

Interviewee: Micki Aaron Davis  
Interviewer: Megan Donnelly and Trevor Scarboro  
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Transcriber: Megan Donnelly and Trevor Scarboro



Overseen by: Dr. Carl Keyes, Assumption College

**Abstract:** Micki Aaron Davis was born in 1980 in Whitley, Kentucky. She obtained her bachelor's degree in History from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia, and her master's from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. She has never married and currently lives and works in Worcester, Massachusetts. After graduating from Hollins University, Micki devoted three years of her life to AmeriCorps, which brought her to both Assumption College and Brandeis University. These past experiences ultimately lead Micki to her current position in higher education department at Clark University. In this interview Micki discusses the beneficial influence of strong female mentors in her life, from her family, co-workers, and people she has met in school. Micki feels that supporting other people is extremely important because she received a lot of support growing up and from women that she works with. She also on the board of the YWCA of Worcester and with this organization Micki has the pleasure to support other women and girls. She discusses challenges she has faced in growing and expanding as a female in the work place. Micki also stresses her advice to seize each opportunity as it arises, and to not regret past decisions.

**MED:** 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 national women's rights convention in Worcester [Massachusetts]. We are focusing on areas of women's education, health, work, and politics slash community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with being an active woman in Worcester. Thank you for your help with this important project. And are you ready to record?

**MD:** Yes

**MED:** Okay. So first I'm just going to ask you general questions. What is your full maiden name?

**MD:** Micki Aaron Davis

**MED:** When were you born?

**MD:** May 5, 1980

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**MED:** Have you ever been married?

**MD:** No.

**MED:** Do you have children?

**MD:** I do not.

**MED:** What cultures, ethnicities, do you identify with?

**MD:** I am a white female. I have some Cherokee heritage in my line as well.

**MED:** That's interesting, is there a large amount of that?

**MD:** No, not as much anymore. But it is something that I do-- even though I can't claim that on, you know, any piece of paper, it is something that is important in my family.

**MED:** Tell me about your parents.

**MD:** My parents have been married about 35 years now and live in Whitley, Kentucky, that's where I grew up. And my mother works at the health department as the office manager, and my dad works on the railroad. So, yeah. On his side of the family he comes from a long line of railroaders.

**MED:** Oh, Okay. Keeping it in the family business.

**MD:** I guess; it ended with me, and my sisters.

**MED:** So where have you lived in the duration of your life?

**MD:** Born and raised in Whitley, Kentucky, and went to college at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. I lived there for four years. Then after graduating there in 2002, I moved to Worcester, and I've lived in a couple different areas of Worcester over that time. Then I spend a year living in Waltham.

**MED:** Oh, okay. So you didn't grow up in Worcester [Massachusetts].

**MD:** No, no, I'm not a native.

**MED:** No, what was your neighborhood like generally growing up?

**MD:** It was a really small town, and it was the kind of place where everybody knew everybody, so if I got in trouble I was in trouble again by the time I got home because, my parents had already known about it. But, it had a really strong sense of community because the families that

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live there, have lived there for many generations, so, your parents knew your friends parents, and your grandparents knew their grandparents, and so on.

**MED:** Yeah, so that's pretty small

**MD:** A very poor community, it had a lot of individuals who worked in the mines. Then the mines starting closing, it brought even more poverty into the area.

**ME:** So did that affect you, or your family in any way?

**MED:** Yeah, it affected the extended family; but not my direct family because my dad didn't work in the mines.

**ME:** Yeah.

**MD:** So, we were okay. But a lot of guys down there did; so they started being laid off or going farther than work, you know, just working in towns and coming home at the end of the night, so.

**MED:** Right. So after your college in Roanoke, how did you come to live in Worcester [Massachusetts]; what made you decide to live here?

**MD:** I—after college I wanted to do something for a year, I wanted to do AmeriCorps. So, I looked into different AmeriCorps positions and joined a program called Massachusetts Campus Compact, which places AmeriCorp VISTAs [Volunteers in Service to America] at different colleges throughout the state, and I was placed at Assumption [College]. So I worked here for two years, working with the community service-learning program, which you guys are now benefiting.

**MED:** Yup. Big circle here.

**MD:** Yeah, I know. So when I got the invite to do this I was like, 'Oh that's so cool!' But yeah, so yeah I worked here as a VISTA for two years, lived on campus in C dorm.

**MED:** Oh, yeah.

**MD:** Yeah, and then was at Assumption [College] for two years and then did a third year of VISTA at Brandeis University. That was the year I spent in Waltham. And then got a job at Clark University at their Community Engaged Volunteering Center.

**MED:** So do you live around Clark or what area of Worcester [Massachusetts] do you live in now?

**MD:** I lived right around Clark when I first started working there. And now I live off of Lincoln Street.

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**MED:** Oh, okay. Do you have and family members living in the surrounding areas?

**MD:** I do not. I'm totally without biological family in the area. But I've known people long enough now that I've been here, that they've become like my extended family, so.

**MED:** That's good.

**MD:** Yeah, you've got to make your family where you can.

**MED:** Yeah, exactly. What challenges do you think this city still faces... If you could change anything about that?

**MD:** Yeah, I think that this city has an image problem. It's like, I don't know, people view it as like the ugly step-sister to Boston [Massachusetts]. And it's always getting compared; well it's not as pretty, or you know it's not as nice to live in because the public transportation isn't as good, and there's not a strong downtown. So I think that, you know, Worcester really has a problem in that perception of itself and what outsiders view of it. But it's a great place to live; there is a lot to do here if you take the time to find it, and to it appreciate what's here. There are tons of festivals, and the Worcester Art Museum is great. So there's tons of little like, you know, niches in the community that are good. So I think that sort of is like, the image of itself, and also we do need more things downtown, the—well now that the Common Outlets are going down, and like the city square project is underway we'll see how that, you know sort of reenergizes the community and give people a place to go, and walk around, and just know, feel more connected to the city. So, that's probably what I would change.

**MED:** Yeah. Have you seen changes, either negative or positive since you've been living here, or is it pretty consistent.

**MD:** No, I think Worcester's changed a lot since I've moved here in 2002. It's still got a long way to go, I think, but what city doesn't. Especially since in 2008 when the money just started to run out in the economy, you, there's not money, there's a lot of problems, and you know it's going to take some really creative ways to try to address those issues. But, you know, I see changes. I wish the Tatnuck Book Seller were still on Chandler Street.

**MED:** I know, that was a great place.

**MD:** Yeah, that's probably what I miss most. That's my most negative—I'm not okay with that.

**MED:** That's funny. You've kind of already said something like this, but what distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

**MD:** I think Worcester is, well I mean it's definitely a city by any standards. But it's either; you can look at it as like the smallest city that you'll ever come to know, or the biggest small town. Because once you spend a couple years here, you can't go anywhere without running into

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somebody you know. And everyone is connected to somebody else in some way. So, if you stay here after graduation, I don't know if you're from here or not, you'll see that there is this vibrant network of people here, and that's really nice to have a support system evolve over time. And Worcester people are very proud of their city for the most part and very involved, and that's very nice to see.

**MED:** Yeah, I know, I agree, my mom grew up here, and she still sees people every single place she goes. She runs into somebody she knows. Yeah, so it's nice.

**MD:** It is nice. And sometimes you're just like, I need to get in and out of the grocery store, you know—

**MED:** Yeah, Yeah

**MD:** Head down, like, I got to get in and out. So it is good, it makes you feel like you're part of a community, because that was something I struggled with when I first moved here; Worcester was just too big, too big. I had no idea how to drive in a rotary, you know. It's all those things that you learn.

**MED:** What do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been generally?

**MD:** That's a difficult question, and I think I can only answer that by my experience. Because are you talking about women's experiences now or women's experiences 50 years ago? You know? I mean, I think Worcester -- it's hard because it's an open-minded community, but it's still very conservative in many ways as well and, with that sort of small town feel that comes with, you know, people knowing one another, also comes with the old good boy network of people supporting, you know, only people they know, and sort of not really trusting outsiders, and particularly females. I think it's still hard to expand and to grow as a female, and as a professional.

**MED:** Do you think that you personally face obstacles to push your way up in the—

**MD:** Absolutely. I'm 30 years old and there are still people that still called me kiddo. And that's not really appropriate. And they wouldn't do it to a guy. I know they wouldn't. But because I'm a female, because I look younger than my age, I don't know, they think that it's totally fine.

**MED:** Yeah, and that's bothersome.

**MD:** Yeah, yeah it is because, just because I may be on the younger side doesn't mean I'm not professional enough. I think that there are still some struggles that women face. But, there's a lot of support as well for women.

**MED:** Good.

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**TS:** All right, well now I want to ask you a little bit about your education. Where did you attend school?

**MD:** I got my Bachelor's degree from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. So, I majored in History. Then I got my Master's in Public Administration from Clark [University] in 2009.

**TS:** And what were some of the challenges that you face in your education?

**MD:** Figuring out what to do with a History degree. No, I actually loved it, but people would always ask, I'm sure you guys hear this a lot, "What are you going to do after you graduate?" And it's like, "Well I don't know; stop stressing me out." So trying to figure out how to turn that into a lifelong passion, a career, because I was just more focused on like the educational experiences, than life after college. Although my parents were more focused on my life after college. But also paying for it, I think that was the biggest hurdle in my education. I got my Master's degree for free at Clark because I was an employee and I took it one class at a time. So, it took me four years, but, you know, a degree is a degree, no matter how long it took for me to get. But higher education is incredibly expensive.

**MED:** What did you do for work, or to pay for it in your undergraduate?

**MD:** My undergrad, I'm still paying my student loans. So, enjoy it while you can, they will find you with those bills. But I did work, I had work-study, I was an RA for a while. I babysat. I did different things, you know. But it's just you know, it doesn't really hit you, the astronomical cost of some of the student loans, until you start paying it back and realize that you know, what you, I don't know. What sounded so logical when you were taking out loans is now actually like, staggering when you have to put it together.

**MED:** Yeah.

**MD:** I don't want to scare you guys; I mean it's fine. It's just you know, been better prepared for that. And that's probably the hardest part of my education actually, looking back, would I have done things differently. You know, but then you wouldn't be the person that you are now. So, you go back and forth.

**TS:** So after your education, what did you see as your options.

**MD:** I had a background in History, which is great because it taught me a lot of critical thinking and the ability to do research. I did a lot of community service while I was in college, and I was in charge of the Share Program, which was sort of like the Reach Out Center, like being a service director at the Reach Out Center. And, I know that I wanted to give back more, and I went back and forth between joining AmeriCorps and joining the Peace Corps, and realized that-- this was also right after 9/11. I figured that there were so many issues in America right now that I wanted to focus on that, and give my time to a community in the U.S. So, that's why I did AmeriCorps.

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And then I thought I would just figure my life out after that. I've never been a person who has sort of had a plan for my life. I just take advantage of opportunities and see where they lead me. And one year in AmeriCorps led me to the next year, you know, and the following year. And you know, this job opportunity at Clark [University], which has been amazing for me. It's been a perfect fit, but I don't think I could of every planned that out if I was, you know, a 16 year old thinking about, like, what do I want to do with my life? Never thought that this was a job opportunity, you know? I never thought of this, so.

**TS:** Okay. While you were in school what kind of support networks and mentoring have you had?

**MD:** I have been incredibly lucky to have strong female mentors my entire life. When I was growing up I had a lot of strong females in my family, and they instilled in me the notion that education is important, and you have to better yourself through education and take it seriously. And, when I was in college I had teachers and advisors who really just pushed me to, you know, to not procrastinate, or you know, not take the easy way out of anything. And just to think about things that I haven't thought about before. So, I've been very lucky. I'd say I kind of collected like mother figures through my life, so, it's been interesting because people normally do that when they lack a, you know, strong mother, but I had a very involved strong mom, who you know, I definitely look up to today. I just, yeah, I've been pretty lucky in that.

**TS:** That's great.

**MD:** Yeah.

**TS:** So, how were girls treated when you were in school?

**MD:** What age school, like when I hit college?

**TS:** Any age, how about, like, middle school, and high school, and then in college.

**MD:** All right, let me think back. There are probably people that wouldn't agree with this, and that's fine everybody's entitled to their own opinion, and their own memories. But I would say that girls in my high school and my middle school were treated as if they were just going to grow up and get married. And, so, while the teachers definitely encourage us to do good in school, never really pushed us to think about our own opportunities in the work force and career wise. I mean, there was occasionally they teacher that would do that. But for the most part it was just assumed that you know, we were going to graduate high school, and that was probably all the education that we would get, and we would get married and have kids, and support our husband, and family. And so, that was my experience.

**TS:** How was the expectations affected you.

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**MD:** Well clearly I didn't follow that path, since I am 30 and not married, and no longer living in a small town in Kentucky. I am somewhat of an anomaly when I go home to visit my family and friends. I don't know-- I think that the expectations that my family put on me really helped to counter the low expectations, the low expectations that community had of girls, because my family did not buy into that at all. And my parents were very clear early on that you had to do well in middle school to do well in high school, and you had to do well in high school to get into a good college. And you were going to college, you know, over and over again, you know, that's what my parents would say. So, and once you got to college and sort of, you know, it opened up all kinds of doors that even my parents didn't anticipate. I'm sure they thought that I would come home after I graduated college. But my mom, over and over again would tell me never rely on a man for your financial needs or for your sense of security. So, she taught me and my sisters to learn to stand on our own two feet before we, you know, got married or attached ourselves to another person.

**TS:** And how was being in college, how did that effect you?

**MD:** Well I went to a women's college, so I was surrounded by, you know a thousand young women my age that had all different up brings, you know. So, it was a really interesting experience for me because college was also the first time I've ever gone to school with someone from another race. So I had a lot of learning and growing up to do because I didn't know what to say, I didn't know what not to say. You know, just sort of those things that you learn when you grow up in a diverse community; like, what is offensive, what's not offensive, you know, that I sort of had to learn in college. So I just went in, eyes wide open, and just, you know, took it each day, and tried to learn from people and meet people, and just had a great time surrounded by, you know, my group of friends who were strong women who wouldn't let anybody push them around or tell them what to do. So, it sort of I guess it rubbed off on me that, I'll find my own way, I have no idea what that is, but you know, take it day by day, and see what happens. There's more discomfort, I think in that than in knowing what your path is going to be. You know, if you know from the moment that your 5 years old that you want to be a lawyer or a doctor, you know. Sometimes I envy those people because I never had that experience, so every once in a while you get that like, "Oh my gosh, what's going on with my life, what am I going to do, what decisions could I have made differently?" But, for the most part, it's I don't know, it is rewarding, even though it's a little bit scary.

**TS:** Okay, I know you mentioned that you work at Clark University; did you work anywhere else that was outside the home?

**MD:** Okay, I spent three years in AmeriCorp VISTA, and then I've been working at Clark [University] since. So yeah, that's pretty much it.

**TS:** Okay.

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**MD:** Besides all the odd jobs... And oh, I worked at Arby's when I was in high school to pay for my car, so. I was the drive-thru queen: "Welcome to Arby's can I take your order please? Thank you and drive around." Because I never had anything—I had everything I needed, but I never had anything handed to me. So, when I got my car, I had to pay to monthly car payments myself.

**TS:** And was Arby's your first job?

**MD:** That was my first, yeah, on the books paid job, although I had done babysitting since I was 14. I remember I started babysitting for this kid during the summer before my sophomore year in high school, it was 8-5 Monday through Friday, and I got paid 50 dollars a week. I know I thought that was tons of money and now I'm like, crap that was nothing. I got cheated, but you know, it was a great experience. It was fine, it probably kept me out of trouble during the summer. He's so cute; I still keep in touch with the family now, so it's fine. But just in terms of the finances, I think, oh my goodness, I wouldn't babysit for a whole day for 50 bucks.

**MED:** When it's your first job you think any money, is the greatest thing.

**MD:** I know I probably had a higher disposable income when I was in high school then I do now because I didn't have to pay bills.

**MED:** Yeah. Exactly.

**TS:** So how exactly did you come to working at Clark University?

**MD:** When I was finishing up my third year of AmeriCorp, I was at Brandeis [University] and I was working with their community service program. So I was looking for jobs because you can only do three years in AmeriCorp and then they sort of kick you out, which is good otherwise some people will stay in there forever. So I was looking for jobs, wasn't really sure where I wanted to be, knew I wanted to stay working in higher education connecting students with community and somebody from Clark, that I had met while I was working at Assumption, sent me the job opening and said "I think that you know you should apply". And hadn't really thought about coming back to Worcester because I just figured that I would go closer to home now that my term of service was over. But applied for the job and it just-I don't know it just felt right. So did the interview and they offered me the job and yeah I took it because I was kind of excited at the opportunity to come back to Worcester, cause the two years I was here with-working at Assumption, Worcester was really good to me and it was a place that I liked and I met a lot of people that I liked so I considered-I could consider, you know, living there for a couple more years. So, again it was one of those you don't plan for things you just take advantage of opportunities, so....

**TS:** And what has this work meant to you?

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**MD:** Yeah I don't know, it means a lot . This is not just a job that I have or a career for me, my job is very personally fulfilling as well, you know, so, I take it home with me and sometimes I probably take it to personally. But I believe in the importance of educating students on what's going on in the communities and making those connections between students and the communities where there living and I believe that, you know, the more students that have these experiences, the better able they are to come up with the answers to solve all of the problems that we have in our world today. 'Cause I clearly don't have the answers so hopefully one of them and one of you guys, you know, will have it so I think it's really important for universities to be involved.

**TS:** Good, and...

**MD:** It's kind of a cheesy answer but that's true, you know-I mean.....

**TS:** Yeah.

**MED:** Yeah.

**MD:** That's what everybody hopes is to find a job that they love, you know, that they feel passionate about.

**MED:** No one wants to get stuck with a chore to do every day.

**MD:** Right, yeah so it's sometimes it's like do I want to get out of bed when the alarm goes off? No I do not, but it's nice going to work and feeling like I'm making a difference in the larger scheme of things. So those days are good. Some days you feel like you're just like planning events and which is not really my strong suit like do I have, you know, did I order the drinks, did I order enough silverware, you know. I hate those kind of days. It's not my strong suit but for the most part the good moments outweigh the bad.

**MED:** Have you had like --do you have a personal story about a day that you -- something has happened and you realize that you had made a difference when a student came back or?

**MD:** Yeah, I think, I mean I don't want to call someone out by name but I think a lot of this work for students and I know for me 'cause it was my own learning process as a student as well, it doesn't sort of hit you sometimes until after the fact, you know, like it sort of takes a while for it to sink in, what you experience or what that experience has meant to you. So I actually got an email from a student about a month after she graduated a couple years ago and its one of those emails that I'll keep for the rest of my life, you know, 'cause it meant a lot to me talking about how, you know, my support of her while she was in college and encouraging her to take advantage of different opportunities in the community and leadership positions on different activities really meant a lot to her and, you know, now she's was going off to do this great work

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as a teacher in an urban school and, you know, just knowing that I had some part to play in, you know, her becoming the person that she is, it was nice.

**MED:** Right, yeah it's nice.

**MD:** It is, so I encourage you to let your teachers know as well, if they make an impact on your life cause often the ones that you get are the ones the you know, "I hate you, your ruining my life," "why won't you just let me take this credit," or "give me a better grade" kind of emails.

**MED:** Yeah.

**MD:** So the nice ones matter.

**MED:** Mmmm hmmm.

**TS:** Alright, well how about in terms of housework, what were your primary responsibilities?

**MD:** [laughs] In my life now I guess?

**TS:** In your life now and also back when .

**MD:** Back when I was growing up? Yeah, we had chores to do growing up. Although I never remember getting a regular allowance I just sort of like did it. My dad, as I said, worked on the railroads so he would be home for a couple days, maybe gone for a couple days like it was always sporadic, you never really knew when he was going to be home or gone growing up. And my mom worked two jobs so she was frequently like gone during the day while we were at school and sometimes at night she would be gone for her second job, so my sister and I did a lot of the housework. I guess, although my mom was really particular about things, so it wasn't until I was probably in high school when she started letting me help do the laundry because she didn't like how I did things, you know. So now I live in an apartment, I have two roommates and ,you know, you do what you have to do, mop the floors, clean the kitchen, there's not a maid that's going to come magically clean it. So, I'm probably a little bit of a clean freak though so my roommates would probably say I do most of the cleaning 'cause I notice it gets dirty first.

**TS:** Okay, and how have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, roles, and interests in your life?

**MD:** I don't know if I have really well but I have just tried to find things and make things connect that maybe wouldn't connect for other people's lives. Like, my job is connected to what I like doing and what I feel passionate about in my personal life and the organizations that I am involved in. Like I'm on the board of the YWCA of Worcester, you know they do such great work in Worcester regarding, you know, women's programs and programs for girls. Because that's what I feel passionate about to so I try to I don't know help things connect and overlap to keep-I guess to keep from going insane. 'Cause it's really hard, you know, there's-especially

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now, there's just so much to do and you can be on ten different committees and like, same for college students like , you know sometimes it's like when do you do your homework because you're so busy going to like group meetings and stuff that you can just spend all your time going crazy doing that. So I try to make things connect and hopefully balance out.

**TS:** Good.

**TS:** How would you characterize the personal and professional costs of your path that you have chosen?

**MD:** I would certainly say that there is a financial cost to that because working in higher education or in the nonprofit world, there's certainly not a lot of high paying gigs, you know? So I think unless you're I don't know pretty ambitious its-mmmm-I'm pretty comfortable with like not being a millionaire but I think-I don't know I think that anything it costs me is worth it because I love the work that I do so I don't see it as a sacrifice.

**TS:** And other than loving the work, what are some of the other benefits that you experience?

**MD:** Well, the free Master's degree was definitely a plus. Yeah. It was a great deal and also the connection with the people that work at Clark. There's a lot of people that have been there for a long time and there's a really strong network of women who support other women at Clark, so, that's really nice to have.

**TS:** Okay.

**MED:** So how do-like what would be an example or?

**MD:** Well we have ladies night once a month so and that's just something that we go out for a drink and just sort of, you know, have time outside of the office to connect with people and building those relationships outside of the office Really makes things work better inside of the office. Because, you know, once you have a personal relationship with somebody like it's easier to call them and say like, "Hey I have this problem can you help me?" or, you know, or "Hey I saw this opportunity and thought it would be perfect because, you know, you mentioned that you were interested in something like this last time we talked."

**MED:** Yeah.

**MD:** So, it just gives you the different feeling it's not so beurocratic and separate as some places where I worked it very supportive in that way.

**TS:** And one last question about work, how has being a woman played a role in your work life?

**MD:** I think being a woman probably helped draw me to this line of work, so, it sort of shaped the path that my career would take. I think it's also I don't know-I don't know if it-this has to do

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more with age or with gender but I never could say no to any project, you know. I was always the one who was like, "Fine, I'll do it whatever needs to be done.". So I would take on all these things and go to all these different meetings and just be there constantly because I felt the need to show support and that was incredibly overwhelming. So I had to pull back a little bit from being so involved and supportive but I think it's just, I don't know, I think women are nurturers by nature and so we always feel like personally guilty if we don't go to something that we were invited to or whatever because a friend was putting it on or whatever, but you can't go to everything.

**TS:** Mmm, great.

**MED:** Okay, so, we need to pull up politics and community involvement.

**MD:** Okay.

**MED:** Do you consider yourself an active or actively political?

**MD:** Yes, but I have to balance that pretty carefully because the office is nonpolitical. So I always try to check myself when sending something out like through the listserv or promoting an event to students so that it's not biased from my personal stance you know, so...

**MED:** Do problems ever arise from that?

**MD:** No, but it's just important to me to not indoctrinate students with my personal beliefs. So, you know, if there's something like when, you know, the 2008 election when there was tons of speakers coming to Clark and all that, obviously I had to send those out. It is an amazing you know, experience for students to come hear Hilary Clinton or Chelsea [Clinton] or whatever you know, that's a once in a lifetime opportunity sometimes, you know. But things like support this initiative on the ballot, you know, or vote this way, I won't send out because I just think that's inappropriate.

**MED:** Yeah.

**MD:** So, but it is hard because of the nature of the work that I do with students.

**MED:** So this next question you've kind of been talking about the entire time seeing as it's your profession but...

**MD:** [laughs] That's alright

**MED:** It's just about being involved in community or volunteer work. So, over your education, work, what different groups have you been involved in or worked for?

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**MD:** In Worcester I'm pretty heavily involved with the YWCA of Worcester and I'm on the board and have been on the board for like five years now and that, I know, there are some people that, you know, join and are active in a million things. I tend not to be that way so that I can focus my energies on you know, a couple of things that I feel strongly about and the YWCA of central mass is one of those organizations. So I do that and then I volunteer a lot through my work, I think, with the kids so I don't always tend to count that as volunteer work but, you know, I'll go with a group of students to the Mustard Seed or.....

**MED:** Oh yeah.

**MD:** Yeah things like that those are fun.

**MED:** So being on the board-what do your duties consist of or what are your tasks as being having that position?

**MD:** Yup, so on the board you go to the monthly board meetings and your responsible, really the board for any organization you're, you know, financially responsible for the physical health of the organization. So we do a lot of budget talk which when I joined the board I had no idea how to read a budget sheet and was at the first meeting and was like oh my god what is this, you know, finance were not my strong suits. So I had to learn as we went how to read that and then talk about programming, you know, for the organization and what's working, what's not working you know, and give advice. Certainly not involved in the day to day operations of the organizations because that's not our job but to support the executive director of the staff and the overall I guess, accomplishing the overall goal of the organization.

**MED:** So, what led you to join or obtain that position?

**MD:** It's actually a really good case of strong women encouraging young leadership amongst other women. Because I was-I guess my name was put in consideration to join the board by Kay Basset who was the wife of Clark president John Basset who was very involved in the community herself and she was on the board of the YW. And they were looking for women under 30 to join the board and so she submitted my name as a suggestion and Linda Cavioli asked me to join the board. And I did because of the recommendation of Kay you know, endorsing it basically saying like it was a good organization and I should defiantly consider it. But also finding out about the work that they did having gone to a women's college having all these strong you know women mentors in my life the work that they do resonated with me on that level. So it was the best decision I have ever made because I can really trace the moment that I felt that Worcester was home to me is when I joined the board of the YW so...

**MED:** Must be a good feeling.

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**MD:** Yeah it was a good feeling, you know, to no longer --to know that you've lived here for a couple of years but, you know, you always still felt like an outsider you know. It's hard and then you feel that your involved in an organization where people really make you feel at home and

(end of tape side 1)

**MD:** Okay, like most of my girlfriends growing up I assumed that, you know, I would have a job I would go to college. And I would have a job and I would be married with kids and that was my life and I never really thought more about specifics really. I never knew exactly what I wanted to do or to define success that way.

**MED:** Do you think that society pushed those views on you as well as other girls?

**MD:** Absolutely 'cause that was all I had ever seen and there weren't a lot of, I don't want to say the word a lot but, okay there weren't a lot of women that worked and raised kids. I had-I was lucky that I had those role models in my, you know, personal life in my family and, you know, in my friends moms but in general there are still a lot of stay at home moms, you know, where I grew up. And that's totally fine I don't want to say that that's not okay but when you grow up seeing one thing and only one thing you never really think of options so.....

**TS:** Okay, and how do you feel about the choices you've made in your life, do you have any regrets?

**MD:** No I think a regret is pointless because it doesn't get you anywhere. Are there things that I wished would turn out differently than I thought they would? Yeah. But I am happy where I'm at and I love the work that I do and I love the friends and family in my life and that wouldn't have, you know, that wouldn't of got me here if I made different decisions.

**TS:** Okay, and based on your life experience what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

**MD:** My advice would be to make decisions for yourself as hard as that may be. I think sometimes we try to make decisions and live our life for our parents or our significant other because we want them to be happy. And it's really hard to sometimes feel like your disappointing those people that care about you and love you and that may have helped pay for your school tuition but it's really important to be true to yourself and make decisions that you know are best for you, no matter how hard it might be at that particular moment. So and I would give that advice to anyone regardless of their gender.

**TS:** Okay.

**MED:** Alright we just have a few conclusion questions.

**MD:** Alright.

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**MED:** And were almost done here. Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women as it has been recorded in the past what should we be sure to include?

**MD:** About me or just in gen...

**MED:** Give me both.

**MD:** I need a timeout [laughs] I think you should include the stories that aren't told. It's really easy to identify people in positions of power in the community that are strong women leaders but it's the stay at home moms, it's the one who, you know, may not be, you know, in an executive office in a corporation but that does the pay roll or that's a program manager, you know, that have really interesting stories to tell as well that so often go overlooked. Also the stories of the immigrant women of Worcester, those do get overlooked and I think that there are some really interesting and critical stories to the whole notion of, you know, women in Worcester, so that would be my two cents I guess.

**TS:** And is there anyone else you would suggest we talk to?

**MD:** I don't know who you've already talked to so I don't know who, you know, [laughs] yeah I don't know who to say I guess. I can certainly give you a long list of people that [laughs] would give you interesting stories but it might not be appropriate so we'll see.

**MED:** Alright.

**MD:** Is that it?

**TS:** Yeah, thank you.

**MED:** Do you want to add anything else? Any last comments?

**MD:** No, really just thanks for the work that you do and good luck putting all this together.

**TS:** Thank you.

**MED:** Yeah thank you you've been very helpful here.

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