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# Karen Jordan

Karen Jordan

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**December 14, 2015 – Karen Jordan (DN 1976) speaking with archivist Kelsey Duinkerken at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

*Guide to abbreviations:*<sup>1</sup>

KD: Kelsey Duinkerken

KJ: Karen Jordan

{CG} cough

{LG} laughter

{BR} breath

{NS} noise

- partial words

-- restarts

KJ: Um, I was born and raised in North Philadelphia at Twenty-Third and Thompson. Family still has a house there. Uh, what was I going to say? How did I get a mental blank about my whole life when I just finished talking?

KD: {LG}

KJ: I was born at Twenty-Third and Thompson. Went to Reynolds School, Vaux School, uh, Simon Gratz High School. The teachers that taught my mother, my uncles, taught me.

KD: Oh wow.

KJ: So we were in the neighborhood school. Everybody from the neighborhood went to the school so everybody knew everybody. That's the kind of neighborhood I lived in. The teachers lived in the same neighborhood as you did. You could have had a doctor somewhere in the neighborhood. So everybody lived in that same neighborhood. From elementary school, I remember when I was in the kindergarten -- prior to that I remember sitting in the window while everybody went to school, and I wanted to go to school. And every day, "I want to go to school!" "You're too young, you're too young." And finally I go to elementary school, kindergarten. And I guess after a while, I don't know how long it was I had been in kindergarten, I said, "Well, I don't want to be in the kindergarten anymore. I want to go to the first grade 'cause I want to carry books and do homework." And I got this plan together. I'm sitting in the first grade class and I'm gonna be in the first grade. And I sat in the first first grade class. And the teacher said, um, I think it was Miss Sartain, said, "Little girl, you don't belong in this classroom." I said, "I want to be in the first grade." She said, "No, you go back to Miss Evan's class." My kindergarten teacher. So I walked out of the room, acted like I was going across the hall, and I sat in the other first grade class. She said uh, asked me who I was. And I said, "I want to be in the first grade." She said, "No, you can't. You have to go back to kindergarten." So I went back to the first first grade class, and she took me to the

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<sup>1</sup> Transcription rules are based on the University of Pennsylvania's February 2011 Transcription Guidelines: [http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/L560/Transcription\\_guidelines\\_FAAV.pdf](http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/L560/Transcription_guidelines_FAAV.pdf)

principal's office, Mr. Aimonetti. And he said, "Why you here?" I said, "I want to be in the first grade. Carry books and do homework." So he called my, my house. My great-grandmother answered the phone 'cause we, all of the generations lived in the one house. And the only thing I remember saying to her was, "Mama." And I started to tear up, but I don't think I said anything else. And uh, the kindergarten teacher came in, he said, "Do you think she can do it?" She said, "Yeah, I think she can do it." And I was in first grade that day.

KD: Oh, that's amazing.

KJ: So, you can't, you can't do that now, you know, kids can't make those decisions, but I had a good, a good educational experience in school. Some of those same teachers I met on the, in the Civil Rights movement, as I got older. So you always saw someone anywhere, if you were in the Freedom Theater on Broad Street. You know, you were doing something in the neighborhood. And it was a closer neighborhood I think back then in Philadelphia. So from there I went to Vaux Junior High School. A lot of people involved in the Civil Rights movement were there, but I didn't know that at the time 'cause that wasn't a focus. Um, belonged to the 4-H club. We used to come down here for classes in entrepreneuring and things like that as a kid because you had free reign. Because where we lived you could - - we walked to the zoo all the time, we went to the art museum, so something was always there. In school you went to the symphonies, the operas, you did all of that in elementary and junior high school. As children. And then the Dell at Thirty-Third and Ridge, it's the Dell now, um, that's where we used to go get the tickets to go to listen to the orchestra before they moved to the Mann. So all of this was around. We had a very rich background, um, in North Philadelphia then. Uh, let's see, so there -- let's see, junior high school, I played sports in junior high school. Uh, went to Simon Gratz High School. Um, in Nicetown. My principal was Marcus Foster, and Marcus Foster was the educator that had gone to California, and he was assassinated by the S L A back in the day. So like I said, I've met so many people, you know, historical figures.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: Um, after high school -- oh, so in high school I was involved with the civil rights movement. The desegregation of Girard College. Cecil B. Moore was one of my mentors. After I got to meet him. Um, he and the N double A C P were demonstrating against segregated schools. Our tax dollars were going there, all kinds of benefits, but poor, black orphan children couldn't go. It was a school for boys at the time. So they started demonstrating when I was about sixteen. And um, they were -- what do you call the horses, uh, barricades, all around Girard College. There were -- I've never seen so many police officers in my life. They were shoulder to shoulder all around the walls, so you figure a couple of blocks.

KD: Mm hm. Easily.

KJ: So you figure a couple of blocks each direction, and totally surrounded. And that was not counting the police officers on the inside because they knew people were going to go over the wall. And I had never met him in person before, but I knew about him. How can I tell you I knew about him? Probably from television. I mean, television or radio or newspaper. But I knew of him. And um, I got up in the fark because {LG} I said I got up in the fark -- I went around, I was a tomboy too, all my brother, my uncles

and brothers, and we were all together and um, said, "Let's walk around and see what's going on." And as we were walking around the policeman started cursing at us and saying things, trying to incite. And I got around and I said, "I'm going to tell Mr. Moore." I remember one of the guys said, "Yeah, go tell him. Go tell him." I took a deep breath and I walked over to him and I said, "Mr. Moore," I said, "uh those police officers are messing with us." He said, "They're not going to be messing with my damn people!" And that was it for me. After that I had so much respect for him for saying that. And then I started demonstrating. Got to meet the people that I'm still friends with today. Um, to help fight desegregation and racism and everything. So this is what we do. Um, at sixteen I had been arrested a few times. First time was at the state building, during a Girard College demonstration, and uh, I guess I was the -- I had never seen a person beaten so viciously by a police officer. Nobody robbed a bank or anything like that, and it was so brutal. Um, the only reason I got arrested is I saw it happening and I jumped in to try to help the person, and they pushed me, one of the police officers pushed me. They were even pushing the photographers and stuff. Didn't want them taking pictures.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And this was behind -- if you ever go down to the state building, which is an apartment building now on Broad and Spring Garden, coming down Spring Garden, look on the side, there's a teeny little street and you will see a cement wall, but it's decorative, that is where all of that happened, in the back. And uh, but I had never seen anyone beat like that. And I was hysterical. I said, "You're going to kill him, you're going to kill him." They were beating him so bad they were beating each other. Plus, you could hear the sticks beating his head. He was unconscious when they pulled him up because he tried to crawl underneath, um, this truck, and when they pulled him out he was unconscious. And the second time I tried to charge the police officers he pushed me back, but the other police officers, the civil disobedience squad, they were the ones that wore the suits, um, and they kinda kept order that way, very low key, under Lieutenant Fencil at the time. And they, they really protected me because they kept me against the wall. And I'm crying. I remember her name was Sandy. I said, "Sandy, they're going to kill him. They're going to kill him." So anyway, that was my first arrest. I think the, during the civil rights movement I was arrested at the post office demonstrating for equal rights, um, that uh, black people get hired, not be discriminated against, and women not lift over fifty pounds, and all those kinds of things. And I think I was, I was about sixteen then because it was so much went on in that whole, that one or two years, you know, when all of this was happening. And um, so that was my other arrest. I did not know that we were faced with ten to twenty years in jail. What we blocked was nothing. We just saw a place where trucks came out. "OK, let's block this one." Because that's what you did.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: And uh, afterwards we laughed about it. "Ooh, we could have gotten all that time in jail." But we weren't really doing anything. And then I have to -- my parents have a picture of me being arrested that day. So, uh, it's going to be in a video, a DVD.

KD: Oh cool.

KJ: So that's another thing on top of that. And um, what's the other thing. The other time I was arrested was inside of a police station. We were really trying to help the police. We were trying to help a friend of ours. Um, he cursed a dog because the dog barked at him. So the lady reported him. So we were sitting in a restaurant, our hang-out, at Ridge and Girard, and the police came in, and they said, "You're under arrest." He said, "For what?" "Disorderly conduct." Or something, cursing, or harassment. He said, "I just cursed at a dog." And he said, "I'm not going." 'Cause he had been arrested and he had been beaten. He said he would never go back again. So I said, "Can we go with him?" Can we put him in the? 'Cause we didn't want him to get hurt. So we put him in the van. The two cops said, "Yeah, you can do it." We go in the back of the van, we get there, and he starts to run.

KD: Oh.

[10:16]

KJ: I'm petrified. I said, "They're going to shoot somebody." And um, he started running, and I remember a friend said, "If anyone's ever shooting at you, zigzag." So I'm running, "Barry don't run!" I'm zigzagging. And the cop pulled his, um, put his leg out, keep him going out the door as they heard a commotion. And uh, so then they started to beat him. And I'm trying to stop that, you know, I'm going in. And the one cop turned around, and I kicked him on his leg. And he turned to punch me, and Freedom George, every time he would punch, Freedom George would move me, so the guy would miss. He was so angry they jumped on Freedom George and I watched him kick his teeth right out of his mouth.

KD: Oh my god.

KJ: Like I said, and then they had me and Freedom George handcuffed. Where they put me I'm throwing up on the floor and everything, I was so hysterical. And we had to take him to the hospital, the old Philadelphia General Hospital, where Children's Hospital is now. Uh, I was handcuffed while they were stitching his mouth up. Never seen any- -- the cop and I both got -- the one who took me down, we were both sick. I said, "I've got to go to the bathroom." We couldn't get out of there fast enough to take me. You know, because we had both never seen something that looked so bad. And uh, I think the, the last arrest I had was at the Board of Education that the school children were demonstrating for black history in schools. And uh, that was when we were dragged and um, down there, and they charged the children. And uh, you know, Frank Rizzo was the police commissioner at the time, and I remember one of the councilmen, I was standing a few feet from them, when they were um, beating the children, I was watching the kids, and Earl Van said, "They're only children." And swear to the living god Rizzo said, "Get their asses." And they proceeded to beat those kids more. It, it was just a, it was a trying -- a lot of police brutality back in those days. Um, they didn't care whether they beat children, they didn't care whether they beat women. You know, they knew they were going to beat the men. So. Um. During those times we did an operation alert with Father Paul Washington at the Church of the Advocate we would just drive around to look for instances of police brutality just to be there to be a witness.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: If something was to happen. Uh, we demonstrated everywhere if there was any discrimination . Because there was a time, that you couldn't go to -- you could shop down in Center City but they wouldn't let you work on the floors. You could work at a place but you couldn't get promoted 'cause they wouldn't promote you over a white person. And even my father experienced that. He could get any kind of job on the phone, because of John McKenzie, that was his name.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: Soon as they saw him the position was full. So these are the things that we had to come -- and just stuff like that is still going on.

KD: Oh sure.

KJ: You just can't tell you that now. But a lot of that. So then that kind of, um, I guess -- oh, back to being a child, I always read fairy tales, Greek mythology, 'cause they were exciting stories, and the good guy always prevailed.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And that's kind of what my, my essence is. To be the good person that's going to come out on top. It doesn't always happen, but I think that was part of my essence. And maybe that was the way I was. Because you know, basically if you come from a loving family, you know, and people caring about people, so that's what you know. And I think that might have, um, had something to do with I guess my sense of right and wrong, as far as the civil rights movement. Equal justice for anybody. That's what I believed. Still do. And um, I think I got married at eight-, nineteen. I was -- oh, I went to Cheyney for a semester, but still involved with the civil rights movement because my grandparents raised me. And got the money up for us to go to school, because Cecil Moore told -- Wade Wilson was the president of Cheyney University at the time -- "I want these kids in school." And he told us, he said, "You know, you kids out here demonstrating open doors for people but you don't have the education. Other people are going to come right in and walk through the door and haven't even made the sacrifices that you folks have made." He said, "I want you all to go to school." Now we had all, except for one of us, all of us had graduated from high school. So we took the test, and we were admitted to the school. I did a semester. So that September was getting close to going back to school, and I said to my grandma, said, "Oh, school is going to start soon." She said, "Yeah, I know." And I said, "Oh, she didn't say anything about the money for school." And I said, a couple weeks later I said, "Uh, mudder," I said, "school's going to start in two weeks." She said, "I know. You didn't help me all summer. You didn't get a job or anything all summer. All you wanted to do was picket."

KD: Mm.

KJ: And that taught me a lesson.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: I didn't go back. But I was still my, my energy went to doing what was right. And we didn't do it for ourselves because we weren't expecting anything for ourselves. We did it for the people who were coming behind us. So I just thought, "Older people. They don't know anything." Um, so after that I didn't go back, um, didn't go back to Cheyney. I'd had passing grades and all, and still involved with the movement, and then I left home. Got mad at my grandparents. Left home. Um, got married at nineteen, uh, and then a couple years later had the first baby.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And then, there used to be a hospital called Saint Luke's at Sixth and Girard. The other hospital closer was Seventh- Sixteenth and Girard, which was Saint Joseph's. Well I was reading in the paper one day that -- and I was living in Tioga at the time -- "Oh, they closed the emergency room?" Saint Luke's? Because they had too many people or something happened.

KD: Hm.

KJ: And I said, "By the time you go from Sixth Street to Sixteenth, you could be dead." That's what made me decide to go to nursing school.

KD: Oh wow.

KJ: I said I had to do something for my people and my family. And I went to nursing school. I put my application in. What I started doing was taking classes just to freshen up since I had been out of school for a while. Went to night school, uh, a refresher course in English, Math, things like that. And one of my other teachers was teaching, one of my junior high school teachers was teaching then. So I, you know, "What are you doing here?" "Oh, I just wanted to freshen up, you know, for nursing school." So I took my exam for nursing school, and they asked me to come in. The letter said to come in. So I came in, I was pregnant with the second baby.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And they looked at me, "You're getting measured for a uniform like that?" And I said, "Well I didn't know I was accepted. You just said come in." You know, the letter just said to come in.

KD: Yeah. So how many different places had you applied to?

KJ: Only one.

KD: Just Jefferson.

KJ: I only wanted to work here. And my husband was working here, too.

KD: OK.

KJ: He didn't want me down here.

KD: And this was the sixties still, right?

KJ: Seventies, no seventies. This was the seventies.

KD: OK.

KJ: And um, I said, "Well look, hold the application a year, because I want to give the baby the year, the first year. You know, we breast-fed all the kids, did all this stuff. And um, that's what I did, and I came to nursing school here in seventy-three. Graduated in seventy-six. Um, let me see. Something else about that tied in with that. It'll come to me.

KD: OK.

KJ: So anyway, I come to nursing school. My first day of class, both of the kids get temperatures of a hundred and four, hundred and five.

KD: Oh.

KJ: {LG} First day of class. I said, "Oh my god." So, take them to the hospital, temperatures come down. I get to class, it's about two o'clock in the afternoon. And did I get reamed out. And, Miss Zarella. "Well, you know, this is very important in school." I said, "What about my children?" "Well we're not concerned." I was so upset. I was livid.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: So what I had to do, if the kids got sick, if my husband couldn't take off, so, I had family.

KD: Sure.

KJ: Everybody would pitch in. I would have to act like I was sick. So what I would do, put a little hot water in my mouth. "Miss Davis, you know, I really don't feel well." Rub my eyes, make them red. And, "Oh, you got a little temperature." Or the other thing was you said you had diarrhea.

KD: Oh {LG}.

KJ: Which meant you got something so you can't come to work. Only thing you had to do was swab. But that was the only way, some of those days, that's the only time I could get out when the kids were sick.

KD: Sure. But it was very new at that time, right, for students to be married and not be living on campus, right?

KJ: Well there were, there was a person before me, that I knew of. I can't remember her name now, but she had uh, she had a child. And she said, you know, she had to sleep when the baby slept. For me to study I would, you know, and everybody took care of my kids. I think doing this really damaged my children, me not being around, a lot of times. But um, I had, I couldn't have done it without the support. My neighbors. "Look, just watch them until I go down to play sick." And I'd come back home.

KD: Mm hm.



KJ: When my husband could take off he would take off. Family members would take off. But the one thing I can say about Jefferson here, I got more encouragement. Not only being a -- people knew my husband, but people knew me as a black person, the only black person in my class. Uh, Bonnie, I would have been in with Bonnie, but she was the class before me, but that would have been the class I would have been in.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: So there would have been two of us. But I was the one in this class. And people not only respected me for it, they wanted me to succeed. I would bring the kids up, it was nothing. People in the cafeteria feeding them. If I had to go to a doctor's appointment they knew I didn't have the time. My sisters or somebody would bring the kids up. I'd come, if it was in between class I would come in, sign them in or run in and talk to the doctor or they would put me ahead. That's how I did it.

KD: Sure.

KJ: Everybody and their mother watched them. You know, I just had to do, you had to do what you had to do.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And um, I guess at one point, when my husband got sick and one time the kids got pneumon- both of them had pneumonia, in two different hospitals. So you're going to school, he's staying at one hospital and I'm at the other one and we're back and forth, trying to work. So it wasn't easy. I look back on it and now I can laugh at it.

KD: Sure.

KJ: But you're young, and you can do those kinds of things. Now, could I do that now? Probably if I had to I would, I could, but I think being younger made a difference. And I remember I used to study when the kids went to sleep, I would study a little bit, and then I knew I had to get some sleep, so I would go to sleep, sleep for a couple hours, and get up maybe three, four o'clock in the morning, study some more. The students that uh, in school were very supportive. And we would study together, and sometimes it was a relief to be down there.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: To study, you know. And uh, we had a good group of students. And the class that I was in we had the first men come in. So there was Dave, there was Wally. I forgot the other gentleman's name. And we were all in the same class, so we all kind of hung out.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: We were outsiders, you know. The men and the black and blah blah blah. So we all, um, had good friendships from that. The people were, were nice. You know, you have your stuck-up ones.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: But they didn't change. But it was a good experience I think. And in fact I did not live on campus. So I did have a life. What I found in nursing school when I came in, because of who I was, I had a strong sense of self when I was here, and I didn't cotton, I didn't bow down to anybody. And because you were an instructor didn't mean you knew everything. And I remember a couple of things I knew just from being, I don't know if worldly is the right word to use, but I had been a lot of places and I had been around a lot of people from a lot of different walks of life. So I remember a nutrition instructor who had been all over the world, she talked about Jell-O. And I said, "Well Jell-O's made from bones and skin and things like that." And I said, "I have Muslim friends that will not eat Jell-O because it's a pork product." "Oh, that is not true." And I'm listening to this and I'm saying, "OK. You know, we don't know anything because we're students." That's the way it was. You didn't question. And I had another instructor. I said, "You know, salt gives black people hypertension." "Oh no it doesn't." I just found, it happened I just found the article.

KD: Oh, that's perfect.

KJ: And she gave me an extra two points. I had one instructor, a psychiatri- -- a psychiatric instructor, Miss Alley. You know when you know people have mental health issues? Sometimes you can just see it. I knew something was wrong with her. We had a class, and at that time they said that au-, she said that autism came from mothers not caring for their, their children. And they didn't take time with them. I said, "That's not true." I said, "Something's wrong with these kids before they are born." And I said, "You know, if you have other people in the house somebody else is usually interacting with that child, for the most part."

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: She, after class she said to me, "Karen, I don't know why you don't like me." And I, something said, "Shut up" because I wanted to say, "Sounds like you're projecting." Or something said, "You better not open your mouth." And I didn't say anything. I said, "Miss Alley." I said, "I have the right to disagree with you. It doesn't mean I don't like you, but I have a right to disagree. It has nothing to do with like, I just don't believe that." And, and the other thing, and after that she really made my life miserable. We did training at the Philadelphia Psychiatric Center, Belmont.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: That's where we did our nursing training for psych. I loved it. Well every -- from the time I said that to her I could not do anything right. And being in the situation at the school, I felt alone. And I knew I did not have support. Now other people, students knew and basically their hands were tied. So, went on. We went to a parachute class, and, at the center. And you have a parachute, where everybody is throwing it up and having a good time, recreation for the clients. We're laughing and having a good time. Well, we get back to class and she said it was a disgrace basically, and how could we laugh at those poor people. I said, "We weren't laughing at them." "Well this was a very serious thing." And then the recreation therapist came to the class to talk about it and they said, "You know, it's supposed to be a fun

time." So I can't say anything. Me and the other two girls got reamed out but she was really after me. We looked at each other. And um, so anything like I said, anything I did got criticized. And, I gotten so, I had been so unnerved by that, and I guess it showed me my vulnerability.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: Because I was always, I could handle everything. Within two, two blocks of getting to the school, to the Center, because we used to catch the bus down here at Broad and Walnut, I would start to shake uncontrollably. But still kept my head up, tried to do what was right. And there was a black and a white administrator that would come around, because they worked for the institution. And I just said to them, "Can I talk to you?" I went in the room with them and I told them exactly what was going on, and he said, "Well I'll tell you this. She's either going to flunk you clinically, keep your marks up. She can't change those. So you just make sure you pass all your tests." And I felt better. On top of that, um, they hired a woman, who I knew from the outside, as an instructor. And she was pregnant. I knew her husband. She had a black husband. And I couldn't tell anybody. I knew now to mention any of that, and she was one of my instructors. And after I graduated she said, "Karen," she said, um, "I knew what she was trying to do to you but my hands were tied."

KD: Oh wow.

KJ: I said, "I knew that." I said, "I wasn't going to say anything to you because it wasn't your fault. I knew the position you were in so why would I even. I wasn't going to hold anything against you because I knew, you know, the position. I wasn't going to say anything." But the fact that she acknowledged it. And then I hear that the instructor was committed.

KD: Woah!

KJ: So it was true. But eventually. It's -- that's what I heard. You know, people, "What happened to so-and-so?" "Oh, she was committed." {LG} So. So that was my story about nursing school. Now, was I a know-it-all? Yup. I didn't know everything but I thought I did. So, um, I, I tell you today I still think, uh, when they had the award for the person who had overcome so many things, a couple instructors told me they voted for me for that. Because all that I had gone through trying to do school. And I knew I should have gotten it, but they wouldn't give it to me. I knew that. But it just made me feel good that somebody came to me, nothing I knew about, you know. I know at graduation I said, "I know that's me. Nobody's going through what I was trying to get through school." But they didn't give it to me.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: But that was alright too. 'Cause I graduated. We had a good time. And it was an experience. Um, I never wanted to work anywhere else. It took me three years to learn the three buildings. I'm not going anywhere else to learn something else. But I always wanted to work at Jefferson.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: And even when I started working people were very good to me here. The other thing, my personality is such that, I'm a, I'm just one of those friendly people. And I know what it's like to be looked down upon so I try not to do that to anybody else. So because I'm a nursing student, I'm not going to look down at you because you sweep the floor. If it wasn't for you we would be in filth. You know, so, and, and people have their jobs, so I'm no better than you because I have an education. We all know people that are educated, you wouldn't have them take care of a dog. We have nurses, I wouldn't let them take care of a dog 'cause I know what they are. What kind of people they are. So wherever we are, and we are all part of the general population. People think because you're a doctor or a nurse that it puts you above everyone else. Uh uh. We're part of the general population. Some of us have had had, uh, a lot of misfortune, and some of us haven't. Some of us have had clear paths to fulfill our destinies, and other people haven't. So that's how I look at people. And I just try -- now do I falter? Yes. Do I look at some people, "I know I'm better than that rug rat?" You know what I mean? But, I, I'm human.

KD: Exactly.

KJ: Tough to hear, but I'm human. Um, so I think that's what, what's helped me a lot, and, sometimes people take advantage of it because you're friendly. They think they can say everything or do anything and you won't say anything. And when you blow up they say, "Well why did she blow up?" And you know, you're faulted for it because you blew up. Well you blew up because people were picking at you all the time. You know, so sometime you have to learn how to quiet yourself. You know, pick your battles. But like I said, I never wanted to work anywhere else, and I think it was a good learning experience. I've seen the change in nursing here. Um, it's a lot more education. A lot more research. The outcomes I think are better. And we're doing things that nobody ever thought nursing would do. And you're doing research on the units that's affecting the outcome. Now where I am now on the nursery, we have a lot of different research, nursing generated research. You know, stress, um, infection rates. And our infection rates have gone down based on the research. And what we're doing and changing the practice. A lot of things we did, I tell people, "Tradition is not always right." We do a lot of things by tradition doesn't make it right. And even with the research, maybe someday down the line will, the research may have not been the best but we did do it. So, I see so many positive things coming across nursing. Me and the computer, I'm still trying to -- the younger people have it down pat because they were raised with it. You know, it's a little struggle for me. But uh, what I do on the unit is, I know the importance of family, and that family is whoever the person says the family is, whether that's two women, two men, could be just children, but that is the family. Um, so I had an interest in a neonatal abstinence program. I mean, children. Babies, families. So years ago I, another nurse and I, didn't like the way they were being treated not only by the nursing staff but how they were treating the nurses, so we figured let's do something about it. So, um, eventually she left the unit, I can't even think of her name now. But I talked to a couple of docs, and we would go over to, um, Jefferson's program for women and we would talk to them and tell them what to expect when they came over because you'd hear all these stories. Well all those women weren't lying, 'cause they weren't treated very nicely by some people. And by the same token a lot of them weren't treating a lot of people very nice. So it was like a battle ground. So we started going over there to talk to them, which made a difference because they knew what to expect. And the doctors talked about the medications that the babies were, um,

using. So they understood that. Um, and we told them also to talk to the docs, because when you hear a story from somebody else, a lot of mothers didn't remember the bad times. Or some people could of lied, "Oh my baby didn't do that. My baby came home right away." So all of those things we tried to deal with. And, and before we went to them I would have them come over to the hospital to have a little snack and they would meet in the conference room. And they would talk. And when they had their babies it made it better. Eventually the unit got together and they got a contract along with the Center, and they made a contract for the moms to sign. So I just felt like, that little, that little part that I did opened the road for what came, came after. Um, now things are better. Somebody else is working on it. Jane is working on it, and she, with the core concept, you know. That these people get support. The other thing I do is fathers,al right. Very important part of the population, the family. But we're biased. We marginalize the men. We want them to do everything, but when they come to that hospital with the baby, everyone's looking at mom. He's a part of the family. Somebody said, uh, "I don't," let's say somebody said, "Well I don't like this guy, your husband." Blah, blah, blah. And you start to talking about it. But that's her, my girlfriend will say, "But that's her rag." As raggy as he can be, that's her rag. You can't, you can't talk about him and you can't deny him. So whoever comes in that hospital, you still, if that man comes in, you still have to treat him with respect. And you have to treat him, he's the other half. There would be no baby. No matter what goes on in their outside lives there would be no baby without that man. So you have to include him in. So what I started doing was, um, over here I started doing the community babies with the unit. You know, we had a committee, a developmental committee. And we started offering services to, we started offering advice. So I, we put up signs. Uh, we'd have a family medicine doctor come in and talk about sexually transmitted diseases, we'd have a urologist come in and talk about what problems men would have, we'd have an O B G Y N to talk about what problems women would have, whether they had a baby or not. We'd have a psychiatrist coming in to talk about issues with men and how to get along. We had it all.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: Because we knew once we got that man the first time we might not get him again. So you wanted, we wanted to have everything there for him at that time. We asked him to bring, uh, if he had young sons or whatever, to bring them in. So we would do that here, and we did it, we do it like every year. And then the people would be saying, "Oh, we should just be doing this on our unit." So we started um, offering in-services. So now what I do, usually on Tuesday evenings, I'll be doing it tomorrow, we have the men, so it's dad's night. It could be anything. It could, we could have docs, because we have docs on board, they would come in and talk and if they have questions they can ask some questions. And one time we had a psychiatrist come in from the department of psychiatry just to talk to them. Um, and we would do this. Sit down, I would cook dinner, have dinner or order pizza or whatever. And they come, non-threatening environment. What went on in that room stayed in that room. If I thought it was something that I thought would help the family or the unit I would talk about it. Other than that what they said is what they were talking about in that room. And um, on top of that they could talk about any topic they wanted. If they didn't want to talk I'd say, "That's fine. Just come on in and eat." And they would come. I could either get nobody to come or I'd get a roomful.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: Now after they finished then I would invite the moms or whoever else is on the unit to come in, and everybody else could finish the food and they could talk. And it was a very relaxing thing for them. So I do that every, I try to do the men maybe once or twice a month.

KD: Mm hm. And when did this start?

KJ: I've been doing it for a few years. On Tuesdays.

KD: OK.

KJ: And then, because, I think um, because I was keeping records, two thousand and five. I think two thousand and five or two thousand six. I was keeping -- like I would give them like a little questionnaire. And with the questionnaires all said the same thing. Nobody had ever done anything for them before. They appreciated it. And whatever we wanted to talk about was fine with them. So I just kept those papers, you know. So as we do it on the unit, I guess I'm going to talk to somebody about starting that again, keeping records that way. But I even do it for the mom. So you do the men. Those selfish women. "What about us?" {LG}

KD: {LG}

KJ: You know what I'm saying. "You guys get everything!" So I would do maybe the moms. So I have a day where they can just sit down and talk and then everyone else can come in later. And then I'd do the parents so that everyone can be there. So the moms said, would say, "Well I want to be here when he hears something because he doesn't believe what I'm saying." So we would open up for parents. Next week we'll have an occupational and physical therapist talk about babies. Because our babies get occupational therapy. Um, relaxation, teaching the parents how to do it. So they teach the parents when they're there, and they also can sit in the room and talk about that. Last week we had speech. Come in, all my babies get speech therapy. And what they do, they evaluate the suck swallow coordination when breastfeeding. So all of these things, you know, even though they're doing it there, and they will still come and listen because they can ask specific questions. Um, and I just tell people, "What goes on in this room stays in this room." If it's something I think should be told to the staff I will. Uh, but I do know people are people. Sometimes people will hear something and say, "I know who said that." But you don't know. The person you that think said something is not always the person that said what you think. So uh, what I find is, we're not perfect, which we all know, but I think there are ways in which we can all improve. Um, and it's very important when you're dealing with people in this vulnerable state that they're in, you still have to set boundaries. Because people have to know where they can go, where they cannot go. Because when people start off with a boundary it's better for everybody involved because when those parents would get out of control, a lot of them get out of control because they don't have boundaries.

KD: Sure.

KJ: Starting off. And we had to be consistent. So we can't do, "I'm the good nurse, the bad nurse. Oh, I'm the good nurse because see what I let you do."

KD: Yeah.

KJ: And then the other nurse comes along and says, "Well you know you really have to." Oh, that's the bad nurse. So you have to be mindful of that. And we can undermine ourselves. You know, I think we should, um, I guess with the new nurses coming along, well sometimes you don't want to be bothered by students, I understand that. But they still should be treated like, you know, invite them. Be inviting to them. I notice sometimes when you -- I'm a speaker. "Hi, how you doing?" You know, when you get tired and come down the hall I might speak to you twenty times a day. But I think people should be acknowledged. So, if say somebody comes to the unit, whether you're a student or whether you're a visitor, "Hi! How you doing?" You go about your business because everyone wants to be acknowledged. It's when you are acknowledging people, people acknowledging you, and when you get with a group that doesn't acknowledge you, you come and speak and nobody opens their mouth, what happened to our manners?

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: That's fundamental. So, like little things like that, can make the experience that a person has a lot better. And I notice too, um, when you're dealing with people and you have that, if you have that negative vibe going, you know it's there. You can't always speak on it because you've been doing it all the time, and people really start to pull away. But there are a lot of nurses that make up for that by running interference. So, I just think we can be a lot more pleasant with people that we deal with. Because it says a lot. Um, do I love what I do? Yes I do. I've been retiring for I don't know how long. And it's a hard decision to make when you love what you do.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And I don't think I would give this job up just to give it up. Well somebody said, "Why don't you get another job?" "Why would I go get another job after all these years it took to make this salary that I make? I'm going to go somewhere and not make anything or make half? No. I'd rather just as soon work." But I think it's.

KD: Have you been in the same position since you finished nursing school?

KJ: When I got out of nursing school I worked med surge and oncology.

KD: OK.

KJ: I really wanted to go to the emergency room.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: But they wanted you to have a year, two years experience, even then. After that I didn't want to go. I loved, I loved what I did. I loved the staff. And that makes a big difference, because we've got a staff, a dynamite staff on the unit. Everywhere I went we went we had a dynamite staff. What bothers staff, or what I've seen, back in those days, that changed the dynamics was the change in nursing itself. When I

came aboard, uh, working with cancer patients in regular med surge, and we had a heavy load. We did a lot. But we worked good as a team.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And the compassion was always there. Now, the people that took me under their wing were the L P N's. And they were so good because they had been doing it for so long. They gave meds, they just didn't give I V meds. But they did everything everybody else did. When the time came for all R N staff, only R N's could give medications, it did -- that hurt me because it hurt them. And at that time they told me, "You won't be able to get meds," and some people were afraid to say anything. And when it came, when I was put on the spot to say, and I said actually, "This is just the way it is." But to see the hurt on somebody's face. "But I've been doing it all these years and now I'm not good enough." So that hurt them.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: Um, but I had a good relation-, good working relationship with I think just about everybody I worked with. Miss Hindson, if I blew up she knew why I was blowing up. She didn't hold it against you. And um, nursing can be very stressful, and you've got all kinds of things going on, that as a nurse you're still giving to other people, sometimes you don't take care of yourself. Because you're so used to giving. And you give to everybody else. And it wears on you, for a while. But you know it has to be done.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: So, it's a balance. You don't always win. There's women. Women are usually give give givers. We feel bad because nobody's giving to us, and when we do need somebody everybody's busy. So we have to kind of balance that. You can't, can you have it all? No, something, something's being missed somewhere.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: That's why I've said there are times I've been away from my children, you know, "Why do we have to go to somebody else's house for Christmas?" You know. Or they, I remember they wanted me to not go. "No," they said, "No, we'll wait 'til you get home." Because they felt like freeloaders. But everybody in my family, "You've got to work! Let them come over here for Christmas or Thanksgiving." The kids didn't like it. They didn't care what time I came home. No, "We wanted, this is our family, this is what we want." And they were little! When they did those kinds of things. So, yeah. Do they want to be nurses? No. Because they did not want to do the holidays and because I was away from them they did not want that. So none of them became nurses. So. One is doing um, one was a beautician, and one is doing um, what do you call it, like social work, kind of like a case manager.

KD: Sure.

KJ: Is it a case manager?



KD: Case worker?

KJ: Something like that. Well, she's um, she works with, I think it's like chip. One of those organizations, make sure kids get the services, early intervention. One of those programs she works for. So I guess they're still doing that kind of stuff. But um, like I said, I think it's one of the most rewarding things at Jefferson. And with the change in administration you see things progressing, and with Klasko coming in, his, all his innovations and stuff, and I see a difference, you know. Now if we could just get people to be a little more, hospitable. I guess that's the nice way to put it. A little bit more hospitable to other people. And um, I know people have a lot on their minds, but manners go a long way. And uh, you know, we expect it from other people, but we have to, we have to cross that road too. Because we're the face of Jefferson. And if, like I said, if somebody comes into the room you acknowledge them.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: You know if somebody's behind you. You can feel it. You can be as busy as I don't know what, but you know when somebody's not supposed to be somewhere. Or somebody comes in, so you acknowledge them. And acknowledging people sets the tone. So it's the little mannerisms I think. And I can't -- I don't know if I can say it's this generation, because they learn it. A lot of that behavior is learned, and I've seen changes in people when they, when they work with people that do not display manners. And they'll take on those same behaviors because that's the behavior that they want. So. I don't know how I got off on this tangent.

KD: Oh, that's OK.

KJ: But, yes, Jefferson has come a long way. And it still has a long way to go. And it's changing with the times, and I think we should all change with the times. I just don't think -- I think with the change, with Klasko's innovation, I think it's going to go much farther. So, yeah.

KD: Could you talk a little bit more about how you've seen nursing change over the years since you've been here at Jefferson?

KJ: Especially with the uh, with the um, research. Now when I started, they used to say, "Oh yeah, we were in with the linen," when it came to the budget. But under Mary Ann McGinley Jefferson has moved tremendously. And she is for the nurses. And, and with the innovations, school, um, conferences, all of these things they built in to make it better for us. P H D's. Who ever thought of anybody with a P H D in nursing? You know. I mean, now when I went to school, it took me twelve years to get my degree. I went to a diploma school. So a diploma school, whatever we learned in class, that's what we did on the floor.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: I think, I think the new nurses should have more experience, even in those, in those segments. Because they come in, some of them they say, "No, we don't do anything. We just observe." But I think they should have a lot more hands on. And maybe some places they can't, but we had it, and I don't know if it's the number of uh nurses that are out now, but our instructors were basically always with us

for the most part. And then we were, we were working with the staff. But for the most part we had those instructors on the unit while we were doing things. But I don't see a lot of that. You know, they drop them off.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: And they make do. Um, but, we had a lot of clinical experience, I think. And I know when we took our state boards, everybody took the state boards, whether you were going to um, a Bachelor's degree program or not. But we seemed to have done a lot better, as I was told, because whatever we learned, we um, were able to um, do. That's not the word I want to use, but that's what we did. We learned it, we practiced. We learned and we practiced. And that's what kept it in our minds. So that whatever patient came along with that diagnosis, "Ah." And we taught. When we were in different rotations we taught the patients. So we did a lot of little, a lot more things than the nurses I think get now. And I could be wrong, but that's my personal opinion. Um, so since then I, after I got out of the diploma program I said, "So maybe I will work on my degree. I'll go to school at night."

KD: Mm hm. Did you go to Jefferson?

KJ: Mm hm. And when my granddaughter was born sometimes I would take her to class too. Sometimes when we didn't have a babysitter and my daughter was working or whatever. I'd bring her, so she went to college before she was walking. But um, I did, I went at night. And it took me twelve years to do it. But I did it. And uh, it wasn't easy. Uh, I wasn't a typer. So I'd have to come down here to Center City, found a typist, and she would type my papers or whatever and I would do the best I could. And uh, and then I got a working group, I got in with a working group, a group of us got together and we were able to do things. Well somebody said, "I write well. You guys give me all of the information and I'll put it together." So this is how we, we did things. Um, at one point, you know, you didn't have to pay to go to school. You just went.

KD: Oh, if you worked at Jefferson?

KJ: Yeah, they took care of you. So if you flunked it didn't matter, or if you dropped out it didn't matter. I tell you, I would get so exhausted. It seemed like sometimes two weeks before the exam I couldn't do anymore. And I just quit. Until they started making you pay for it, and the day I had to pay for that class I dropped, I never, I never stopped taking one, I never dropped one. And uh, I got my degree. I did not know, we were waiting for, we -- I kept a lot of the exams. And I was waiting for a result to come back and it came back I think two days before graduation. That's when I found out that they accepted it. And I don't know. There was a Dr. Savacool here, he was one of the historians.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: I loved him. And he helped me a lot. And, when I went up, when I went to my seat, um, before we got on stage and went up, there was a dozen long stem red roses on my chair.

KD: Aw.

KJ: And I said, they said, "Oh, it's for somebody named Karen." I said, "Well I'm Karen. Let's see who it's from." It was from Dr. Savacool.

KD: Oh that's so sweet.

KJ: And he remembered. And uh, but I tell you, he was the most wonderful -- he reminded you of one of those country doctors. And he had a heart of gold, a heart of gold. And I didn't know he had died until I said uh, "Let me call him up." I hadn't heard from him for a while. And then that's when they told me he had. So. It was sad. But when he got his award here, I called over. I forgot who the president was, and I said, "Can I please get an invitation to go?" And I was able to go see him honored by the med students.

KD: Oh nice.

KJ: So um, a lot of people helped me out here. And I'm just appreciative of it. And uh, like I said as far as nursing, we're doing so many great things. Things you would have never thought of. I mean, we just did the work, kept the baby -- the, um, people happy. Like I said, I started out in med surge.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: I was here when they built the new building, and we had a choice, "Do you want to stay in the old building or go to the new?" I said, "Nah. New building, let's go over."

KD: Yeah.

KJ: So we started, I started out on the fifth floor, which was going to be the cardiac floor. We only stayed, "I don't know anything about the heart." And they said, "No, you're only going to be here a couple weeks or so. And that's what happened, and then we went down to third where they did med surge. Um, med surge, a lot of oncology. Um, you know, we gave a lot of meds. Now, a lot of certifications now, so you don't just do things.

KD: Sure.

KJ: Now, you know, you're being tested on it. Uh, yeah we're doing -- I was surprised when I saw a nurse do an ultrasound. You know, I was like, "Oh, they're doing these things these days." You know, 'cause I don't, we don't do that.

KD: Sure.

KJ: We didn't do that on the floor. Um, a lot more machines. A lot of things, a lot of technical things that nurses are doing that we probably hadn't done before. So I, I see that difference. And I tell ya, nursing is going to new heights.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And I don't think it's going to look back. I don't think we're going to look back. You know, and the education that the nurses are receiving now, I think is some of the greatest education a person could ever receive, you know. I'm just proud, I'm proud to be a nurse and I'm just as proud to be an employee

here. You know, there's the -- I'm going to say a saying that somebody used to say, "Jefferson's not the worst place to work. There's a lot wrong with Jefferson, there's a lot good." But somebody say, you know, I heard a man say, "Well it's like if your mother was a whore, you still love her." You know, your mother, you still love her {LG}.

KD: {LG}

KJ: So that's how I feel about Jefferson. You know, there's a lot wrong with it, there's a lot right.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: But it's where I want to be. Because I would have not gone anywhere else. And the only reason I'm in the nursery, I didn't get along with a supervisor. You know, and uh, it was either that -- Mr. Lawlor came to me and said, "Karen, don't let them do this to you." He said, "You're too good a nurse." He said, "Get out of here." 'Cause I'm thinking, "I'll go and fight you." But administration wouldn't have stuck by me. And when he told me that, he was a night shift supervisor, the next day I put in for a transfer. Got my transfer and I left.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And that's when I came up to the nursery, neonatal.

KD: And that's where you still are now, right?

KJ: Mm hm. Yeah. So, I mean, I've worked from soup to nuts. You know, I uh, I'm where I'm supposed to be, that's how I'll put it. Yeah. And I -- just like I said, the babies are alright, when you look at it they're no different than the C O P D or the adult. They got the same -- some of them you like some of them you don't {LG}. Some of them are just terrible {LG}. Little rug rats, is what I call them. But uh, they're funny. They're really funny. So they just stop breathing. Another person will fuss at you and moan all day, the baby says, "I'm dying right now. What you gonna do?" You know so, the babies usually stop breathing first. And then everything else crashes. But they're funny, and they all laugh, and you get to know them. And you know, they die, you feel bad, you know, and I, I guess the other thing how I look at dealing with such a fragile population is that, and even with the adults, death is not always a bad thing. You know, we can prolong somebody's death in an attempt to save somebody's life. But you gotta do what you have to do. And uh, so we see it everywhere we go. Whether it's an adult or whether it's a baby. We're going to try to defeat death, but in the meantime we're just belonging, you know, you're suffering. It's just something we just have to come to terms with. Some people can make the decision early that we're not going to do all of this.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: There are a lot of things in play, and people are looking at a lot of the things that we used to do. And everything is evidenced-based. And that's where we're going. And that's a good thing. So just because it was tradition that doesn't mean it was right.

KD: So this may be an obvious question, but it's one we like to ask, um, how has Jefferson affected your career and your life?

KJ: Hm. I'm trying to think. I guess, it's also helped me grow. You know, 'cause the person I was at sixteen, I'm not the same person now. I've experienced a lot more, I've seen a lot more. Um, I still have compassion. I've always had compassion. I believe it's just part of me. But I'm able to channel things, and it's made me want to excel. And if I compare it to the way I was as far as doing things and giving, that part hasn't changed. It might have even enhanced it, because I can still go out on a limb for anybody, even if I believe. And uh, and uh, it just made me, it made me prouder, um. And it's helped my self-esteem, you know. It's, it's done a lot of, a considerable amount of things it's done. Um, and it's also made me reach out, not that I haven't done it, and it's part of me.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: But I do reach out to people and other things, and I care about how people live their lives. I care about the health of other people. I care about the families. So through Jefferson of, of thousands of people that I've worked with here over the years, I've been able to impart something. Um, you don't have to have a big crowd. Just teaching one person, you might teach thousands. Somebody asked me one time, "How many people did you have at your meeting?" I said, "One." And they get, I don't get discouraged because that person that was there was supposed to be there. I know when I help somebody I'm not just helping that one person, I'm helping those other people because if somebody tells you something you're going to remember it. I diagnosed my own breast cancer based on what I heard, or what I learned, in nursing school. Oh, it will feel like an orange. It has the consistency. And I'm, you know, I'm having a little difficulty, and I, my eyes bugged, I said, "Oh, I have breast cancer."

KD: Wow.

KJ: That's what it was. From something I heard twenty years ago.

KD: Sure.

KJ: And so, you never know, just little bits of information, how to save somebody's life, you impart. To tell somebody where to look for something, to those fathers that come in, to tell them, Yes, you're a part, you have the right to give them permission to question." To have a parent advocate for their children. We're not always right. And sometimes we can miss the whole picture just by looking at lab results. We don't see the whole picture all the time. So we're teaching people to be their own advocates. That's what Jefferson has done. And it's helping me to help people to not be afraid when they question or they have an idea. Or because somebody has an education doesn't mean they know more than you, because they haven't lived your life. Now we can learn from everybody. And just as like I tell parents, "I don't know what it is parents see. They see things nobody else sees." I knew when my children were sick before they even showed symptoms. What am I seeing? You know, so, being impassioned, and I think I might have become a little more impassioned about certain things about health. I know I'm a little overweight. I don't always practice what I preach {LG}.

KD: {LG}

KJ: But I can give a good spiel.

KD: Uh huh.

KJ: You know. But that's what Jefferson has done. And I think it's made me more impassioned. And it makes me talk to other people about this place, because you don't always do that. You know, people don't always say good things about their, their jobs, you know. And, and the fact in this day and age that you have a job, a basic secure job. You have a pension. You know you're going to retire with something, you don't have to live on a grate. That's saying something. And I, I'm appreciative 'cause I don't have to be here. Nobody had to accept me. But they accepted me, and I give them my all. And that's what it's about. And we're in an interdependent, live in an interdependent society, that we all depend on each other.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: If people didn't get sick, we wouldn't be working. You wouldn't be a doctor, you wouldn't be a nurse, if everybody did everything they were supposed to do. So, instead of putting I'm up here and you're down here, no, you wouldn't be up there if it wasn't for me. If everybody's doing well, what do we need you for? So that's how we have -- and that's another thing I have to, I try to impart upon people, that we live in a society together. There were millions of people that worked for nothing, were forced to work to give other people, and other people took advantage of that. So they're up here and people are still down here. And the people want to blame the people because they're still down here.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: Well it doesn't change. People still on top. There's still racism here, there's racism at Jefferson, there's racism everywhere, you know, so. It just made me look at things in a different way, from being in a position that I'm in. And it also put me in the position that I know I can't change everybody and everything and some people even know I'm a stickler for, there's some battles I'm not ready to fight yet. And some battles that would do me a disservice to fight, so I fight the best way I can, just to make it better for somebody else. So, but Jefferson has, has afforded me the opportunity to do things for other people. I may not be able to get on every picket line, but I can give you a couple of dollars to help you, you know. So, I've been afforded an opportunity that I didn't want to go away. And I give my all, you know so. I've seen it change, and I'm a tell you, one of the biggest changes is swiping in.

KD: Oh, yeah.

KJ: Oh? Can you imagine? And I can do it most days, and other days, it's the farthest thing from my mind, when something stops me from punching out.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: You know, and I did before, it was nothing for me to supposedly get off at three-thirty, and I'm here until five o'clock. Just doing stuff, making it easier for somebody else. Finishing stuff. "I'm not leaving this."

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: You know, this is what I'm supposed to do because of my assignment, and it's a difficult concept for me. And maybe it's from the old-school, you know, I -- it's a little difficult.

KD: Yeah.

KJ: So that, that was a fun -- I never thought that'd come, that we would have to punch in, punch out. I never thought it would come. So, but uh, but this place has afforded me a lot of opportunity, and it afforded me the capabilities and the educational background to help thousands of people. And that's basically what it's done.

KD: Alright.

KJ: So.

KD: Do you have any advice for current or future nursing students?

KJ: Stay the course. And if you look back on. I guess if you're looking at life, I can say this now, now next week I'll be saying something different {LG}, but, as you go through life you're gonna have your ups and downs. And if you look back over, as hard as you think things are now, look back at all the hurdles that you've overcome. You never thought you would get through that one. You never thought you'd get through that heartache. You never thought you would pass that exam. And that exam that you did flunk, you never thought you would pass another one after that. So I tell them to stay the course and do the best they can. Everybody's not going to make an A and when you get out of there, no matter what school you go to, everybody gets the same degree.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And the prestige might come from the school, but you all get -- I have the same degree that you have. So I just tell people to just keep that in mind. Just do your best. And all that you can't do, don't worry about it. You know, because everybody's not going to make an A. We'd love to, but we're not going to do it. But we can do the best that we can. And it might be something that in your course, in your travel you might find something that you're so impassioned about that it just come right to you. And you'll be able to grasp it.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: And you have a whole lifetime ahead of you. Because you might not. You might want to be something one day but it doesn't mean you're going to be the next day. I still want to be an auto mechanic and I still want to be a carpenter, you know, nothing said I can't. When I passed the exam for the police department, I was going, but they said I couldn't do that and do this too. I had to concentrate

on one thing. When Miss Huijsen said I was getting a sixteen percent raise with the cost of living blah blah blah, and I was going to take a cut in pay to join the police department, I said I'd be a fool to go. Didn't I break my foot or something? So had I gone to the police department I wouldn't have had any healthcare.

KD: Sure.

KJ: So things happen for a reason. And sometimes things are just not meant to be, you know. And I also tell people, if things happen to you, like when I was diagnosed with cancer, now, I'll tell to students, "If it wasn't you it'd be somebody else." And don't think because bad things happen that you did anything wrong. Or because you didn't pass a test that you're not worthy. Give yourself a break. I just, like I tell my daughter, my granddaughter, "Do the best you can. That's all you can do." You know, and things -- you're going to look back over this and you're going to say, "Woo! Can you imagine? Never thought I'd make it." But you're doing it. And a lot of things I thought I, I didn't think I'd get through, that psych class, I did. Have I been fired for running my mouth? Yes. I've gotten through what I didn't think I was, no. I always did what I was going to do. But it was just something that was in me that I was going to come through. So um, I would tell them that, just persevere and you might find something that you like. And because you want to do something today doesn't mean you're going to want to do it tomorrow. Because I'm not the same person I was when I was a little girl. Headstrong, that part hasn't changed. But I've grown. And I'm able to look back at myself and see that I'm not perfect, even though I talk a good game, I'm like everybody else, you know. And that we're all human beings. And remember to treat people not only how you'd like to be treated, unless you want to be beat up then you going to beat up everybody {LG}. But, treat people like you'd like to be treated, and respect goes a long way. And it carries you a long way. And remember that the people that you meet up when you're working your way up are the same people you're going to meet if you come down. And not to say that you gotta be nice because you don't want anyone stepping on you if you fall, but you treat people with respect and you be nice to people because that's what you should do, because that's what we all want. We all want to be treated with respect, treated decently, and not abused. And that's what most people want. And {NS}.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: Probably my father. {NS}

KD: Feel free to grab it if you'd like.

KJ: How long have we been talking?

KD: About an hour.

KJ: And that's just part of my story.

KD: Alright. We are down to just one question left though.

KJ: Oh, last question.



KD: Yeah. Um, which is just open ended, is there anything else you'd like to say or mention that we haven't talked about yet? About Jefferson, about nursing, about your life?

KJ: Um, Jefferson, Jefferson, Jefferson. My life. What am I doing now?

KD: Yeah.

KJ: I belong to the Cecil B. Moore Philadelphia Freedom Fighters. And uh, our lega-, our mission is to keep the legacy of Cecil B. Moore alive. And um, this was the man that was the head of the N double A C P in the sixties. Um, led demonstrations for Trailways to get black bus drivers and everything. Everybody else started to fail, I mean started to fall in line. The airlines. He was responsible for getting them to hire black pilots and all, 'cause he had them come to him saying he wanted a program within twenty one days and come back -- I mean thirty days -- come back with a program to hire pilots, and things like that. Stopped blackface in the Mummers parade because they used to come down Broad Street with the blackface. He fought the Board of Education. You know, they were, black teachers couldn't teach everywhere. They wouldn't let them go different places to teach. So a lot of things that we take for granted we think was always that way, somebody had to break the door down. So this is who, um, this is one of my mentors when I was coming up. And our legacy is, is to keep his legacy alive. That's what we want to do. So you know you have the subway stop named after him. Alright, well you know Temple has done a lot of expansion, so they took over the subway stop, with all of their advertisements. So we just, we just had -- we went to Septa complaining about what was done, so they took that down. So now we're fighting them to put up what we want to put up, not what they want to put up. Um, the History Making Production just did a documentary on Cecil's people, which was us. And they just won an Emmy, a Mid-Atlantic Emmy award for that. Uh, for part two. So there's one and two and part three will be coming out. So.

KD: OK.

KJ: So that's what I do. Um, I volunteer in the neighborhood, you know.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: Um, I belong to an organization called the Posse, we're a dance, we're an old school, old school, oldies dancing. Um, I support so many organizations, so many different things. Um, financially I do. You know, I can't always be there all the time, but financially I support a lot of organizations. Oh, what else do I do? My father's eighty-five, my mom's eighty-four, so, you know, it's working with them. Mostly my father because he lives alone. Uh, and the job, I got a granddaughter, and um, I guess I'm just, I guess I'm an all-around person. I'm just too busy for my own self, you know, and um, I guess that's it -- I don't know if I'll ever stop. Every year we work with uh, we partner with Todd Bernstein with the M L K Day, uh, at Girard College. So this Girard College, I mean Martin Luther King Day we will be presenting in the auditorium at Girard College so we talk about Cecil Moore, we talk about the Freedom Fighters. Uh, we have, um, interactions, you know, demonstrations, you know, mock demonstrations. We sing freedom songs, uh, we have speakers, we have entertainment. So, all of that going on. So we do that every year. Uh, what else do we do? We do the festivals, uh, just showing that information. Uh, and that's basically

it. And doing what we can and speaking out. We can't fight every battle, because so many battles we fought there's enough for everybody, but it's about that social activism, and I don't think it ever leaves you. You know, sometimes you will wax and wane.

KD: Mm hm.

KJ: But it never leaves. You know, and even here, you had to be an advocate, and I guess I am an advocate. And that's basically what I do. Um, and as far as my career, Jefferson, I don't think I could have asked for anything better. In the grand scheme of things, this is one of the best places to work. And I've watched people come and go over the years, and many have come back.

KD: Hm.

KJ: You know, because it is the best. I really think this is the best place to work. You know, could it get better? Yeah, anybody could get better, but I, I do. I do see us progressing and moving. And the commitment, to keeping Jefferson alive because you've got so many different hospitals and, and just so many different things going on, you just do have to reinvent yourself, and that's a constant. I tell you this, I've had to reinvent myself too. But uh, yeah, I just, I just think that's it. And uh, if I think of something I'll call you.

KD: OK.

[End of recording]