

[0:00:00]

Irene: This is Irene Ruiz interviewing Mrs. Lydia Rocha Estevez at Penn Valley Community College on January the 30th, 1978. Mrs. Estevez, I would like you to tell me something about the place of your birth and the date of your birth; if you care to?

Lydia: I was born in Broadwater, Nebraska November the 7th of 1919.

[0:00:30] I lived through as a baby, so I don't remember anything about Nebraska.

Irene: In other words you moved away and lived elsewhere? Now would you tell me about the names of your parents and they resided at one place or moved around, you might briefly mention those and maybe the area, the city that you remember more as a youngster having spent a number of years there.

Lydia: My mother's name was Maria Delgado Rocha; my father's name was Elpidio Rocha.

[0:01:03] I understand from their conversations that they moved around a lot from Texas, but the only place that I ever recall is Kansas City; I don't remember any of the other places.

Irene: So you were fairly young, in other words, when you came here? You were born in Nebraska and you came here; now so then you lived in one house and one specific area for a certain number of years; you probably remember that. So then I'd like for you to give me a little description of whatever you recall the most; if you did move.

[0:01:35]

Lydia: The only time that I can recall is that we lived at 2405, from there we moved to 2322 Holly, and then we moved 2324 Holly, which is still the family home. So we didn't really move around a lot, we stayed...

Irene: You stayed there.

Lydia: ...between the area we lived on Mercier and Mercier is one block west of Holly, so we lived in the same area for over 50 years.

[0:02:03]

Irene: All right so then you ought to have some good recollection of what the general composition of the neighborhood was, generally speaking, the majority of the people worked; were they working people?

Lydia: Yes.

Irene: Would they be low income, medium, or was it a variety of...

Lydia: Well we lived in an area where we were -- they contained the Mexican families in one area, which was the West Side.

[0:02:31]

Irene: You mean by containing you mean this was force...

Lydia: Yes, they just didn't sell homes to Mexicans where we had to stay within an area. It wasn't written but it wasn't encouraged...

Irene: It was an unwritten law?

Lydia: Yeah.

Irene: So how did your father earn his living?

Lydia: Most of the people in that area, from what I can recall, they either worked for the Santa Fe or the packing house.

[0:03:00] My father worked for the packing house. He worked for Cudahy's Packinghouse, then he worked at Swift's; those are the only two places that I can remember that he did work.

Irene: Was this, then, typical; you said since the Mexican American people were contained there, the majority of them worked...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: ...in those two areas, more or less? And so what school did you -- or schools did you attend?

Lydia: I attended Adams School as a grade school up through the sixth grade...

[0:03:30] ...and then we went to West High School, which is at 18th and Summit; from there we completed the two -- it was a two-year school, then we went on to Manual High School, if we went to a four-year high school. At that time it was encouraged that the majority -- not the majority, but a great number of the Mexican boys and girls they either went to a trade school or the boys went to a trade school, which was at Jane Hayes Gates for the girls, and Lathrop for the boys.

[0:04:05] And then the ones that did not go to trade school or did not go on to school, the rest of them would go to Manual High School, which is a senior high school.

Irene: And so you followed that route; you went to West and then did you graduate from Manual?

Lydia: I went to West and then I graduated from Manual, yes.

Irene: All right. Were you -- was -- were you -- I know or your family, were you members of the Church Guadalupe or some other church in the neighborhood?

[0:04:30]

Lydia: Yes, we were members of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Irene: Our Lady of Guadalupe. So would you say that generally speaking most of your neighbors, then, belonged to the church?

Lydia: Yes. I would say the majority of them they did belong to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Although there are two other churches in the neighborhood, which is a Baptist and the Christian church, but the majority of them did go to the Our Lady of Guadalupe.

[0:05:03]

Irene: Did you, as you recall those years, did you belong to any organization, probably within the church, or school affiliated? I'm thinking of either scouting or some other [unintelligible 0:05:16]...

Lydia: Yes.

Irene: ...which at that time I know those organizations would have either girls' or boys' names probably attached to them; would they not?

Lydia: No, I belonged to the Girl Scouts and...

[0:05:30] ...then I belonged to a social club all there in the neighborhood.

Irene: What was this called?

Lydia: Gosh, I can't remember.

Irene: Was this predominantly girls again or was this a social club for...

Lydia: It was a social club...

Irene: Predominantly females?

Lydia: Right, hm-hmm.

Irene: And how about the...

Lydia: But there was also a club for the young men and then we would have activities together like dancing, or we'd go roller-skating, or we would go on hay rides, or things like that for boys and girls.

[0:06:02]

Irene: You did have some joint affairs that you participated in. How about the Center, the Guadalupe Center wasn't that active then?

Lydia: It was very active but our family didn't participate too much. We were -- I come from a family of ten; eight of us are still -- some of us are still living, and...

Irene: You said "ten," excuse me, that would be ten children; you say?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

[0:06:33]

Irene: You were one of ten?

Lydia: And I guess -- and my father always felt had a belief that there were plenty of us at home that we didn't have too much of this other outside activity. And I was very active in swimming, and roller-skating, and my hobbies were [unintelligible 0:06:52] roller-skating and swimming, which we had some days -- they had some days up at West that they let us go swimming and...

[0:07:00] ...I did a lot of reading, and I guess that's about the way that -- and then...

Irene: But every time you had -- some of the other questions I was going to get to that in other words your free time, if you had some, you devoted to reading and all that. Now, you said "swimming," and where exactly...

Lydia: At West High School.

Irene: ...they did have the pool there inside?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: Because I've heard that...

Okay, so you were saying you enjoyed reading, and swimming, you would sew, and roller-skating and all that?

[0:07:33]

Lydia: And as I said swimming was at West High School; there was a public swimming pool, which was...

Irene: And did you go to the public swimming pool?

Lydia: This was at the Penn Valley and they would have days for just the Mexicans.

Irene: Oh, I see. In other words you could not participate when the general...

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...public...

Lydia: No.

Irene: But this was supposed to be a public, like under the auspices of the city Recreation Department?

Lydia: Right, but we were not allowed to swim there on the days -- we would...

[0:08:02] ...the days that they would let us swim would be just the days before they cleaned out the pool, then that was our day for swimming. Then the city built the Swope Park swimming pool; and, again, they wouldn't let the Mexicans in with...

Irene: Not every day at Swope Park?

Lydia: No.

Irene: But did you have...

Lydia: We had certain days, but when they did open that pool...

[0:08:30] ...a friend of mine -- myself and a friend we went out to Swope Park and they told us that they couldn't let us in to swim, so this friend and myself we stood in line, wouldn't let people in. We just stood there and...

Irene: You just held the place, in other words, to block...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: ...you were staging your own...

Lydia: Yeah. At that time I didn't know...

Irene: It wasn't a sit-in...

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...it was a stand-in?

Lydia: It was a stand-in. Of course, I didn't do it because we thought it was a stand-in, we just -- it just infuriated me that we couldn't go in to swim.

[0:09:00] And we just stood there and...

Irene: In other words you had not known this before you went up there...

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...it was just a sort of a shock?

Lydia: Right. And then we stood there and the gentleman couldn't make us move from there, we weren't making any racket or any ruckus or anything, so he must have called somebody at City Hall because they did let us in, and from then on they let the Mexicans in.

Irene: Is that right?

Lydia: Uh-huh. And the girl that was with me was Hilda [Fuente]; she was very athletic, too.

[0:09:31]

Irene: Hilda?

Lydia: Fuente.

Irene: Irene, sister?

Lydia: Uh-huh.

Irene: Very well. Are there any other events such as that or some other activity from that period that stands out in your mind [unintelligible 0:09:46]...

Lydia: Yes, what stands out in my mind was that the education that they had for the Mexican Americans at that time, we went to a school, which was Adams and it was really a condemned school.

Irene: Adams, you're speaking of the elementary school?

Lydia: Right.

Irene: It no longer exists; right?

Lydia: No.

[0:10:00]

Irene: Where was it located?

Lydia: It was located at 24th and Mercier; and the reason I say that it must have been condemned was because we could not use the upstairs because the water would come in.

Irene: Through leaking? I mean, the roof was leaking?

Lydia: Uh-huh.

Irene: Could have caused a...

Lydia: And finally...

Irene: ...health hazard as well as the roof could have collapsed?

Lydia: Right. Finally, finally I guess it was condemned because then it was made into apartments.

[0:10:30]

Irene: And tore down and made into apartments? Now was this Adams School predominantly attended by Mexican Americans?

Lydia: Right, hm-hmm.

Irene: And this was from the first grade or...

Lydia: To sixth.

Irene: To sixth grade?

Lydia: Uh-huh. And I remember also that the teachers didn't want us to speak Spanish. We'd be punished.

Irene: Was Spanish, then, the language you spoke at home?

Lydia: Right.

Irene: And at school you couldn't; were you punished?

Lydia: We were punished, uh-huh, yes.

Irene: For speaking Spanish?

Lydia: Yes. Like, for instance, stay after school or stand in the corner,

[0:11:00]

Irene: Did you have to ride write or do anything like that?

Lydia: I can't remember that we did that...

[Crosstalk 0:11:05]

Irene: Still you were reprimanded?

Lydia: Hm-hmm cause we spoke Spanish.

Irene: Was this done with any sort of tact where you were told...

Lydia: No, some of the teachers weren't very tactful.

Irene: Just told that you couldn't speak Spanish?

Lydia: Uh-huh. How do we expect to learn English that we were here in the United States and we should speak English?

Irene: How did your parents react to that? Of course, maybe you were lucky and maybe they spoke English and that might have helped you, but -- did they speak -- just speak Spanish?

[0:11:33]

Lydia: My mother didn't speak English.

Irene: Any English?

Lydia: My father taught himself, he went to night school to learn English and to write English.

Irene: And did you find that difficult then when you were very little?

Lydia: Annoying. It annoyed me that they wouldn't let us speak it because I felt that it was an advantage to be able to speak two languages, but, of course, let's say, huh.

[0:12:03]

Irene: All right, then looking on a little bit beyond that, then when you were in junior school or, rather, in high school were there activities that you were excluded from again because you were Mexican American or because of your language?

Lydia: I wasn't aware of it there when I was attending school because I belonged to the hockey team, and the baseball team, and all the teams that I would want...

[0:12:34]

Irene: You were active in sports?

Lydia: I was very active in sports and I didn't notice anything then. But looking back now we had some excellent teachers but then we also had some teachers that weren't very excellent -- you still have it now, I mean...

Irene: We're not -- you didn't feel were as well qualified, I mean, in thinking back now?

Lydia: Uh-huh, and well I worked there, later on I worked there in the library and I could see the reaction some of those teachers had towards the minorities and some of the...

[0:13:03] ...some of the teachers, I felt, that they had there, and this is when I was working there at the library...

Irene: So this was a number of years later?

Lydia: Right. I could see that some of the teachers that they had -- I'm not saying this is true about all the teachers, but some of the teachers that they had I didn't really feel that they were qualified to be teaching there. When my opinion...

Irene: These teachers...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: Excuse me. Were some of these teachers that you were speaking of, were they any that had been there when you had been there as a student?

[0:13:32]

Lydia: Oh, no, uh-huh.

Irene: No? This would have been...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: ...quite a number of years later?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: I see. But what I'm trying to get at, too, is then when you were at West, for instance, were the children or the students predominantly Mexican American...

Lydia: No, I was...

Irene: ...or you said it was a mixture by then?

Lydia: Right. I think there was a mixture...

Irene: What number would you say of Mexican American students were there -- attending then when you attended?

Lydia: I would say that it was about...

[0:14:01] ...it was about -- when I was attending?

Irene: When you were attending. When you were a student at West?

Lydia: Oh, when I was attending the majority were white, were Anglos, uh-huh.

Irene: Anglo?

Lydia: Uh-huh.

Irene: Were there any Black children?

Lydia: Very few.

Irene: Very, very few?

Lydia: Uh-huh. Not until I started working there much later, that's when -- I would say that it was divided about 30, 30, 30 because of the housing project and we had quite a few Blacks and quite a few Mexican Americans.

[0:14:31]

Irene: Were you encouraged, then, to say -- I'm speaking at home, but particularly at school, for instance, were you encouraged then by the counselors, if you had them, or by your teachers, did they encourage you then to go on to high school or...

Lydia: Would you believe that all the time I was in school I didn't even know what a counselor was? A counselor never...

Irene: Did you have counselors there, then, as far as you know?

Lydia: I would imagine so. I don't know.

Irene: You mean you never went to a counselor for any advice or orientation...

[0:15:04]

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...into what career you might follow...

Lydia: Huh-uh.

Irene: ...or any sort of thing? Did you know if any other students went for counseling?

Lydia: No.

Irene: Did you find out later?

Lydia: Hmm-hm. We were encouraged to obtain more education because of our parents. Our parents emphasized the importance of education.

Irene: In other words you're saying that because of your parents but not because of school did anything...

Lydia: That's right.

Lydia: ...as far as you could tell then, or maybe you, in thinking back now, you realize that the school did not encourage?

[0:15:33] But what I would also like to clarify is you feel, then, was there a sort of a concerted effort on the part of the school or administration then...

Lydia: I don't think so.

Irene: ...to discourage -- but nothing to encourage?

Lydia: Nothing.

Irene: Maybe not discourage but they didn't encourage; is that it?

Lydia: Right.

Irene: So, like you said, very often the boys went to a certain type of school...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...than the girls? Would you say a large number, then, of the girls, the Mexican American girls, then, did not go on; did many of them in your group, did they go on to high school?

[0:16:04] From there did they go to the Manual; many that you know? What would you say; very few?

Lydia: At my time I think about as many went on to Redemptorist as went to Manual.

Irene: The Catholic School?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: But would you say there was a large number, then -- in other words, did they start falling off, like, after they finished...

[0:16:31]

Lydia: Right. After...

Irene: ...elementary school, after they finished junior high school?

Lydia: Well, Irene, I really couldn't really say honestly because as I've told you before we really weren't -- we didn't go out with groups of friends and...

Irene: Outside of the neighborhood?

Lydia: Uh-huh. But I would say that the girls that I went to school with I guess most of them went on to Manual High School -- either to Manual or to Redemptorist.

[0:17:03]

Irene: So in spite of the lack of encouragement, if we can say it that way from the school, there was still some of you who went on to finish high school and maybe beyond that?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: Did you have many other responsibilities at home, too? I know you said you came from a large family, so I imagine did you have to help at home? At home? Not any more than...

Lydia: Not any more than was expected of, you know, a large family. You had to learn how to -- no.

[0:17:31]

Irene: Just helping...

Lydia: We were never -- it was encouraged that we do our homework. That was the most important thing, but, no, we didn't have to hold any outside jobs or anything. My father was the sole supporter of the family.

Irene: But at home, I mean, you did help at home?

Lydia: Oh, yes.

Irene: Just duties at home; when I'm saying not outside the home, I meant at home you had...

Lydia: Oh, yes.

Irene: ...probably cleaning up, or kitchen, or...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: Since you were a large family.

[0:18:00] In thinking back, too, were there any other -- not any other, I'm sorry, I don't think we had talked about any other -- any major event that happened while you were still living there. Were you living there during World War II?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: How it affected maybe your immediate family; maybe uncles or cousins, or somebody who had to go to the war; were there any changes that you could, as you think back, that occurred because of the war?

[0:18:32] Or at least how did the war, then, affect you? Were there people leave, many...

Lydia: I wasn't...

Irene: ...you don't remember then..

Lydia: I wasn't at home then.

Irene: Oh, you were already away?

Lydia: Uh-huh, so I couldn't tell you. I wasn't there for the flood; I was living in Washington, DC.

Irene: Well that was a little bit later, but I was thinking in '45 you were already gone, then?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: Not in '45, in '45 the war ended, but in the early '40s...

[0:19:00] ...were you not living there or you don't recall?

Lydia: I just know that quite a few of the boys went away to service, but I really wasn't there cause I moved away from home in about '43, I guess. That's when I was married, so I just -- and I moved out of town.

Irene: And you moved immediately...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...afterwards? All right, so then did you...

[0:19:30] ...you said you moved away but that was when you were married; did you secure a job right after graduation from high school or did you -- were you still living at home? What did you do this...

Lydia: No, when I graduated it was during the Depression and my parents were very proud people and, of course, during the Depression a lot of people lost their jobs, a lot of people went back to Mexico.

[0:20:00] But my father lost his job and -- but instead of going on welfare, which we would have qualified because of the number of children, instead we went to the wheat fields.

Irene: Oh, so this is...

Lydia: My father...

Irene: ...moved around?

Lydia: ...my father and my brother and myself, so that we would not go on welfare.

Irene: You couldn't starve and you didn't want to go on welfare so you did the next...

[0:20:30]

Lydia: Uh-huh, so we went to wheat fields and we went there for three summers or at least three summers while the rest of the family went to school. I graduated so I was the logical one to go.

Irene: To work?

Lydia: To work -- well...

Irene: To help with the family?

Lydia: But, no, to do the cooking and my father and my brother would work in the fields, but, of course, I helped.

[0:21:00] Because Esther had not graduated, so Esther stayed home to take care of the children, the ones that were going to school.

Irene: Which ones?

Lydia: The younger ones. And we went there for three years and by that time, then, my father found a job and then we didn't go to wheat fields anymore.

Irene: You were able to stay there, then...

Lydia: And then, of course, then the war broke out and I started working, I worked at North American and right after that -- I worked there about a year-and-a-half.

Irene: North American what was...

Lydia: Aviation.

Irene: Oh, aviation?

Lydia: Hm-hmm, bomber plant, B-25s.

[0:21:32]

Irene: What kind of work did you do there?

Lydia: I was a riveter.

Irene: A what?

Lydia: A riveter.

Irene: Oh, this would have been in the early '40s?

Lydia: I was a riveter and I also did wiring.

Irene: Did you learn there on...

Lydia: [Unintelligible 0:21:46].

Irene: I know, but I mean, did you learn the...

Lydia: No, I took classes for it.

Irene: You took classes?

Lydia: Hm-hmm. I took classes for...

Irene: On your own, you mean, or...

Lydia: I signed up for them, no, I signed up for them at -- they had classes at the Lathrop, OBL Lathrop School, and I took...

[0:22:03]

Irene: Were these evening classes or day classes?

Lydia: They were day classes. I took the classes...

Irene: And you didn't have to pay?

Lydia: No.

Irene: These were -- was this part of your course load when you were in school or...

Lydia: Oh, no, no.

Irene: This was later?

Lydia: Yes.

Irene: That's what I was trying to determine.

Lydia: This was later.

Irene: So you could qualify or feel that you were able to...

Lydia: Qualify for one of the jobs.

Irene: For one of those jobs?

Lydia: I took blueprint reading and riveting and wiring.

[0:22:30] And then I got a job and I worked there for about a year-and-a-half then I got married and moved away from Kansas City.

Irene: Yes, and about what time was this? This was probably, you said, in the early '50s; right?

Lydia: Oh, no, this was -- the war broke out and I worked for about a year-and-a-half.

Irene: Yes, but when you got married, was this, too, in the '40s then?

Lydia: Oh, yes, uh-huh.

Irene: Then you went to Washington DC?

Lydia: Went to Florida.

Irene: First? Now was this because your husband was in the military service...

Lydia: Yes.

Irene: ...or was he working for the government?

[0:23:02]

Lydia: No, he was in the Navy Air Corp.

Irene: And then...

Lydia: Then we came back.

Irene: From Florida you returned here?

Lydia: Hm-hmm. And then my husband went to school, went to college to St. Benedict's one year and went to Penn State Junior College one year and then he went to Georgetown University in Washington DC and we moved to Washington DC.

[0:23:31]

Irene: You lived there?

Lydia: And we lived there for about six years. And my second son was born there.

Irene: And your first son was born here in Kansas City?

Lydia: Kansas City.

Irene: And then your second son was born...

Lydia: In Washington DC.

Irene: ...in Washington? And then...

Lydia: When my husband graduated then he got a job with the government.

Irene: What is his field?

Lydia: Then?

Irene: Well what was his field of specialization?

[0:24:00]

Lydia: Oh, foreign service. Foreign service because then we went to...

Irene: To Germany.

Lydia: ...Germany for a while and we were in Germany about a year-and-a-half and my daughter was born there.

Irene: Now this was about what year?

Lydia: Let's see.

Irene: Well you were saying your husband got an assignment in Europe and you were stationed in Germany; is that correct?

Lydia: Frankfurt, Germany.

Irene: Frankfurt. And then you were there about a year-and-a-half.

Lydia: Then we returned.

[0:24:30]

Irene: And then you returned to the United States.

Lydia: Uh-huh, and we came to Kansas City and he got a job at City Hall and...

Irene: He obtained a job with City Hall?

Lydia: City Hall.

Irene: What kind of work was that?

Lydia: Administrative assistant in -- I think he was with...

Irene: You don't remember, but he was working for City Hall then?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: And you came back and by this time where were you residing; you were no longer at the Holly address were you?

Lydia: No.

[0:25:00]

We got an apartment on the West Side, but not with my mother because by that time my mother was very ill, so we got an apartment as close as possible

to her house so that I could go see her; look after her cause everybody else was working.

Irene: Were you working outside the home then or were you staying at home...

Lydia: I was staying at home.

Irene: ...then and looking after the children?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

[0:25:30] And I stayed at home until my daughter was...

Irene: She's the youngest of the children; right?

Lydia: Uh-huh.

Irene: So you waited until she was...

Lydia: About two years old and then by that time, of course, I was also, as I say, looking after my mother and she passed away, and by that time, then, my daughter was about two years old, I guess, and I put her in a nursery and I started working.

Irene: Is this when you went to work for the library?

Lydia: Right, uh-huh.

Irene: Or the KC Missouri...

Lydia: Right and I was...

Irene: ...Public Library.

[0:26:00]

Lydia: ...and I was there for 11 years.

Irene: You were at one location for 11 years?

Lydia: I was at West for about eight and at the main library for about three years.

Irene: Three years? And then what did you do after that?

Lydia: I left because I felt there was discrimination.

Irene: At the library?

Lydia: At the library. I felt there was discrimination; it was very subtle, but it was there.

Irene: Did you get any additional training or did you go to school at your own?

[0:26:32]

Lydia: I was going to school on my own to junior college at night and then I resigned...

Irene: Excuse me, I'm going to interrupt here, I don't want to run out of tape, and then we'll go over this last question again. Press both here now.

[0:27:00]

This is a continuation of an interview with Mrs. Lydia Estevez. Mrs. Estevez, you were saying that you left your position with the library because you felt there was some discrimination there, subtle as it might be, and then you decided to go into further training to continue with your career or was seeking another job?

[0:27:30]

Lydia: Well all along I was going to -- off and on, I was going to junior college.

Irene: While you were working?

Lydia: While I was working because if you -- I had three children that were young, they were going to school, and I was working full time, so going nights was pretty hard, so I would go and then I would drop off and then I'd go back. But when I left the library I went to work for ICS and I did interviewing and secretarial work, and I worked there for...

[0:28:00]

Irene: ICS?

Lydia: Institute for Community Services. And I was there for approximately two to three years, and I left there simply because it was a -- all the work was funded through grants and it was very important to me to work because -- since I had had such a bad experience with the public school, I didn't want my children to go through the same thing...

[0:28:32]

...and I put them all in private parochial schools. And they were already in high school, and they also went to parochial high school; my two sons went to Rockhurst High School, my daughter went to Loretto, and so it was very important that I work, I could not...

Irene: In other words you needed that additional financial help that you could get if you were working...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...to be able to keep them in school?

[0:29:00]

Lydia: And that was the reason I left ICS because we did work on grants and it was always dependent on whether they would be funded.

Irene: So not a very sure...

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...thing? And by that time...

Lydia: But I enjoyed that work very much. Then by that time I found the job here at Penn Valley and I've been here ever since.

Irene: So you've been working for Penn Valley Community College since 19...

Lydia: I've been here eight years.

[0:29:30]

Irene: Nineteen seventy?

Lydia: Hm-hmm. It'll be seven years.

Irene: And what type of position did you start here?

Lydia: I started out as secretary to the president of the college.

Irene: Here at Penn Valley?

Lydia: At Penn Valley.

Irene: You were secretary to Doctor...

Lydia: Girard T. Bryant.

Irene: ...Girard T. Bryant and then to [Dr. Lott]?

Lydia: No, then I went to work for [Mr. Preakle], secretary for Mr. Preakle.

Irene: Who was then...

[0:30:00]

Lydia: The Assistant Dean to Academic Affairs [unintelligible 0:30:01].

Irene: And then what have you...

Lydia: And now I work -- I was Community Services Assistant and I worked out of the Academic Affairs Office, and I work...

Irene: So what does your position entail now? Obviously you've gone on from one position to another, but always with more responsibility...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...added to your load? So what are some of your duties now?

[0:30:31]

Lydia: I work in the scheduling of classes with all the full-time and part-time faculty; also to work with the community for -- to encourage the community to use our facilities and our services.

Irene: So you have to set up further schedules -- site for the use of an auditorium, or use a film, or...

Lydia: Hm-hmm...

[Crosstalk 0:31:00]

Irene: So you have quite a bit of contact with students but more so with faculty and faculty members and with the public and the community...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...which is a responsible position? In the meantime somewhere along the line you were divorced so you still had the responsibility of your children; or were your children fairly grown when this came about?

Lydia: They were pretty much...

[0:31:31] ...they were almost out of the house, right, so I still had the responsibility of the last one at home, my daughter, but she has since married and has finished her schooling, is teaching now.

Irene: So now you're out of your three children, two have gone on -- excuse me. You were saying your three children, and I know you mentioned earlier...

[0:32:00] ...your daughter attended Loretto Academy and was graduated from the high school there and two sons went to Rockhurst, and I know that at least two of them have gone into professional work; so would you say just a little bit about that; Richard Estevez and then your other children?

Lydia: Richard, who is the eldest of my children, is presently a principal at Douglass Elementary School. Ronald, who is my middle child, who is -- I'm very happy to say that after dropping out of two years -- he went to two years...

[0:32:35] ...he went to school two years to K State and moved to California in San Diego. I spoke to him last weekend and he is enrolling at Berkeley to complete his -- so hopefully he will be completing his college education.

Irene: So he has lived in California for some time now?

Lydia: Yeah, a year ago August. He's been there a year in August.

Irene: He did live here for a while?

Lydia: Right, and he just moved over there.

[0:33:01] And my youngest...

Irene: Child is your daughter.

Lydia: ...is my daughter and she went to KU, graduated, got her Bachelor's and Master's in special education and she is presently teaching at Topeka.

Irene: She's teaching in Topeka, Kansas for private or public...

Lydia: Public, the Topeka Public School System.

Irene: What level?

Lydia: It's special education there.

Irene: Special education in the district?

Lydia: Right, hm-hmm.

[0:33:30] There is no break level on special -- essentially they're from first, second, or third, wherever they need them in the grade school.

Irene: Oh, the elementary level?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: All right, as you look back and then look ahead you feel like you've done fairly well in spite of the obstacles, particularly with your children; but along the way do you feel you have ever received any recognition for some of your work; outside of your family or immediate...

[0:34:03] ...any recognition anywhere?

Lydia: I'm sure that I must have somewhere along the lines.

Irene: Received it? And you can't recall? Well I was thinking of something that would be obvious.

Lydia: I think I may have because I feel that just being promoted, you know, from one job to the other is some kind of a recognition, so, yeah, I think I have received some recognition.

[0:34:30]

Irene: What about your plans for the future and what you would like to accomplish as you look ahead?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: You strike me as the type of person who has worked very hard to get these promotions; obviously they haven't come just because you are who you are or whatever, but you prepared yourself and you've worked?

Lydia: Well what I'm hoping to do is that I'm still going to school and...

[0:35:00] ...I really don't have any degree in mind, but I'm taking courses so that when I retire I would like to volunteer in the elementary school with mixed and American children. And the reason I say volunteer is because...

[0:35:30] ...I want to be able to go into the school where I would like to go; and really what I would like to be able is to work in the schools where my children would be teaching because then I could give them all the time that they would need because they really need help.

Irene: Are you interested in doing this because of your own experiences that you had...

Lydia: Right.

Irene: ...and children that you know that have encountered problems, you feel you would not only know something about it but have an understanding?

Lydia: Right.

[0:36:00]

Irene: And be able to help?

Lydia: And the children could identify.

Irene: Identify with you?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: And you said you weren't certain what degree you might pursue, but where are you taking courses now; or where have you been taking courses recently? At different places?

Lydia: No, I'm taking courses here because...

Irene: At Penn Valley.

Lydia: ...in the last two, three years it's when I thought, well, that's what I want to do when I retire. And so...

Irene: You want to devote your time and do what you really want to?

[0:36:30]

Lydia: Right, because I have taken enough courses that I could have had my Associate's in Business and also my Associate's in Secretarial, but that isn't what I want.

Irene: In other words you don't want to stay with that...

Lydia: No.

Irene: ...after you get through working, you just want to do something you will enjoy...

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: ...but feel that it's profiting, or that it would help somebody?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: All right, is there anything else that you would like to add?

[0:37:01] As you look back is there one person or persons that you feel influenced you, or encouraged you tremendously to have this drive and energy?

Lydia: My father and my mother.

Irene: So you credit both your parents?

Lydia: Hm-hmm.

Irene: In instilling this...

Lydia: Right, because looking back when I come from a family of eight and when you feel that as hard as times were then, and the discrimination, and the obstacles that were put in our way...

[0:37:30] ...that I would say that...

Irene: In spite of all...

Lydia: Out of all the eight there are only two of us that do not have degrees because all the others are professionals, and I think that's good, and I think this was

instilled by our parents. I feel that they were the strongest influence in my life.

Irene: All right, thank you very much, Mrs. Estevez, and this concludes our interview.

[End of Audio 0:38:05]