to vote (meaning???) I could vote, and I try never to miss an election. So, I guess that would be my political statement, you know, I believe in democracy, and I believe you have to participate if you want a democracy.

LS: Right now, when I'm in college, I see different cultures from different places. Did you experience that?

LD: No, Assumption was 100% white. We had one African America, and he was on the basketball team. It was a very homogenized group.

KL: Did a lot of people go to the school because they were Catholic?

LD: I think it was very Catholic at the time, extremely.

KL: (Now we have???) all religions, it wasn't like that?

LD: No, it was mostly Catholic.

LS: And they would practice? They would go to church?

LD: Yes, I think the majority of the- of my classmates, would participate in church and religious holidays.

KL: Did the church like to hold a lot of events for all the students to participate in?

LD: No, I think it was just... I'm trying to think about that. I'd have to say I don't know. I don't remember any- any specific...

KL: Okay

LD: But, I think they encouraged Catholic enrollment. I think you had to be Catholic to get in at the time.

KL: Did all your friends go to Catholic colleges too, the ones from high School?

LD: No. No. Very few that I knew of. I had grown up in a very, I don't want to say affluent because we weren't necessarily affluent, but very upper middle class, very educated town. Most of my classmates went to Ivy League schools and this was a public high school.

LS: How do you feel about the choices you made in your life?

LD: That's a very hard question. I don't know that I'm really prepared- prepared for that. I don't know that I can really answer that honestly.

LS: Do you have any regrets?

LD: Maybe my biggest regret was that I stayed in Rhode Island after college for so long. You know, for 32 years. I think I would have liked to live in other places, a big city. I would have loved to live in either Pittsburgh or Pennsylvania. Not necessarily New York, maybe San Francisco.

KL: Now, you say you like a city, what about a city do you like? I mean, the amount of people, or the way its set up?

LD: I like the opportunities. There are so many things, and you mention before the colleges, I could go to a different lecture every night if I wanted to, and I loved to listen to other people you know talk about subjects, movies, you know, every college has you know a little film festival there's just so much to do, and restaurants, have you ever been to a city that had more restaurants, and every ethnic kind of restaurant you would want?

KL: Did you go out to eat a lot?

LD: As a student, no, but now I do. I love to go out to eat. Anytime I don't have to cook, I'm happy.

LS: What was your favorite musical group, or song?

LD: Oh, in college it was the Jefferson Airplane. Oh, I loved it. "Do You Want Somebody to Love" was my favorite song.

LS: And what about a favorite dance?

LD: Favorite dance? Oh gosh, I don't know that it was called anything.

LS: Yeah, I understand.

LD: You just kind of moved to the music, kind of like free spirit baby. That kind of thing.

LS: What memories do you have of significant historical events that took place when you were growing up?

LD: Oh my gosh, the Cuban Missile Crisis was definitely a biggie. I remember getting up in the morning, my mother and father were having their coffee, and they were saying, "You know, we may not be here tomorrow," and I'm thinking, "Oh my God what do they mean?" And they said, "You know the Russians could just wipe us all out," and everybody believed that. That was a very serious threat, and they had drills at school, which of course made absolutely no sense, they had you get under your desk, I mean what would that do for an atomic bomb? So foolish,

but yeah, I was always frightened after that. Anytime I heard a plane go overhead for the longest time, I thought: “This is it. These are the Russians. We are going to be killed.”

KL: Are you afraid of planes or flying or...?

LD: Now, No. I don't like to fly, but I'm not really afraid of it.

LS: What do you feel is success in life, how would you define success in your life?

LD: Meeting everyday with an- with the idea that it's going to be a good day; being positive. I think that's the most important thing.

LS: And has that changed?

LD: To be open to possibilities. Well, I think that that gets stronger as you get older. I can't say that's the case with my husband though, I don't think he looks at each day as this great possibility. But I try to keep that in mind.

KL: Do you have any favorite quotes that you live by?

LS: Or Mottos?

LD: I truly believe in forgiveness, in not only of other people, but of myself. If I make a mistake, I try to forgive myself and I think that's the most important thing to keep in mind. But, no one is perfect.

LS: What do you think Assumption as a college and your experience in colle- in college was the most important lesson that you got?

LD: Hmm. Perhaps learning that not everyone has the same goals, desires, I mean, even though we were pretty homogenous, I did meet people from many different states and learning to accept other people I think is the biggest thing that I learned. I had to live with a roommate, and I was basically an only child until I was seven. The idea that I had to share a room with someone was kind of like: oh my god how am I ever going to do that? Share a bathroom with all these people? And all of that was something to adjust to.

KL: Did you-

LD: ...Be more tolerant.

KL: Did you like living in the dorm?

LD: Yeah

KL: I mean you had to share a room, but...

LD: Yeah I did. I liked the camaraderie of the dorm.

LS: Were the boys allowed in the girls dorm?

LD: Oh God no.

LS: They couldn't even come in?

LD: They could go to the first floor, and we had someone sit at a desk, and the person at the desk would call you and tell you that there was a male downstairs waiting for you. That's as far as they got, the front door.

KL: So, you weren't allowed in their dorms either?

LD: Oh God no. Absolutely not. It did relax, I would have to say by senior year, was a little looser. I do remember going into a boys dorm, but the first year they were so protective of us. All they could think of was my God what if something happened you know, or what if one of the girls got pregnant, you know, on our watch. So, they were really careful to keep us segregated.

LS: Was there a curfew?

LD: Oh yeah, I think we had to be in at ten.

LS: Every day?

LD: Every day. Oh not on the weekends, no. Eleven on the weekends, but I think that changed by senior year too.

LS: And were there a lot of con- conduct- breaking the rules?

LD: We had a women's dean and if you- if you were reported by the dorm mother... Do you have housemothers?

LS: We have RAs.

LD: RAs, if you were reported to her, it was very intimidating. She was a really scary person. You didn't want to go there. So, I never really had to go there so I don't know what the consequences were.

LS: So, you never had a friend that got reported?

LD: I probably did, but I don't remember for what. Probably drinking on campus, you know, bringing in a bottle of wine.

KL: Was that a big thing?

LD: Yeah, wine was a big thing for people... wanted this one kind of wine, called Blue Nun.

KL: So, it's not like today?

LD: No, no, not at all.

LS: And this adapting to school, how was it?

LD: I think, I probably went over that so...

LS: Do you feel you have a legacy?

LD: Well I hope not yet, maybe in 20 years.

KL: What advice would you give women today and of the future?

LD: There is so much in the news right now about the women who moved from Google to head Facebook. She was hired by...what's his name? Facebook guy? Can you think of who I'm talking about?

LS: I know his face...

LD: And she just wrote a book that she says women are their own worst enemies and you know what? Maybe she is right. I don't think she said when she went to Facebook and they made an offer, salary offer, and she said it was really extraordinary and she went home and told her husband that she had accepted that offer and he was furious. He said no man would immediately accept an offer, not at your level of competency. He would ask for more, and negotiate. You didn't even think to negotiate, and it's true. Women are just so grateful that they're going to get a raise, they don't think they have the power to even ask for more, or ask for a promotion, and that's really sad when you think so much has changed for women but that hasn't.

KL: Alright. Do you have any more questions?

LS: No.

KL: Alright, that's the interview, thank you very much

LD: You're welcome. I hope it's usable

LS: Thank you so much.

LD: Good luck on your project. You asked good questions.