

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: This is Irene Ruiz interviewing Mr. Alfonso Lopez at the West Branch Library located at 1936 Summit on October the 20th, 1978. Mr. Lopez is the director of the bilingual program with the Kansas City, Missouri School District. Mr. Lopez, tell me a little bit about your early life like, where you were born and when.

[0:00:30]

Respondent: I was born in the state of Zacatecas, Mexico in a small town called Tenayuca, Zacatecas, which is actually an ejido. I was born in 1950, specifically in January the 23rd. I was the third child out of eight at home, the first male which had some social cultural implication to my rearing from the [unintelligible 0:00:55] because the person that happened - at that time, that my nickname became Macho.

[0:01:00]

Respondent: And as innocently as that name I had been assigned to me, conveyed a message that became associated with the macho attitude that all males are supposed to have. My father had - prior to - going to Zacatecas where we were born, now I've spent quite a bit of time in the, you know, in the States. He was in the Kansas City area, in the State of Kansas as early as 1929 and spend a couple of his rougher winters in the Kansas City area according to his...

[0:01:33]

Interviewer: Recollections.

Respondent: ...recollections with us.

Interviewer: What had he been doing up here? Or...

Respondent: He had to work mostly with the railroad, he did a lot of work with the immigrant laborers on [unintelligible 0:01:44] the lettuce, in the fields and just about anything in the area. He ended up learning English through a self-taught method. My understanding is that he learned the English language well enough that...

[0:02:03]

Respondent: When he stopped in Cheyenne, Wyoming in the late 30s he became an official translator for the...

Interviewer: The other migrants or the other...

Respondent: ...for the court - for the courts.

Interviewer: For the courts.

Respondent: Right, and that [unintelligible 0:02:17] and had opportunity at that time to, you know, go outside and get out of the field labor but he was too much of a, you know, aventurero, that he decided to keep on going.

[0:02:31]

Respondent: His last work, you know, prior to moving back to Mexico was during Second World War. He worked in a factory, in the fundición in Los Angeles and at that time he already become a legal resident. Prior to that he had just been a brasero.

Interviewer: And had moved about quite a bit.

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: And then he became a legal resident and lived there for some time.

Respondent: Right. And at that time he went back to Mexico and at the end of the war [unintelligible 0:03:02]...

[0:03:02]

Interviewer: About how long would he had been there?

Respondent: Well, he - as dad told me he had been around...

Interviewer: [Unintelligible 0:03:07].

Respondent: ...forty. Right. And he went to Mexico in '49 - '47, married my mother or got together with my mother whom became her - his common law wife, in '48 when my oldest sister was born in Zacatecas.

[0:03:30]

Respondent: And at that time my family or his family still had some property in the state of Zacatecas and they still do. Farming was not very productive, in two years he decided there wasn't much of a future there so after I was born, we came back from the border in Juarez where we lived for two years. History goes that I was the youngest vagabond in Juarez because I became lost at the age of 2 trying to deliver some tortillas that my mother used to sell in Juarez.

[0:04:00]

Respondent: And story goes that I was picked up by the cops.

Interviewer: You don't remember that too well?

Respondent: No, nothing of recollection, does not really start to [unintelligible 0:04:06] three and a half to four years old, I don't have a memory of that by. It's history, you know, oral history in the family.

Interviewer: Well, then you lived there in Juarez or El Paso...

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: ...for some length of time.

Respondent: In Juarez...

Interviewer: Your earliest recollections are of that area, is that where you were? Or...

Respondent: I still go back in my own mind and I go...

Interviewer: Call that home for your early years.

Respondent: ...and I can see myself - right. We're from quite a small to small town, still in the Mexican side of the border.

[0:04:33]

Respondent: Called Guadalupe Distrito Bravo, Chihuahua. Which is about 30 miles from El Paso and it's about, you know, 30 minute walking distance to El Rio Grande which I recall very well, because we used to cross it especially when I became 7, 8 years old we used to cross the River to help my father in the cotton fields.

Interviewer: Do you recall what sort of neighborhood or what sort of house you had in those early years?

[0:05:00]

Respondent: Yes. We used to live in Guadalupe it was on the main street of the town...

Interviewer: Small town.

Respondent: It's a small town. For a while we lived next door to the major's house which has some positive, you know, values to us because that gave my father and the family a very good police record. No matter how mischievous I was and that helped quite a bit. And I go in my mind, I used to work for him, that major had a big farm and he used to employ us whenever we wanted a job or [unintelligible 0:05:33].

[0:05:34]

Respondent: I sold newspapers when I was living in Guadalupe and used to sell cotton candy and trying to...

Interviewer: About the littlest vendors that you see across the border.

Respondent: Right, but never a beggar always earned, you know.

Interviewer: Was your mother basically a homemaker? In other words, that was her...

Respondent: Right. She, you know, that sometimes business work but with making and selling tortillas when, you know...

[0:06:00]

Respondent: ...the income of a family was not sufficient, she used to - and still is a very good cook so a lot of people would seek her help in preparing mole de gallina, mole de pollo and I feel those exotic Mexican dishes.

Interviewer: What school or schools did you attend there?

Respondent: When we were in Guadalupe I attended kindergarten and first grade in a public school system.

Interviewer: In a public school.

[0:06:28]

Respondent: I became angry because when I was in the kindergarten, they were not doing that things that I would feel that I was ready to do, you know, I was ready to read, I was reading already. I was doing a lot of the things that, you know, that we are not doing there. I transferred to the first grade in the middle of my kindergarten year and in Mexico they still give you, you know, recognition for good work, you know, as low as kindergarten and first grade. And in the first grade I managed to finish [unintelligible 0:06:55] the half year of first grade with the highest honors in that little group of students.

[0:07:01]

Interviewer: Why was it that you were already prepared? Was it because your mother had encouraged you or had helped you learn? Or they read to you or did she ever read to you or your family?

Respondent: Mostly, right. She don't read too much, she never had any formal education

Interviewer: But at least...

Respondent: But she had a notion of education and both of my parents [unintelligible 0:07:20] education for [unintelligible 0:07:21].

Interviewer: And encouraged it.

Respondent: My mother taught us how to count when we were able to as early as we were able to - she always kept us busy, you know, productively.

[0:07:33]

Respondent: So she did everything that she could. She would buy each of us at the age of four a book that at that time - I guess like the readers of the 1980s in this country. I don't recall the name but we had the abecedario in our book and she taught us to [unintelligible 0:07:51].

Interviewer: Now, to go back just a little bit, we did not get the names of both your father and your mother, so would you give me their names?

[0:08:00]

Respondent: My father's formal and official name is [Telesforo] Lopez [Saucedo]. [Saucedo] then being the...

Interviewer: The mother's.

Respondent: His mother's name.

Interviewer: Mother's name.

Respondent: My mother's formal name is [Trinidad] Lopez - [Vazquez] de Lopez.

Interviewer: [Vazquez] her father's name and Lopez. And from there, from the schools that you attended there, did you remain there to finish the grammar school or...

Respondent: No, okay, from...

Interviewer: ...Primary school or did your family move again?

[0:08:32]

Respondent: After completing first grade there still wasn't challenging enough. At that time the [unintelligible 0:08:40] just opened a Catholic school about 30 miles in another town. And my parents again, you know, so that was being more challenging for us, they transferred us to that school and I went to that school for two years, I went 'till the third grade. And at that time my father had met the principal of the school in Tornillo Texas, which is where he used to work in the fields.

[0:09:03]

Respondent: And the principal encouraged my father to take us across to school there, so we started going to school to Texas when I was ten years old. And we did so on the student visa permit for six years. And it was a...

Interviewer: And you run back and forth every day?

Respondent: Every day.

Interviewer: Now, how many were these? The older ones and yourself, you two sisters and you?

Respondent: No, by that time they were already all eight of us and...

Interviewer: Then several of you.

[0:09:30]

Respondent: Right. At least four of us were coming to school to Texas.

Interviewer: Traveled back and forth.

Respondent: Right. And we did that like I said, from 1960 to about 1965 when we were able to get legal permanent residence in the United States and then that time we moved to Texas. To the little town, Tornillo Texas, which is 30 miles South from El Paso.

Interviewer: El Paso. During this period of your life, did you or your family or all of you belong to a Catholic Church? Or...

[0:10:03]

Respondent: I guess we could say yes. We...

Interviewer: Yes, you were not active though. I mean, not necessarily you but your parents.

Respondent: No, right.

Interviewer: Do you remember if there were...

Respondent: No, neither of them were - we were...

Interviewer: Did you go on a regular basis out to church or like Sundays? And all that.

Respondent: Yes. That was, you know, until I was about 12 years old, I was an altar boy. That was my [unintelligible 0:10:21].

Interviewer: And most of your neighbors or friends would've belong to the same church.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Catholic Church. From there, what did you do or what did your family do?

[0:10:34]

Respondent: I've always done some weird things a lot like, when we moved to the States I resented first of all coming to school to the States and the change in lifestyle and in many ways I still do. The move was made only physically not mentally, not morally, not culturally and to the point that it created a lot of problems in the family.

[0:11:01]

Respondent: We were [unintelligible 0:11:03] we were old enough to depart when the feeling of adult would reach us, we all left home. Even the youngest is getting ready to do so but her departure has been more favorable but still, you know, we have all departed from home because of that very problem. I dropped out of school when I was in the third grade. Simple because I resented that and we...

Interviewer: You didn't want to be away from your roots.

Respondent: Right. I know, it was [unintelligible 0:11:28] when emotionally and I was too attached.

[0:11:32]

Respondent: You know, I can go as far back where is the latest - being 18 years old and I still have some of my best friends in Mexico, in the little town. The girls that I used to date were from that little town so it was an attachment that was too deep to depart from.

Interviewer: Right, a tie or ties that were too - well, I say as youngsters, a small child or even as a young 12 or 11, 13 whatever, did you have any hobby or hobbies or did you time the time? Or...

[0:12:04]

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...facilities to indulge in?

Respondent: My father was always very good about getting us into harvest. For example, chopping weeds in the cotton fields, cleaning [unintelligible 0:12:14] driving tractors so that was our hobby.

Interviewer: That your...

Respondent: Higher because my father's and my mother's values towards education. Anything that had to do with school we were granted permission to attend. I saw this as perfect excuse to keep working at least a little bit.

[0:12:32]

Respondent: So I became very involved in sports. I consider myself an above average baseball player, football player, basketball player, tennis player, golf player. Name in a sport and I participated in it and to the point that when I was in the eighth grade, I was too old because of the transfers from school to school I had lost - in the age - I had to repeat a special [unintelligible 0:12:56] to the States.

Interviewer: But you dropped out third grade but then you went back.

[0:13:01]

Respondent: I dropped out the third grade...

Interviewer: For how long?

Respondent: My father's medicine for dropping off, you know, was in like...

Interviewer: You work...

Respondent: ...you drop out, you're ready for the responsibilities of a man. So very convincingly, you know, he taught me that there was probably a better way to...

Interviewer: So you dropping out was a short direction.

Respondent: Very short, about a month or so and I did go back. The drop out came out because I had at time done some physical damage to a school mate by utilizing a sharp object.

[0:13:30]

Respondent: And was expelled at the same time so that was part of the problem. And it was part of the adjustment that I was having for [unintelligible 0:13:36] across, I was fighting all the time. Yeah, not being the [unintelligible 0:13:41] in that little town, you know? That caused in those problems. And it was just a matter of proving to them, you know? That [unintelligible 0:13:47] was going to be [unintelligible 0:13:48] and which was good because to date, you know? I have two friends in the - unfortunately that opened a [unintelligible 0:13:54] and never would that I just met last year and...

Interviewer: Friends from your little town.

Respondent: I respect them, right. And they respect me still.

[0:14:01]

Respondent: Even though I came in a different direction than they did. So it was a very good experience.

Interviewer: So, you dropped out but went back so then from then on did you continue your formal training? Or you stayed in sports as a professional or...

Respondent: Sports would be a - right, when I was a freshman - just as much as I could with any of the limitations on my physical size. I've always been small and have never been able to compete, you know?

Interviewer: That would not have been your - in your favor...

[0:14:30]

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: ...like for football or something like that.

Respondent: Right, but when I was a freshman was already on the tennis team. I was on the original golf team of the school.

Interviewer: Where did you go to high school then?

Respondent: There in Tornillo, this is a little town...

Interviewer: In Tornillo. That was the town that had...

Respondent: Right. So all through high school I was involved in a sports, I also became involved in order literary competition type of events to the point that when I was a junior in high school which again was the last year that I could participate in any kind of competition.

[0:15:01]

Respondent: I had a trip to the state - I mean, to the original competitions in tennis, golf, [unintelligible 0:15:08] speaking an mathematic competitions. So - and I became very involved...

Interviewer: In a variety of things.

Respondent: ...I became - right.

Interviewer: I mean, it wasn't just limited to sports.

Respondent: Right. I managed to graduate out of high school when I was 20. At the same time I was participating in one of the many programs for the disadvantaged which was a summer upper bound for when there was [unintelligible 0:15:31] of the Texas.

[0:15:33]

Respondent: So combining all those things I managed to put enough time into my studies that I managed to graduate valedictorian from high school. And that was when things started rolling for me in many ways.

Interviewer: How about your brothers and sisters? Were they also school oriented to that extent? Or...

Respondent: Most of us had been, yes, fortunately doors have been open as far as for some of us is the - for me but two of the sisters had a [unintelligible 0:16:03].

[0:16:03]

Respondent: Both of them American. My younger brother followed my steps, he went to school but he went into electronics and, you know, he's doing very well living in Phoenix, Arizona. And I have a younger sister that is special at elementary teacher in Texas. And the other ones are trying to make their own way.

Interviewer: All right, then from there you went on directly then to college or did you also have to work to help yourself? Or did you...

Respondent: No, I always attend to work...

Interviewer: A scholarship or...

Respondent: I haven't had the high school valedictorian scholarship which is as state of [unintelligible 0:16:40] scholarship. Not enrolled at North Texas University. And, you know, there's a little - a bit of [unintelligible 0:16:48] that I think to me hasn't been very important in the Mexican culture, you know? The machista is very heavy specially in the lower income [unintelligible 0:16:59].

Interviewer: Very strong.

[0:17:00]

Respondent: It becomes - it's [unintelligible 0:17:01] where it becomes physical machismo, is - you prove yourself in so many ways. When I went to college because at that time I was still just a legal permanent resident, I was not a naturalized citizen yet, the university had never dealt with students that hadn't gotten a legal status and therefore not knowing what to do with me, they put all my applications with the found that - financial aid applications and my enrollment applications as a foreign student which was incorrect.

[0:17:31]

Respondent: Doing that I was supposed to have some other additional proofs, you know, like income sources for - from parents or anybody there was going to sponsor me. But, you know, I always thought that it was ridiculous which was just ignorance. So that - they never followed up with my acceptance to the

university because they said that I was not yet - and I fulfilled the requirements. Fortunately the same friend that got me out of the army - I was drafted in 1969.

[0:18:01]

Respondent: Because of my age, I was 19 years old.

Interviewer: Then you were how far along?

Respondent: I was senior in high school.

Interviewer: When you were a senior...

Respondent: [Unintelligible 0:18:07] had drafted me because of my age. I was ready to go but a friend of mine from...

Interviewer: In '69 you said.

Respondent: In 69. That was very strong into the fight against the war on Vietnam, managed to encourage me to seek a deferment and through his assistance I got a deferment to go to college. So that I felt strongly to go to college.

[0:18:31]

Respondent: To avoid going into the armed forces. First of all because being that I had gone to that upper [unintelligible 0:18:37] a lot of money had been invested in me already and I felt that I could produce more other than being just a [unintelligible 0:18:43] in Vietnam. So this same friend called the university and they told him what was the problem so he very strongly objected to the problem and he called the day before the last day for registration.

[0:19:00]

Respondent: And having as much interest as if you don't - I mean...

Interviewer: Was he an older person? Or was he...

Respondent: Yes, older than I am. Yes, but he is a middle age man now.

Interviewer: But was he active in community or where did you meet him? Or he was just a friend, he became a friend of yours.

Respondent: He was employed. He was employed in the upper [unintelligible 0:19:16] program that I attended. But he has got such a big heart. He's such a sincere person that he took every case, you now, and...

Interviewer: Kind of on a personal basis.

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: Not just...

Respondent: He wasn't just a counselor, he went above and beyond. That was the first counselor that [unintelligible 0:19:30] in high school.

[0:19:30]

Respondent: So, through his help, you know, he managed to convince the university that they had done wrong to me. And managed to get them to give me an emergency loan. He collected money from friends and other people to have enough money so that I could fly to that and to go to school. And when I arrived there, I arrived on a Friday which again, you know, was the last day before the registration. Right there I entered with my, you know, belicito de ropa, the following day manage to get into the registrar's office.

[0:20:03]

Respondent: And they still [unintelligible 0:20:04]. So there I am all depressed, finally things start rolling I go and meet the right person and it's 11:30 and I still haven't finished registering for the twelve-course - the 12 hours that I had to have. So I go to the registrar's office and they tell me that I need to be more hours and everybody is closed, you know, I need something. And the guy shut the door on me so I [unintelligible 0:20:26] with the intention of going into the army right there.

[0:20:30]

Respondent: Fortunately there was a guy that I had just met the night before that encouraged me to stay which I did. And that former day, which was the day after Labor Day, he managed to make contact with some people and through them they managed to get me in.

Interviewer: Into class.

Respondent: That one more course that I could become a full time student . And the interesting about that is that I was assigned under the work study plan to work in the registrar's office. And the first person that I met was the guy that shut the door on me did they before and...

Interviewer: That was an experience.

[0:21:01]

Respondent: Well, to both of us. And I think to him it was a learning experience.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And to me it was too. And, you know, I realize that, you know? What it was going to take to make an assistant. And that was to get to know the people and to deal with their game and we became personal friends.

Interviewer: After that.

Respondent: I just wrote him last week to seek some assistance from him from sure which I'm sure he will produce...

Interviewer: So it would tell...

Respondent: Going into college was very interesting, right. So I learned that in college.

[0:21:29]

Respondent: In September of 1970, I managed to get my bachelors degree in sociology in two and a half years. At that time I had started working on a part time basis with the public schools as a teacher's aide.

Interviewer: In - around - in their...

Respondent: In Denton, Texas. My responsibility was to teach English to non-speaking students and to tutor Mexican-American children that were having problems with school. They ended - the work was so tremendous and I have enough time.

[0:22:00]

Interviewer: It's a very large Mexican-American community [unintelligible 0:22:01] was in that [unintelligible 0:22:03].

Respondent: Enough in that school, right. I only had one hour to spare in three days a week because I was working during, you know, 15 hours on campus, you know, to make enough money to stay in school. The principal of that school, Mr. [Ford] became very supportive of my work and he managed to give me a job as a dishwasher in that school, so I had more hours to be able to stay there and work with them. And within two months he managed to secure a teacher's aide job for me.

[0:22:30]

Respondent: And at that time what I did instead of doing the teaching, I recruited volunteers from both, North Texas State and Texas [unintelligible 0:22:37] University. And I had, you know, in 1971 the first [unintelligible 0:22:41] in Denton, Texas using volunteer helpers.

Interviewer: Volunteer help for the whole...

Respondent: So being that interaction that I have to education and the interest of this person expressed on my work and the school for I worked being just off the campus at North Texas State, some of the college professors had their children there.

[0:23:01]

Respondent: So they encouraged me, you know, to go into education as a profession. And towards the completion of my degree in sociology, they managed to secure a \$1000 scholarship for me for a year, so that I could go into education into my master's work. And the best part...

Interviewer: So you remained there then.

Respondent: ...I became a - yes, I stayed there through a...

Interviewer: To finish the Masters.

Respondent: ...into my masters which I did in August of '74.

Interviewer: '74.

Respondent: So there, you know, to me that's, you know, their biggest accomplishment, having two degrees in four years.

[0:23:33]

Interviewer: And in such a short period of time and considering that it had taken you longer with all the interruptions and everything else. And so about this time, what did you do? You didn't get married or you didn't go into the service.

Respondent: Actually it happened right in between...

Interviewer: It happened in between...

Respondent: It happened in between there, right. I met my wife.

Interviewer: Where was she from originally? From Mexico?

Respondent: She is from Baytown no, she is from Baytown, Texas. She went to school in '71.

Interviewer: Was she a student?

[0:24:00]

Respondent: Right, she was a student at Texas [unintelligible 0:24:02] University and there was a little piece of history that is a little personal but somehow I met her and she became one of my assistants in the program and we became friends and from there, history took its course.

Interviewer: Married about that time while you were both still...

Respondent: And we married in 1973.

Interviewer: ...in other words you were both still studying.

Respondent: I was in a position to where I could [unintelligible 0:24:24] financially be able to take care of her because I already have a degree and I have many job offers at that time.

Interviewer: Was she going to finish there? Or later finished her...

[0:24:33]

Respondent: Well, in 1974 when I finished my masters, I had a great [unintelligible 0:24:39] with the Denton public schools to work as a teacher for them. But at the end, you know, like I said earlier, you know, some doors have been opening for me and somebody keeps speaking on me to jump on those doors hopefully, you know, so far not have been negative hopefully they'll continue to be positive. I was offered a job.

[0:25:00]

Respondent: I was referred to a school district in Garden City, Kansas by a college professor. And at that time I had just opened or had received funds for bilingual program that were [unintelligible 0:25:10] director.

Interviewer: In Garden City.

Respondent: In Garden City, Kansas. And, you know, I was asked, you know, if I was interested which I did and I went for the interview and was selected so unfortunately my wife had to quit school there so we could make the transfer. She did go into the Community College there. She's a [unintelligible 0:25:30] nursing.

[0:25:31]

Interviewer: At the...

Respondent: In there, in Garden City. And she finished her associate degree and became a nurse and that's, you know, her own profession.

Interviewer: Yes, I knew she was in nursing. So then you came into Garden City about '74.

Respondent: In '74.

Interviewer: And then you stayed there...

Respondent: I stay there for three years until 1977.

Interviewer: ...three years.

Respondent: We did our piece of work there, a piece of work for the cause and [Refugio Lynette], our daughter, was born there three years ago.

[0:26:00]

Interviewer: So you have one little girl.

Respondent: So we have...

Interviewer: And how did you come to Kansas City? Or how did that come [unintelligible 0:26:11]...

Respondent: Searching, you know? I have always tried to keep informed about employment opportunities and people that I have met in conferences from this area, when the position became vacant with the bilingual program I was encouraged to look into that.

[0:26:30]

Respondent: And I did mainly as merely curiosity because I never thought that I would see myself working in a school district as large as Kansas City is. But, again, you know, like other things in the past I was offered a job which I accepted.

Interviewer: So when did you come over officially though to Kansas City?

Respondent: I was offered a job as early as January - February of 1977. Because of my personal commitment to my profession and my personal obligation that I see professionally.

[0:27:04]

Respondent: I told the school district in Kansas City that I would not be able to take the job until I had finished my contract obligation in Western Kansas which they agreed to.

Interviewer: Which would have been at the end of the school off '77.

Respondent: Right, I started working as a chief consultant for the Kansas City public schools as soon as I was offered a contract and I came once or twice a month.

[0:27:31]

Respondent: To lend them assistance and carrying on the program until I was able to assume the job in a full time basis.

Interviewer: Which was...

Respondent: And I get in July of 1977.

Interviewer: So now you've been in a little over a year and four months.

Respondent: Just about a year and a half. Right.

Interviewer: Basically then you administered the bilingual program and you work with the program of course is in various schools, right? Has said expanded at all in this year?

[0:28:01]

Respondent: Not in - not physically...

Interviewer: In one way but hasn't it gone further into other schools and for instance here in West, I don't think they had any bilingual [unintelligible 0:28:12] at all.

Respondent: Some efforts have been made prior to that, however I'm very opinionated into the kinds of like [unintelligible 0:28:21] bilingual education needs to be doing. One of those does not reflect positively one what has happened previously in Kansas City nor anywhere in the country.

[0:28:31]

Respondent: I became involved in bilingual education as far as 1968. I researched at that time and interest in legal issues, I had an interest in political science and have since, you know, started reading congressional documents and I somehow by incident - by accident, got a hold of the public law that authorized bilingual education. And I read it at that time.

[0:29:00]

Respondent: And researched that thing in great detail when I was in college. To [unintelligible 0:29:04] I knew what the government wanted based on the documentation I had been presenting to legislation that when I arrived in Kansas City I made some major changes that I felt were needed to bring their program into compliance with the law and secondly to meet the needs of students.

Interviewer: Are you just the second person, right?

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: It was Doctor [Franco] who was here and then you.

[0:29:31]

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: As you look ahead into the future, what would be some of your plans or goals that you would hope to accomplish for yourself personally or for the program or whatever?

Respondent: No. I am [unintelligible 0:29:47] person at least up until now and I hope I will not lose this attitude. I'm often times asked what is your ultimate objective? I don't think I have one but, you know, I am Latino, making the [unintelligible 0:29:59].

Interviewer: Maybe not [unintelligible 0:29:59] because sometimes something is like - even your life has a goal or maybe is trying not do one thing and then it gets into something else.

[0:30:04]

Interviewer: But at least as you see it now from this point...

Respondent: I have no one given objective, I feel that I have certain perceptions of the needs in education, I believe I have certain perceptions, positive perceptions, about society in general. With my interest in sociology and social welfare education, definitely in the legal areas I would eventually want to pursue further educational training that would give me the credentials to become a spokesperson.

[0:30:35]

Respondent: In those areas that I feel are important. Even though I feel that I have the knowledge and the verbal jargon, you know, to defend my issues I still feel that, you know, society still demands in the [unintelligible 0:30:49] we still need to produce for society those documents but eventually I want to get into a doctoral [unintelligible 0:30:55] that allowed me the opportunity to get into education.

[0:31:00]

Respondent: To further explore my interest in sociology and eventually getting to a law degree. And then from there on let...

Interviewer: Excuse me, let me - you were saying you would like to pursue a law degree eventually.

Respondent: Right. Once I am able to fulfill societal requirements then do my own thing.

[0:31:29]

Respondent: And I have great interest in writing, right now I have too many boxes of junk writing that I want to eventually put together. I am a...

Interviewer: This be in your general field too again by essays on some social...

Respondent: Social educational issues, right, political issues. And, you know, in whichever possible way leave my mark, you know, within an individual within community, within society, just within myself, just, you know, try to [unintelligible 0:31:58] my own designers.

[0:32:01]

Respondent: You know, as selfish as that sounds.

Interviewer: And as we were talking you did mention this one person that was a counselor in upper [unintelligible 0:32:11] program and then of course even the person that would shut the door in your face later became a friend and a supportive one, so is there any other person or as you look back or persons that you feel have been...

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: ...begin, for instance in your life obviously your parents were.

Respondent: Well, I think first of all my parents are...

[0:32:31]

Respondent: ...and God had been, you know, the trio that have made me what I am, you know, primarily. My father's rudeness, my father's tough attitude towards rearing us, gave me the endurance to make it in this very cool system.

Interviewer: Which you wouldn't have with all these things going against you.

Respondent: Right, I in one way or another and I'm some of a stoic person, I'm a cold person in many ways but I think those are essential.

[0:33:04]

Respondent: Some of us have to adapt to survive in the times of conditions that we live and specially when we are trying to bring up a change in such a large system such as education. And when we are in such a small minority, we just have to be that way. Secondly the softness that merged to be within me and I attribute it to my mother and her very wise words, I resent the Catholic Church attitude towards maintaining women in second roles.

[0:33:33]

Respondent: And not allowing woman to become persons, because some of the people that I have heard and they have had a better impact on me had been women and most certainly my mother. And I think that women's perceptual live needs to go beyond just a home. It needs to be within the church in a very

constructive or in a more positive way than it personally exists. So, you know, most definitely those things.

[0:34:02]

Respondent: I think that my belief and my faith in God, you know, has definitely helped characteristic that I'm sure comes from my mother's, you know, teachings. Beyond that, I've been in [unintelligible 0:34:14] to people, [Laracy] was the person that was my counselor in the upper [unintelligible 0:34:18] definitely had a positive impact and interest in me. Beyond that [unintelligible 0:34:25] people here, people there that have been one way or another helped me.

[0:34:30]

Interviewer: Helped you and pushed you along your way and maybe when you were depressed or something, gave you that push.

Respondent: Yes. I think Mr. [Ford], the principal, that encouraged me to get into education. If I do good, definitely [unintelligible 0:34:43] think anybody else other than myself and he would be the person that I should thank because he took me literally as a son, he trusted me, he gave me advice and, you know, he really became like a second father to me. And in terms of words and wisdom, you know, he was the only father.

[0:35:00]

Respondent: Because my father worked in a different way. My father teach me how to work and be responsible, but Mr. [Ford] became that person [unintelligible 0:35:10] a man to be what I am. And now every time we go to the general [unintelligible 0:35:16] and he's one of the people outside of my sisters that I...

Interviewer: That you visit all the time...

Respondent: ...that I've visited and always[unintelligible 0:35:21]. So I think, you know, those are the people that have he influenced me in. And sure, I'd like to have somebody in this area.

[0:35:31]

Interviewer: You haven't found one.

Respondent: Unfortunately my introduction to the Kansas City area was, "We don't like you, you are an outsider and - " which is fine, you know? And those are the things that people like myself have to deal with. People need to recognize that we sacrifice a lot and that, you know, it takes a lot of suffering, you know, moving as you do to do the things that we're trying to do and then come to

the community and be told, you know, "We don't care much about you." That doesn't [unintelligible 0:35:56] too well. But, give them, like I said, you know?

[0:36:00]

Respondent: Eventually maybe somebody will be coming here.

Interviewer: All right, and your wife more recently - we don't want to leave the woman out.

Respondent: Right.

Interviewer: Is working now at the - what's the name of the hospital? Or the...

Respondent: She's right now working in the Downtown Hospital.

Interviewer: Hospital.

Respondent: And my wife has been definitely a tremendous moral support, a great follower, a great right arm, you know, a great companion. I hope that, you know, she has gained as much as I have from her.

[0:36:30]

Respondent: And she has been willing to sacrifice with me more so in her family because we are so far away from her family also. And her family being much closer than mine and that she has had to sacrifice a lot more. But I think that we are happy, she's involved, she does her thing and I try to interfere the least amount possible, you know? Still I'm a Mexican [unintelligible 0:36:56] male and some of the things that I have been, you know, shall [unintelligible 0:37:02] speaking.

[0:37:02]

Interviewer: You tried to get the good out of that but try to in that letter...

Respondent: To go too far [unintelligible 0:37:08]...

Interviewer: ...overshadow her completely because then that wouldn't be consistent with your new theories. All right, unless there is something you wish to add, this will conclude this part of the interview.

Respondent: Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you.