

BARNARD COLLEGE CLASS OF 1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Reminiscences of
Joy Montgomery Rocklin

2015

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Joy Montgomery Rocklin conducted by Frances Garrett Connell on September 11, 2015. This interview is part of the Barnard Class of 1971 Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Barnard Alumni Class of 1971 Oral History Project

Interviewee: Joy Montgomery Rocklin

Location: Park City, Utah via Skype

Interviewer: Frances Garrett Connell

Date: September 11, 2015

00:00:00 Q: So this is an interview with Joy Rocklin Montgomery at her home in Park City, Utah on September 11, 2015. The interviewer is Frances Connell and we are doing this by way of Skype. So, fingers crossed Skype does what it's supposed to. Okay, well I'm delighted that you offered to be part of this. We usually start by asking you to talk a little bit about your childhood, significant relationships, memories of growing up wherever you were, and from there.

00:00:41 Rocklin Montgomery: Well, the interesting thing is that I remember very little of my childhood. I had two sisters, one is passed. But the three of us got together, probably about twenty years ago and between the three of us we could not construct one coherent memory. So we've all blocked it out, for good reasons I'm quite sure. But what I do remember is, let's see, I was born in Manhattan and my parents moved to Teaneck, NJ when I was about four. One of the earliest memories that I have is I was very concerned when I moved because we had just been to The Howdy Doody Show [laughs]. They were sending me my Howdy Doody puppet, I was afraid they'd never find me, but they did. So I grew up in Teaneck which is a very middle class town in New Jersey. Nothing terribly remarkable [laughs].

00:01:35 Q: Okay, and what about your parents? What did they do, or what do you remember of them in particular?

00:01:42 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, my father was a top executive at Revlon. He travelled around the world all the time and was barely there. My mother was a part-time professor who managed to teach such that I had to go straight home from school, run in the door, and take care of three little ones. That started, actually, when I was in second grade. I guess I am remembering some. In second grade I remember my second grade teacher, Ms. Pizzi, whom I adored, commenting that I had too much home responsibility. I was diapering, feeding, and on and on, whatever. So I was a parent before I was a child. I was never really a child [laughs].

00:02:22 Q: That's pretty intense. What about the neighborhood itself? Was it middle class? Were a lot of kids around? Do you remember special friends?

00:02:32 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, middle class, a lot of kids around. I had one or two special friends. But because I always had to run home from school it was hard to have friends, because I couldn't go out and play and do things, a lot of times. And when I did I was always interested in what the boys did. I mean I've always felt a little out of sorts there [laughs]. I played football with them and most of the girls did other things. My parents would get an erector set for my brother—remember erector sets? No, you probably don't. Anyway, building sets for my brother and get me a Revlon doll. And then I would make all these wonderful things. I can remember this carousel, I made all the horses go up and down and all these things. And when my parents saw it, "Oh, Bill! That was wonderful! What a great job you did!" It was like, "Okay, girls can do that too, hello?" So from an early age I guess I was always trying to beat the guys.

00:03:29 Q: Well, that's good, that's impressive. What about your experience with school, though? You said you had a favorite teacher in the second grade, who recognized you already had way too many responsibilities. What were some of the things academically that you—or even socially—that you remember about school prior to college?

00:03:50 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay. I remember a lot of—I guess, again, I was always competing with the guys. I liked math and science and early on—earlier on, as a matter of fact—the girls had to take home-ec [Home Economics] and the boys got to take drafting and woodworking. I wanted drafting and woodworking and put up as big a stink as I could, but in those days it got me nowhere. Now I'm told, "It's open to everybody," but that's what I wanted to do—wasn't allowed to do that. But there were three of us; myself, and Mark, and Mike. We always got the top scores on every test in everything, specifically the sciences and math. What I do remember, another teacher Mrs. Renda was the advanced calculus teacher and there were—I don't think I was the only girl in the class, but there were very few. Again, the three of us were always at the top of the class, more me than them, and she didn't like other girls doing well in math. It's very interesting. But she spurred my love of mathematics, of pure mathematics. I just really got hooked. And I did end up majoring in math.

00:04:57 Q: Oh you did, okay. It's a good beginning. In terms of things that you—a couple other questions going back to your family roots. Where did your family come from? What was the ethnicity? Was there an extended family as well?

00:05:13 Montgomery Rocklin: Not that much. My parents, their parents had both come in through Ellis Island. Jewish.

00:05:22 Q: From Eastern Europe?

00:05:24 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. My father's side came from Minsk and—I should remember, I just looked all this up—anyway, from Russia. That part of the world. Actually my mother was adopted and we don't know exactly where she came from. She would never ever admit she was adopted. Somehow I knew that at an early age. You asked about extended family. My father had a sister and at one point Aunt Florence said something about my mother being adopted and my mother banned her, and we were never allowed to see her. She'd send back the gifts Aunt Florence send. It was very strange. So my parents were brought up, apparently, pretty—I don't know orthodox, but kosher. I guess so, my mother actually got Bat Mitzvah-ed. But they brought us up with nothing. So I really was brought up with no religion at all. My friends were—I guess a lot of them were Jewish because a lot of them had Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs, and a lot of them I went to their Communion. So I really didn't fit anywhere but I fit everywhere, if that makes any sense.

00:06:29 Q: Yeah.

00:06:30 Montgomery Rocklin: And I guess I was a bit of a rebel, yeah I guess so. One of my best friends in high school was the guy considered kind of a—not thug—I don't know what

words you'd use in those days. Leather jackets, had a motorcycle. And he and I would go motorcycle riding all the time. I loved the motorcycle! Ended up getting my own, later. My parents didn't quite know about that. And my friends were all older. Across the street, Gail, who had been my best friend, she was maybe four—three, four years older.

So I had fake proof when I was fourteen. Because whatever the age differential was between New York and New Jersey, we'd go up to Greenwood Lake, New York and everybody would get pretty smashed. I'm not sure, I was under the weather a bit. I couldn't drive; I was too young. I don't know how nobody ever got hurt, in hindsight. It was insane. Nor do I know how my parents never knew. Because I'd come back at three and four in the morning and either they didn't care or they didn't know. I don't know which. But that's what I did. So I was a bit of a rebel.

00:07:36 Q: Now, politically were you aware of things going on as well, and were you participating in things other than social events?

00:07:44 Montgomery Rocklin: I was aware, not participative. My parents were overly participative. One of them headed a planning board in town, one of them headed the board of adjustment, my mother was on the board of education. They were so active in everything that I got a bitter taste [laughs] and said, "I don't want to do this." One was republican, one was democrat. I can't remember which was which because they switched later in life, somehow. I'd hear both sides all the time and they'd cancel out each other's votes, they would joke about. So it

wasn't a particularly one way or the other background. It was very ethnically diverse though, in Teaneck. There were a lot of—would you say African American? Black? I'm not sure what word we're supposed to use, but there were a lot of—give me the right, word, come on.

00:08:33 Q: African Americans? Blacks?

00:08:35 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay. African Americans in town. I was friends with a lot of them, and then at one point I remember Roger asked me out. And I wasn't going to go out with him, I didn't like him that much. But anyway, I mentioned it to my parents who had been these ultra, ultra, liberals in terms of integration and, you know, they had a lot of Black friends too. My mother was horrified that I'd go out with a Black guy. And I remember it struck me as so hypocritical at that time [laughs].

00:09:07 Q: So, who do you think was most influential in your life at that point?

00:09:10 Montgomery Rocklin: At that point? That's a really good question Frances. My father, to the extent that I had his scientific, business, engineering bend. I wanted to go to engineering school. Matter of fact I wanted to go to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and my mother would not even allow me to apply because it was not Ivy League, nor Seven Sisters. There's a little bit of educational snobbery back there and I was really pissed because I really wanted to go to MIT. I lost my train of thought as I always do.

00:09:44 Q: You're talking about influential people.

00:09:47 Montgomery Rocklin: Influential. So, my father. Maybe that was more genetic because he wasn't there. He was just out of the country probably sixty percent of the time. So he wasn't around. So I guess I'd have to say she was the most influential, and it was not a good influence. We have reconciled, and I understand. And she passed away last year. She did the very best she could, given the circumstances she had. She had four very young children, all two years apart. My guess is she was very frustrated and really wanted to be a full-time professor, but in those days it was harder to do. But anyways, so I was the mother. So yeah, I guess she was the greater influence. Yeah. To the extent that I never wanted children. I swore I would never, ever have kids because childhood to me was nothing great.

00:10:37 Q: You'd already done it.

00:10:37 Montgomery Rocklin: And again, as I said, as I experienced it. So I guess she was—oh God, I hate to say it, but she was the more influential. Although later in life [laughs]—you know it's interesting. My sister would say, when she had a child-rearing problem, she would call my mother and ask my mother what to do, and then do exactly the opposite, and it always worked out well [laughter]. So, I don't know what to make of all this [laughs]. So, they were both influential but in different ways. I think I grew up and eventually became who I am more despite them than because of them.

00:11:13 Q: I'm sorry, became what?

00:11:14 Montgomery Rocklin: More despite them. Or more—well I got skills from them. Like I learned to be very self-sufficient and very independent. Oh, and counter-dependent, not just independent, overly so. And I learned I couldn't really count on anyone but myself, and blah, blah, blah. And those are skills that in some ways served me very well in business.

00:11:36 Q: Sure, sure. Now going back just a bit, where did your name come from? Do you have any idea where you—

00:11:41 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh, my birth name is Joyce-Ellen Pollack. Pollack was their last name. As soon as I started to learn to write—remember, in those days we learned to write cursive. I dropped the “Ellen.” It was too much to write, I just said, “Nah.” So I dropped that. And then some time later in a work situation where there was—there were two Joyces and it got very confusing, so I just changed it to “Joy” and I've been “Joy” ever since. People say now that name really fits me.

00:12:13 Q: Yes, that's good. Okay. So do you feel like you—you said that you didn't really belong to one group or the other because of not being raised, really, as a Jew but obviously having that as, possibly, as your background. You're not sure about your mom. But you really could fit in everywhere. You also seem to have been much closer—you're better friends with

boys. So was there any kind of romantic memories you have of the pre-college years? Or were they all colleagues?

00:12:49 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, most of that was non-romantic. I just—I was more comfortable with the boys and my friends were guys. I usually use that as a generic term but, like, my friends were male, shall I say. Until maybe my forties. Because I just always had guy friends. I just always related to them better. Remember Mars and Venus?

00:13:13 Q: Mmm-hmm.

00:13:15 Montgomery Rocklin: That book about Mars and Venus? I could not understand Mars—which are women? Venus. I could not understand Venus at all. I read those books and I would laugh hysterically. It was like, “What are they talking about?” I was all Mars. So I probably had too much testosterone, or something.

But back to earlier times. One of the times—yeah—I liked doing what the boys did. For example, I was a pretty good gymnast and the girls did somersaults, nothing really exciting. And the boys were doing really fun things on the rings, and the double parallels and all that. So I ended up not officially joining the boys’ gymnastics team, because in those days you couldn’t, and there was no Title Nine. But I did all my gymnastics with the boys, which I loved—until the coach started spotting me like this [gestures across the breasts]. And then it was like, “Wait a

minute, this is not good.” So I dropped out of it. Which today, again, wouldn’t happen.

Something would happen to him.

So, romantically, yes. There was a question on there, something about your first date. And I remember too—I can’t remember which was first—one was Harry. Harry and I went to the movies and his father drove us. “You got to sit in the back seat, dad’s driving.” “Okay.” And the other one I remember, which was—it must have been later because Keith became my boyfriend for quite a while. Keith and I went to Palisades Park, which is not around anymore. I love Palisades Park. And I remember on one of the rides, I threw up all over him. Not a good start [laughs]. But we stayed girlfriend and boyfriend for a bunch of years, actually.

00:14:46 Q: So, let’s see, in terms of high school programs, activities that you were involved in—anything you want to highlight at that point?

00:14:56 Montgomery Rocklin: Well certainly gymnastics. I loved, I just loved gymnastics.

00:15:00 Q: Oh, you were doing that in high school already, okay.

00:15:01 Montgomery Rocklin: That was high school, yup. I did start at junior high and kept up through high school. I danced outside school—ballet—and I loved ballet. You know the song in A Chorus Line, “Everything Was beautiful at the Ballet?” Well, maybe you don’t. But anyway

there's that song and that was kind of me. It's like I just felt free, I felt free. And then for some reason my mother decided she didn't want to pay for it anymore. So there was that.

And at one point—I digress all over the place—one point very much later in my life I had seen a—trying to think who it was—one very famous dancer do a master's class. And on the way home, through the Lincoln Tunnel I remember bursting into hysterical tears and realizing I gave up on myself the day I gave up ballet. Not that I would have been a great ballerina but it's just—I didn't push for what I wanted. I just, “Okay.”

00:16:00 Q: So, I know there were recitals for people who took ballet, were you part of any other groups, like that—that made you really love it, yeah?

00:16:11 Montgomery Rocklin: I'm trying to remember. I'm sure there were. Gymnastics. I spent—when I didn't have to run home and immediately take care of the kids—I spent hours and hours in gymnastics. Oh, I was in the orchestra. I played the cello.

00:16:25 Q: Oh, the cello?

00:16:26 Montgomery Rocklin: Cello. And in those days, again, I did after school, I lugged this giant cello all the way up the hill to home, and it was crazy. And I wasn't that good but my parents, when I'd go downstairs to practice they referred to it as, “Killing the cat.”

00:16:41 Q: Oh, no!

00:16:42 Montgomery Rocklin: A lot of encouragement—but I don't think I had talent, to be fair.

00:16:47 Q: Yeah, it's hard to give the cello up, though, it's a beautiful instrument.

00:16:50 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh, it's gorgeous. I love the sound of it. I still do. So, I still love ballet and classical music. Oh, my mother—I don't like opera. When I was probably about six or seven my mother took me to one of the [Richard] Wagner Ring operas—standing. Because that's what she still did. You know, back in the days when she had no money, she stood. So here I am, maybe six years old, standing for a whole Wagner Ring opera, and I have not liked opera ever since [laughs].

00:17:21 Q: That could do it. That could definitely do it. Oh my goodness, that's pretty intense [laughs]. So being good in math, were you able to participate in any math, science, kind of competitions or clubs and things like that, as early as high school?

00:17:40 Montgomery Rocklin: Earlier. It was junior high. There was some math contest and you're on the stage, in front of the auditorium, in front of the school. And I had aced, like, every test ever, and done all of that. I get up in front of a crowd and I froze. I didn't get a single one right. I just, I couldn't be in front of a crowd of people. It was just [makes a sound]. So yeah, I

did that. And I did do some gymnastics competitions and I won some medals and stuff. But getting in front of people to do anything was very hard for me. I mean it's hard to believe. People who know me now would never believe this, but I was shy, I had no self-confidence, and I didn't want to be noticed. Oh, I also—I should add this somewhere along the way—I thought I was stupid and ugly until I was in my mid-forties.

00:18:32 Q: Oh, no!

00:18:34 Montgomery Rocklin: I mean I didn't understand why Barnard or any of the other schools accepted me. I thought, "This is a mistake. I don't belong in any of these schools." It was very strange.

00:18:42 Q: Where do you think that came from?

00:18:43 Montgomery Rocklin: Well clearly there were subliminal messages there at home. And maybe there's some—I'm not smart enough to know how much is nurture or—you know that whole discussion. But I got a lot of subliminal messages. I was never good enough. Maybe that's it is. I was just never good enough, according to my mother. Never ever, no matter what I did it was never good enough. I'd get all "A's", and like a "B" or "C" in conduct because I couldn't shut up. Now I know how to spell "ADHD" [Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder] and I understand it but in those days no one did and I would get berated. "Why did you get—?" So I was just never good enough. So that's probably a lot where it came from.

00:19:25 Q: Yeah, that's a tough one. Can you think of—you refer to your forties as realizing you were actually very attractive and very able to handle many things. What would you say would be a time that—when did your life really change for you and you began to feel more confident? And what might have triggered that?

00:19:46 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, let's see. I got married—I was in Barnard. I'll go through the progression, maybe I can think of the answer because I don't know it. I went to Barnard and I actually didn't graduate with our class. I graduated a year early because my parents cut off tuition because I got married. And the only reason I got married was because I had to get out of the house. I was a commuter. And commuters—I had to go home. I didn't go home every night; I had some friends. We stole all the cushions from the Brooks [Hall] sofa, I put them up on their floor and I slept there a lot. But I just had to get away from home so I married the exact opposite of what they wanted. Subconsciously on purpose, it was kind of an “F you” to my parents in hindsight [laughs].

But he ended up—I was a battered wife. So I didn't feel real confident then. I mean, I remember coming out of Barnard, I got one of the highest starting salaries in our class. Every time I got a raise I was petrified to tell him because [makes a sound]. It was just not good news. So I wasn't confident then, most definitely. And I still felt—this must have been a message from my mother. Oh, this was a message from my mother, okay. Thanks for reminding me. I remember her saying, “Get your M-A-N before your MA.” So I guess I got the message, “You're supposed to

be married.” And I felt for a long, long time that I was half a person unless I was married. So I’ll try to figure out where that changed [laughs] because I don’t know.

00:21:17 Q: Okay, let’s actually go back because I think, yeah, it’s much too complicated to answer in one anecdote or something. But let’s go back in the whole process. You’re in high school, you’re clearly—you have your own social group, you’re comfortable with your friends, your male friends in particular. So you apply to Barnard. You had really been interested in MIT or in engineering school. Right? But Mother’s saying, Go to Barnard. Go to an Ivy League or a Seven Sister.

Okay, so tell me a little bit about that whole process and your first coming to Barnard and your impressions. Let’s go back a little bit further, then.

00:21:51 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, the process probably started, my mother said I had to go to Vassar [College]. Because she wanted to go to Vassar and didn’t, because she didn’t have money.

00:21:58 Q: She didn’t finish, okay. Did she finish?

00:22:00 Montgomery Rocklin: She did, she finished very high, but at Hunter [College] because her parents didn’t have money. So that’s why, I guess, the kids had to do it.

00:22:08 Q: So you were the one who had to do it, yes, I get it.

00:22:11 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, it was all of us. We all had to go Ivy League. And so I go up to Vassar with them. I take one look and say, “I hate it. I will never go there.” Now that was probably—that was a reaction to my mother, I know. And then we went to a couple of other schools. I remember I went by myself up to Radcliffe [College] and I was much happier going to the interview by myself, without parents. But that was the first time I’d ever taken an airplane ride by myself. Maybe the first time I’d taken an airplane ride, actually. And I remember being really scared.

So, I applied to all these different schools and Barnard met the criteria for her, she considered it Ivy League enough, and it was—the fact that it was in New York initially was a negative for me. I didn’t want to be near home. But by then, I had a boyfriend—this is the guy I ended up marrying. And the main reason—if I’m truthful—I chose Barnard is because of him. It was close to him, he was in New Jersey. But the actual reason I gave myself—which was also true—was it was one of the schools that was really strong in both French and math, and those were the two things I liked the best and knew I was going to pursue. And when I first got there? Is that what you wanted to know?

Q: Uh-huh.

00:23:33 I would get—I remember walking through the gates for the first time—oh my God—and being absolutely petrified. First, I don’t think I belonged there. Second, here I am a

commuter, so I'm just kind of walking in, everybody else is bringing luggage and stuff. I don't have that. And I met—first walking through the gates I met Donna Rabin who I believe has passed away since. And we kind of bonded a little bit. It was like we were both commuters and [makes sound]. So it was very intimidating at first. Very much so. And again, I never really found a group a Barnard. Because I was interested in all the stuff—and I took almost all my classes across the street at Columbia. So I was the only girl in a lot of my classes. It was pretty cool, actually, in hindsight. So most of the people in our class did not know me until reunions. My photo is in the 1970 mortar board. I actually have it here somewhere [laughs]. I'll show it to you later. This was me, nobody knew who I was.

00:24:34 Q: Right. Unfortunately that was true for a lot of us. We were kind of like satellites, we just went off in different directions, I think.

00:24:41 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. I felt very much so, because I went home at night and everybody else stayed there. I remember one night when I was sleeping on the cushions on the floor of my friends' place, they had a panty-raid. They had apparently had many of them before, but that was the first time I'd been there for a panty-raid. I had no idea what was going on. It was like, "Ahh! What's going on?" Very strange.

00:25:01 Q: So tell me a little bit about the commute. How long did it take you?

00:25:06 Montgomery Rocklin: It took me quite a while.

00:25:07 Q: Did you come every day?

00:25:09 Montgomery Rocklin: Pardon me?

00:25:10 Q: Were you coming in every day?

00:25:11 Montgomery Rocklin: Just about. I tried to schedule classes where I didn't have to. Oh, I guess later on I managed not to. Because I remember I was working in a ski store forty hours a week. Yeah well, I had to pay my own tuition, kiddo. And it had to come from somewhere. So I managed to schedule classes so I didn't have to come every day, later on. But it was a bus commute. A bus through Port Authority, and then Subway back up to Barnard. [Laughs] and once—this is funny. I had classes—again, a lot of classes over at the engineering school. So I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. The express stops at 125th [Street]. Engineering is closer to 125th than 116th." Do the math. So I get off at 125th and I look around and go, "Hmm. This doesn't look familiar." And, I can see your smile, you're aware, this was not on Broadway and 125th. And I'll never—this is one of the first times I was actually conscious of race differential, because I was brought up without that. A big, Black woman took me in her arms and said, "Honey, you don't belong here," hailed a cab, threw me in it. And it was the first—I felt so weird, out of place, I didn't feel scared—just weird. I guess that's when race relations hit me [laughs].

00:26:33 Q: Yeah. So I think, we often hear commuters felt particularly distant from the social life. Do you want to speak a little bit about that? And how you did end up making some friends.

00:26:46 Montgomery Rocklin: Yes, I felt totally distant because I was going to a home to a situation I hated. Then when I got married I was getting beaten up so, either way worked pretty well. I did come in for one or two of the mixers. I remember if a guy started to come towards me I ran into the ladies' room [laughs]. Scared little rabbit! Oh my God. So I came in for a couple of mixers but, you know, I'd read the *Spectator*—no, it was in the *Barnard Bulletin*. I'd read the *Barnard Bulletin*, I'd hear all these wonderful things, but if I stayed for them, then I took the bus home very late at night and I didn't want to do that. Yeah, I felt totally, totally disenfranchised, almost, from Barnard. And that's why when I was on the board I tried very hard and voted for a dorm room for every single student. That was very important to me. Because I don't think I had true college experience. And when my daughter was going to school, she was going to school distant and staying there. I mean I was adamant on that. Of course she wanted to stay local for her boyfriend too. But anyway [laughs].

00:27:51 Q: Yeah, runs in the family.

00:27:55 Montgomery Rocklin: I think there was a commuter room where I could snooze. But I never got a sense of a socialized commuter group—like we did things together, and the commuters did this and that. I never got a sense of that. And I wasn't, certainly, part of all the

dorms cliques, because I wasn't. So I felt pretty separated, pretty distant. I still didn't think I belonged there [laughs]. My grades were fine, I mean I—

00:28:21 Q: Really?

00:28:22 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, my grades were terrific but I still thought I was stupid and didn't belong there.

00:28:29 Q: You keep referring to how bad the home situation was. Were you just—were you trapped there because of your mother's rather negative view of everything? Were there other issues going on at that point?

00:28:39 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, and I was in charge of the younger kids.

00:28:42 Q: You're still in charge of them.

00:28:44 Montgomery Rocklin: She had to go teach. So, I mean I was cooking dinner for them—quote unquote "Cooking dinner." And I didn't know how to cook. I didn't know how to be a mother and discipline three kids. I mean we've spoken since, and there were no hard feelings after. The only hard feeling was my middle sister who has since passed away. She said, "You left! You left home just when I needed you the most!" But once I left I wasn't coming back.

00:29:13 Q: Sure, sure. So this boyfriend who you ended up marrying and who ended up being abusive—that's a tough one. You had met when you were in high school?

00:29:23 Montgomery Rocklin: Yes. I had met—[laughs] I was out with my friends at some bar and he assumed that I was a lot older. Yeah, he was six or eight years older than me.

00:29:33 Q: Oh, my. Okay.

00:29:35 Montgomery Rocklin: Which in those—I mean that gap at that age is a big gap. But he was a lumber salesman. Never went to college. So, of course, with parents who were all Ivy League conscious, that was a great way to get at them [laughs].

00:29:48 Q: Yeah. Now, did he—was he supportive of you being at a place like Barnard? Studying and all that? Or was that even an issue?

00:29:56 Montgomery Rocklin: Initially I think I was just strong enough to say, “Hey, I’m going to school, this is important.” And I remember once—we didn’t have a lot of money at all. We didn’t make much and my parents didn’t give us anything. And I had to pay my Barnard tuition. And once we had one subway token. Either he went in to work or I went to school, not both. But that didn’t happen too often. But he was supportive until I graduated and started making a lot more money than he did. Then he was not supportive [laughs] at all.

He was insane. I remember once when he knew where I was working—I was in my computers, my first job. One of the few areas where, “Oh, you know, I guess we’ll have to take women because nobody else knows how to do this stuff.” And I was really good at it. I really liked it. And he came storming into the office assuming I was having an affair because I was there late every night. Well, I was just happily debugging programs—and very happy to do it—and that’s all that was going on. But it was misjudged.

00:31:00 Q: Okay, so talk a little bit about the process of completing your degree, graduating, getting married, and then getting a job.

00:31:11 Montgomery Rocklin: No, it was in a different order [laughs]. Different order.

00:31:13 Q: Okay, correct the order, then.

00:31:15 Montgomery Rocklin: I had really wanted to do the five year program where I’d get an engineering and a Barnard degree. That’s what I really wanted to do. Then when my parents cut off tuition, that wasn’t happening so, as I said, I graduated in three years. But I married him my second year in.

00:31:31 Q: Okay, okay.

00:31:32 Montgomery Rocklin: So I was officially a sophomore, I guess. I lost a year or whatever. So I married earlier. But anyway, so then I graduate and I really liked computers. I had actually started kind of a Ph.D. in theoretical math. I liked the math and the theory. Computers were more applied but I liked that too. And I was pretty good at it. And ended up getting—let's see. My first job was with a time-sharing service bureau and I ended up—because of my technical skills, I ended up running the New York office. I had a bunch of forty-year-old men and others reporting to me. Now here I am, I graduated college at twenty, I did not have the emotional maturity at all to handle the situation. I mean I was smart in the computer side but really dumb in the rest of it. Now I lost track of what your question was [laughs].

00:32:24 Q: The whole process of getting the job and what that meant. So you went right from Barnard in this job, you're saying?

00:32:32 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. It was really important that we get the money.

00:32:34 Q: At twenty. Oh, my goodness.

00:32:36 Montgomery Rocklin: For some reason my goal had always been a very business-oriented career. As a matter of fact when I was doing some of the Ph.D. work, one day—and this was theoretical math. So you don't see numbers, you see a lot of Greek letters. And I loved it. I loved it. But one day my professor and I, for some reason, are having lunch, I guess, and swirling wine in a glass and talking about the equations of the flux lines in the glass of wine. And it just

hit me, “Wait a minute, is this really what I want to do? I’m not enjoying life here.” And the two options, the two roads I saw from there were research or teaching which, at the time, neither of those appealed to me. I wanted to do business. And again, that must be my father’s influence. So I did end up—and I had a very successful business career.

00:33:32 Q: Okay, I’m a little confused, when were you doing the Ph.D., then? This was while you were also working?

00:33:39 Montgomery Rocklin: The Ph.D. was actually before I started work. It was a short time right after Barnard and before I started work.

00:33:50 Q: Okay. Now, did you end up finishing that?

00:33:52 Montgomery Rocklin: No, no. Not at all.

00:33:53 Q: So, then you were working because you’re having to support everybody [laughs].

00:33:57 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, that was part of it, yeah. And I liked it! I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed work. As a matter of fact, my identity for a long time was 125 percent my work, which is not a good thing, but it was.

00:34:13 Q: And where were you living there at that time? After you were married where were you living?

00:34:19 Montgomery Rocklin: Once I got out of Barnard we were living in Hackensack, New Jersey, which was, unfortunately, the next town to my parents. But I was working in Union New Jersey, and he was working somewhere else in Jersey, so it worked at that point. That was convenient.

00:34:35 Q: And there were a number of revolutions going on. Let's go back. One of the things that was addressed in the original movie that was made—or film, I should say—

00:34:46 Montgomery Rocklin: That was just terrific. I loved that.

00:34:48 Q: Yeah. A lovely group of people, very interesting women. It's too bad we didn't know them when we were in college [laughs]. But I wanted to know when did you first hear about the demonstrations? The Columbia strike in '68? What were your feelings as a commuter and as, you know, coming from where you did?

00:35:09 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, well here you'll see my—I don't want to say, polarized, but both sides of me. I totally agreed with the goals of the demonstrators, stop the Vietnam War and all of that stuff. I totally agreed with all of that. I didn't necessarily agree with their methods, and I definitely wanted to go to class. I was paying tuition, and I loved—and I wanted to go. So I

counter-occupied the math building so that the demonstrators / my friends couldn't get in. And there was this picture in the *New York Post* of me climbing into the math grad building. And two things really got me. One, I didn't realize how short our skirts really were. I mean, whoa! Hello! And the other thing was how many people recognized me from that angle, it was very—

00:35:59 Q: Oh, dear!

00:35:59 Montgomery Rocklin: “How do you know that's me?” [Laughs] It was strange. So I counter-occupied. I really wanted to go to class. But, as a commuter—again, going home at night a lot—I baked cookies and pies and everything for all my friends who were demonstrating and would go along the lines and give them home-baked goods. So I went both ways.

00:36:20 Q: You were doing both ways, always.

00:36:21 Montgomery Rocklin: That particular circumstance [laughs]. Let's not take that the wrong way.

00:36:25 Q: How do you remember the university responding to the strike and your particular academic course at that point?

00:36:32 Montgomery Rocklin: The thing I remember the most—and this is my most poignant, vibrant, whatever, memory of that whole time at Barnard—was the day after the troopers broke it

up and battered heads and did whatever they did. I can't remember, I think the campus was supposed to be somewhat closed, and being me, of course, I got in. And blood all over the white Low Library steps. I remember just sitting down and crying. "This is my friends' blood." It just—I'm getting shivers right now. Unfortunately that's my most vivid memory at Barnard.

But you asked how I first heard about it. Again, being a commuter, you didn't really know. You know, you'd walk on and you'd see Mark whatever at SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] making speeches, but you had to go home. So I didn't get really involved other than the counter-occupation.

00:37:29 Q: Now, was there any—you said your parents were kind of both sides—very liberal, very involved—so were they rooting for this to happen or did they even discuss it with you? Or were you too busy?

00:37:45 Montgomery Rocklin: I don't remember. I told you I don't remember, but I wish—that is such a great question, I wish I knew the answer. I don't know. I, now, sitting here wonder how they would have felt. The liberal one, whichever that was, would have clearly—because they switched sides, so I can't remember. I believe my father was originally the liberal one. Maybe. But anyway, the liberal one would have supported it. I'm not sure about the actions. You know, the idea of taking over the university and all that. My mother, who was on the board of education—nah. Not so much. But, you know I remember if you talked to, like, Katherine [J.]

Brewster or some of the others, you know all these things about their parents and they said, you know you can't be involved and all this. I just don't remember.

00:38:37 Q: Yeah, well, that's fair enough. I mean you were focusing on the things—

00:38:42 Montgomery Rocklin: I wish I did.

00:38:44 Q: Okay, what about special friends that you may have maintained since Barnard who were also Barnard students. Anyone in particular come to mind?

00:38:53 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. Linda Balagur at Barnard and then Peyster and Zappulla. But she and I have remained friends. Actually, when I drove out to Park City, I drove across country and stopped in Kansas City and saw Linda. And she and I both got pregnant in our forties. We were both very late on this. And she had Matt six months before I had my daughter Jessie. And they used to play together—

[INTERRUPTION]

00:39:36 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay. So we were really good friends when the kids were younger. And then I guess Linda got a lot of jobs in different places, and she moved, and I moved. But we'd get in touch again, like every couple of years, and it was like no time had ever passed. And then we met initially because we were dating brothers.

00:39:55 Q: Oh, no!

00:39:56 Montgomery Rocklin: She ended up marrying one of them. I did not. So that's how we met initially. I remember her, she's tall, and blonde, and long blonde hair and she was in her cute little tennis outfit, and we met on the steps of Barnard Hall. And we've stayed friends. And then our kids are now very close friends. What happened is Matt ended up at the University of Illinois doing a lot of advanced graduate work in engineering. My daughter ended up at the University of Illinois taking her Ph.D. And they have become best friends.

00:40:28 Q: And what was her field?

00:40:30 Montgomery Rocklin: It's a branch of psychology and the area she is specifically interested in is childhood obesity. So she's on this really well funded team, but she represents the psychological side of it. And then you have all the other usual suspects. Nutrition, and sociology, and everything else. And she's really enjoying it. And I think Matt called her his best friend at one point. And I remember she said was thinking of having—because she's getting married next year—having Matt be her maid of honor, but that wouldn't work [laughs].

00:41:03 Q: Not a maid. Matron of honor? No. What do you call it?

00:41:07 Montgomery Rocklin: Whatever, whatever. A guy of honor.

00:41:09 Q: A guy of honor, yes. It's a phrase we don't hear that often, guy of honor [laughs].

00:41:15 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, whatever. So we're really looking forward to the wedding because the four of us will get together again.

00:41:20 Q: Okay, will that be in Utah?

00:41:22 Montgomery Rocklin: No, I live in Utah. Her dad lives in New Jersey. They live in Illinois. But the wedding is in Vermont. Go figure. As she put it, it has mountains, which they love, and snow, which they love, and family. And I'm thinking, "What am I? Chopped liver?" But anyway [laughs], so they're having it in Vermont. It will be a destination wedding for almost everybody.

00:41:51 Q: Well, good luck with that. Going back a little to Barnard and Columbia and your student days, what do you remember about the political and, sort of socially charged, racially charged tone of those particular years we were there.

00:42:09 Montgomery Rocklin: It was very charged. And I didn't really get it, to be quite honest with you. I just look at people as people, and I always have. The whole, "Oh, the Blacks, they do this," it didn't sit well with me. And then I remember there was this very stout gentleman, a Columbia student I assume, you know, spouting very, very, very conservative Republican—and

going, “Nah, that’s not me.” And then there’s Mark [W.] Rudd who wants to take over the university, “No, that’s not me.” So I don’t know that I really—I was aware of it. But not as much aware as I would have been had I been a live-in student because then, you know, you’re just immersed in it, which I was not. But I didn’t really get into it. I wanted to go to my classes, keep my head down, that’s what I did.

00:43:02 Q: Yeah, I mean as you’re talking I’m just wondering, were there any African American commuters in our class? I don’t remember. I think none of them did.

00:43:12 Montgomery Rocklin: I don’t believe so, but again, as I told you, we commuters never got together as a group. So I don’t even know how I’d know the answer to that.

00:43:22 Q: Yeah, no it just came off the top of my head. How about some of the particularly eventful world events, the cultural changes at that time, the war was going on, we had assassinations, there was Kent State, rioting in Harlem. Any memories of those particular events and reactions?

00:43:42 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh yeah, a lot of them. Let’s do Vietnam first, and the fallout from that. My brother is two years younger than I am, and he was the first year of the draft. He was adamant that he was not going to serve in a war that he did not believe in, blah, blah, blah. So the night they were drawing the numbers—and I wasn’t watching it on TV but I called him a little later and I said, “Well, how did you do?” Because he had sworn he would go to Canada

rather than serve. He said, “Well, let’s put it this way. You’re more likely to serve than I am.” He had a very, very high number [laughs]. He’s always very lucky. So that was part. Again, because I had older friends, I knew people who went to ‘Nam and didn’t come back. And that affected me very strongly because I wasn’t sure I understood what we as a country were doing there. And that troubled me. It troubled me greatly.

The Women’s Movement—oh, the Sexual Revolution! I forgot that one. I missed the whole damned thing. I was married, so I just missed it. I was never—I guess I was so contained, constrained, whatever. I didn’t even do drugs at Columbia. I mean, I was really very—

00:45:08 Q: It sounds like you were just too busy. You were just constantly—

00:45:11 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, I don’t think it was just that because I remember getting invited to parties where I knew there was going to be that. And I’d go, and as they passed the pipe or whatever around I might try to—but I didn’t do enough to have anything ever happen. Remember I still had to take the bus to home.

00:45:27 Q: Right.

00:45:29 Montgomery Rocklin: I had access, shall we say, to some of the best quality pot on campus but it just wasn’t my thing. You want to segue into the first time I actually did smoke pot?

00:45:39 Q: Sure.

00:45:40 Montgomery Rocklin: It's pretty funny. I was in my forties, believe it or not [laughs]. And my two younger sisters could not believe I didn't. They went [makes sound]. So they decide that I'm going to smoke pot and they're going to get me high. And I wasn't opposed to it, you know "Okay." So first we have to go shopping and buy all the junk food. I'm going, "Why are we doing this?" They go, "You'll understand." So then—I think it was a bong. They were using a bong and I couldn't get the coordination with the bong at all, for some reason. So they were laughing hysterically. Because they're taking much deeper—they're already really high. And then I kept going, "Well, I think I'm high," and I remember my sister saying, "No, you don't think you're high. You will know." And it did happen and it was hysterical. I don't think I ever laughed more than I laughed that night. Everything was hysterical, it was a lot of fun. But I just never pursued it, anyway. That was not where we started. I segue a lot.

00:46:40 Oh. You were asking about politically charged atmosphere and the things that were going on. So the Sexual Revolution I missed. The politics—I felt very strongly we should not be in Vietnam and voted that way. But as you heard, I didn't want to take over the school to make the point. Remember building of the gym? I was very—I thought it was wrong. I mean the people in the community would not have access—real access—to the gym as I remember it, and that infuriated me. I mean, how dare the university take land from this group of people and then not let them in? It just really infuriated me. So, I was very unhappy about that.

We had the whole Feminist Movement. We had that going on too. That was a big one. That one—that was really interesting because I would always say—I didn't call myself a feminist and I didn't go out and bra burn and do all that. But in fact, I wanted—and went after very carefully—all the goals they were after. I wanted free access to do a job I wanted to do. I wanted to get paid the way I should get paid—because I was doing it better than the men, as it happened. So I was, yes, I was caught up in that. Did I get overly involved in it? No. No. I guess I'm just not politically active.

00:48:06 Q: But you chose a field which, as you said, traditionally not a lot of women had gone into.

00:48:13 Montgomery Rocklin: Well no, my initial field was—we then called it data processing.

00:48:19 Q: Oh, in data processing, okay.

00:48:20 Montgomery Rocklin: It was so new that nobody was going into it. So they would take anybody who was qualified and the fact that I was a woman, “Well, I guess we got to do it.” But then my next field was management consultant. So here I am, the first female management consultant of what was then one of the big eight accounting firms. And they didn't know what to do with me and I didn't know what to do with them. It was just awkward. The first night I was on an out of town job, the partner pulls us into a meeting of some sort—and I guess there were

about, maybe twenty of us on this job, and it was a government job—and he goes, “As you know, we’re on a government job and we always try to limit expenses on those jobs,” so then he kind of leers at me and goes, “So who would you like to room with?” I mean now I would have such a great—I would have so many wonderful answers. Then, I just wanted to sink through the floor. I don’t even remember what I said or didn’t say. I did get my own room, p.s. But it was tough because you’d go in to see a client and they would go, “Why is his secretary coming?” “Hey. I’m the manager on this job” [Laughs]. It was—it was weird.

00:49:34 Q: Did it change over the course of years, or did you feel like you were always kind of fighting that boys club?

00:49:41 Montgomery Rocklin: It was always there in my career, but in different ways. It still got pretty blatant sometimes. My way of handling it—right or wrong, it’s what works for me—is again, become one of the guys. I went through a short period where I actually wore suits with vests to try to hide that I had boobs. That didn’t work too well. Then I went through a period where if some guy would hold a door open for me I’d walk through another door. That was not very nice, and that wasn’t very successful for business. So I found a way to kind of just not see it. Something would happen that, in hindsight, was just totally gender discrimination—completely—but I would choose not to see it as such. That’s what worked for me. So later on, here I am running a consulting organization myself, and I still have a lot of clients who didn’t want a woman. Specifically the Japanese. I had a Japanese bank and they just did not respect women even more than American men did not respect women. And I just figured, “You know?

The best way to handle this?” I had all the people who worked for me do all the presentations and they did most of the face time. Because I didn’t have an ego in it. You know, as long as what I thought was the right thing got done, okay. If it’s more likely to happen, if I had someone else do it, so be it.

00:51:10 But I guess—oh, God. It was there when I was with Chase Manhattan. So I was, at the time, the youngest Vice President they ever had, and again one of the few women. And I remember a bunch of things happened. A couple of guys hit on me and I went to my boss, “They’re hitting on me, but we work here. I mean we can’t—” And he goes, “It’s going to happen. Just, you know, don’t get involved.” Which was my approach to begin with. I wasn’t going to. And then one other time, I guess it was a Jewish holiday, and he was Jewish and he knew I was. And he said something. We were in a cab and I don’t remember what spurred it, but I remember him saying to me, “Don’t let anybody know you’re Jewish. It’s bad enough they know you’re female. You won’t get anywhere.” And I thought, “Hmm. Again, I don’t fit in!” You know? I do, but I don’t.

00:52:07 Q: That’s really harsh.

00:52:09 Montgomery Rocklin: Until recently that was the theme of my life.

00:52:11 Q: Okay, can you talk a little more about the whole process of eventually having your own consulting firm and being a manager?

00:52:20 Montgomery Rocklin: Actually that was pretty interesting. I was at Chase—no, wait. Well my first job was quote, unquote, “data processing” and then I went—I don’t remember. Then I went to a real estate company but doing—again, in data processing. And then there’d been an ad in the New York Times, “Are you bored with your job? Do you want exposure to more things?” I can’t remember all the questions, but I remember answering all of them, “Yes!” So I went to the interview, and it was to be a management consultant at Touche Ross. And I knew I’d be the only female, so I declined it. I declined it for about six months. Jack Shaw, my future boss, called me every month and said, “Are you sure you don’t want to do this?” And he happened to call me—you know, we all have days at work where it’s just, “I’ve had it, I’m out of here, I can’t stand this!” He happened to call me on one of those days. So I went to management consulting.

I did that for about four years. You know, again, just trying to get over the fact that I was female, and just not let it impact anything—but it was. And then in hindsight, now I know I’m ADD. I just overworked everything, and I put in so much more effort than any of the guys, and it was unnecessary. You know, you didn’t need to know the answer to every single question just in case it got asked. But I did do that.

00:53:43 And then when I left consulting—where did I go? Oh! I left external consulting with Touche to be in a group at Chase that was, in many ways, internal consulting. And I always joked, I did not get a lobotomy the day I joined Chase because I would have noticed. You should

know these things. But when I was in consulting, and they were paying me ridiculous amounts of money, and power, they listened. And they respected, and listened, and did what I said would be right for their company. I go to Chase and it's like nobody listens. You're internal, you're internal staff, nobody cares. So that was a real wake-up call [laughs]. But I did it and I enjoyed it and I got exposure to almost every area of the bank.

And then at one point, again, this is a big bank. And what do banks do? They lend money. Well, I didn't know anything about lending money. I didn't know anything. And I ended up going through the lending course, not because I wanted to learn to lend. I took it as a language course, and a culture course, because it was very clear to me these guys didn't think the way I did, not at all. So I got to understand how they thought and realized it's all about mitigating risk. So next, then, when I started making presentations, I very clearly addressed risk mitigation and all this other stuff, and things got a lot more successful.

00:55:11 Q: Can you explain a little more—?

00:55:13 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh, I have to get into my own consulting group—sorry!

00:55:15 Q: Yeah, this is part of it.

00:55:18 Montgomery Rocklin: Then I was actually let go from Chase. I'd been in a couple of different positions and they were downsizing the area I was in. And, you know, they had all this

great support and you had offices, and you had consultants, and you had all sorts of help. And I realized I really liked the consulting aspect of what I did, because I get bored very easily and different clients, you get different things. And by that point I had a clear expertise. I was one of the only people in the country who knew about bank mutual funds, because I started the industry. And since I started the industry and figured out—there were restrictive laws that people initially thought that banks can't do any of this stuff. Part of my job was to find ways—not necessarily to get around the law, but to get Chase ready for when the law would change, because we knew eventually it would. So I found a way by partnering with Dreyfus, who was then a big mutual fund company. Chase would do some, Dreyfus would do some. They would do the parts that were clearly illegal for us, and so I made it all go. So I had this expertise and, again, I was the only woman on the boards. But that was fine. And they had to tone me down because banks were not allowed to sell mutual funds. They said in my normal, infectious enthusiasm for selling, “How do you look in stripes?” Because it could be construed as sales.

00:56:47 But anyway, so I leave Chase, and I did start my own consulting firm. My clients were mostly banks, investment managers, other financial institutions, and I did a lot of work around bank mutual funds, but then a lot of work around restructuring, a lot of other things. It was diverse enough to keep me interested. And what I did which worked for me, is rather than hire a staff—because when I was at the large consulting company, you got a lot of people called, “On the beach.” Not on the job right now. And then you send, often, just who is available, not necessarily the best person for the job. I did not want to do that. So I had on call a whole bunch of retired Booz Allen Consultants, McKinsey Consultants, other people who are kind of semi-

retired but who are really good, and really smart. And when I needed a really good market research study, I brought in Sam. First of all, I didn't have payroll, but that's not so much the reason I didn't do it. It was more I wanted to get the best people on the job to do the best job. That's how I ran my company.

00:58:00 Q: And how long did you do that—did you run that firm?

00:58:03 Montgomery Rocklin: On and off [makes sound] eight to ten years. I did get enticed to take a job and give it up once, which was such a mistake. Executive vice president of a certain company, and it didn't work out. I missed what I had been doing, they wanted somebody different, and so I just went back to where I was. But what really stopped it is I got sick. I didn't know what it was. They ended up eventually diagnosing it as MS [multiple sclerosis], but I just couldn't do a lot of things that I used to be able to do. And I ended up not working for four or five years—zero income.

00:58:45 Q: You were getting treatment, or what was—? you just weren't able to—

00:58:46 Q: No, because I didn't know what it was. I clearly had depression and I was seeing somebody for that. And in hindsight I'd been depressed my whole life but I never figured that out. And no, it wasn't getting anything physical until a bit later, because the diagnosis took maybe seven years—which is not atypical with MS. They thought I had early onset Alzheimer's at one point because I would get lost going from home to work. I'd get to the corner, and I'd

recognize it, but I wouldn't know, Do I turn right, left, or center to go home. And that was a little weird. I started tripping over my own feet. A little strange. There were other really weird—oh, I lost night vision. So I stopped driving at night. I could not see at all at night. I became very photosensitive, which I still am. And thank God—it was my shrink, actually. She said, “There is something going on here. This is not mental. This is not just getting older. This is something else, you’ve got to see a neurologist.”

00:59:52 So, then again you go through five or six different ones. They thought it was epilepsy, they thought it was this, they thought it was that, and they finally come to MS as a “diagnosis of exclusion,” I believe is what they call it. Now, when I saw the list of all the other things that these spots all over my brain could be I voted for MS too, it was the least awful. But I’m still—and I did take treatment then. I was on these intramuscular shots. The needle is this big, you have to stab your thigh once every week. It was awful. All it did was it totally destroyed me for two days because I was too tired and couldn't get out of bed to do anything. I wasn't sure it was really helping, and with my doctor's understanding I got off it and nothing bad happened. So although the diagnosis is on my MIB [Medical Information Bureau], I don't believe I ever truly had it. I don't know, I have something because I still have to get brain MRI's and it still lights up like a Christmas tree. So there's something not right up there.

01:00:51 Q: Amazing. Now, at some point you married again?

01:00:56 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, a couple of times.

01:00:59 Q: Okay, is there anything you want to share about that?

01:01:02 Montgomery Rocklin: Not necessarily, but I will.

[INTERRUPTION]

01:05:33 Q: Anyway, okay. So, I'm sorry. You had started to tell me about, I think, your relationship with the second guy and something about chasing in the bushes [laughs]. If you wouldn't mind retelling a little bit of that?

01:05:45 Montgomery Rocklin: I don't know if you caught the "Night of the Babushkas" where my girlfriend had seen him having dinner with his old girlfriend and said, "You have to know. You just have to know this." And so we put scarves over our head and we used somebody else's car, and we drove to the restaurant, and we snuck around in the bushes. Peaked in the bushes. Yeah, he was having dinner with his old girlfriend and they looked pretty chummy. I don't know to this day if he ever had a real—if he ever really had a physical affair—he clearly had an emotional one, whether he had one sexually, again, I don't know, But I just didn't trust him, I just didn't trust him at all. Huh! That's a theme of my life, mistrust of men. Hmm, I just realized that's another theme. But anyways, so that didn't work, and we went back and forth, oh God. I think three times I walked out, left, got my own apartment, furnished it, got everything all

together, and then he'd always talk me into coming back. And finally I just didn't go back anymore, "That's it, I can't do this anymore."

01:06:48 And then, again, around seven years later. I joked I got married every ten years whether I needed to or not. A friend of mine was taking me to a party to introduce me to someone and somebody was taking the guy who became my husband to the party to introduce him to someone else—and they were not there. We were supposed to meet other people and somehow we met each other. And everybody kept saying, "This is not going to work. They're so different," but it clicked in many ways. I really enjoyed that we both played tennis, we both sailed, we both skied, we did activities together. And he was probably the first guy in my life who didn't beat me down. We went up to Grey Rocks, which is a ski area, at the beginning of each season and they divide you into fifty-two classes based on your ability. So I end up, I think, in class number three near the top and he was, like, twenty-eight or something. And he was so proud that his wife was up there. I was like, "Wow!" This was a really nice feeling. I liked that.

He even talked me into having a child. He said to me, one day, "How are you going to feel when you're sixty-four and you never even tried?" I don't know why that got me, but we had a deal. He was going to be the primary parent. I was going to continue to work, because I was the breadwinner and logistically that made sense anyway. I liked to work. I knew how to work. Kid? Ooh! Petrified me. And that sounded like a really good plan.

01:08:24 So we go through a couple of things, because I was, at that point, like forty-ish. And I ended up getting pregnant, and p.s., that was my first pregnancy. Unlike many of our classmates I never ended up having an abortion or anything. But I very firmly supported *Roe v. Wade*. I got pregnant, I had Jessica. And the first day and a half I wasn't so sure about this. I kind of thought, "Can I push her back? What can I do?" [Laughs] I wanted to go to sleep! I was exhausted! I was tired. And I got through the whole nine months of pregnancy. I never had morning sickness. I never had any problem other than being pretty constantly tired. I had a note from my doctor that I was able to fly in my ninth month. Because I had clients, you know, and flying there to see them.

Actually, just before she was born—I guess we had cell phones by then—so I'm on the phone with the client about something or other, and the doctor is yelling, "You have to get off the phone, it's time to push!" So I had my daughter and the first day—and she's heard me say this—the first day and a half I was really [makes sound] not so sure. And then, as the doctor said to me, hormones kicked in big time. I had never understood previously why all these high-powered women who were, you know, in jobs kind of like where I was, would have a child and not come back. How could that be? I never understood it.

01:09:50 I was torn in half. Every time I was away from her my body literally ached, I missed her so much. Yet, every time I'm with her, I'm on the phone with clients. And at one point, she was maybe four or five, and she's playing with her dollies—you know like little kids do—and I heard her say, "Well, mommy would love to play with you right now but I have to go have a

conference call with a client.” And that, like, “Oh, shit, is that what I’m teaching my daughter? This is not good.” So again, I was really caught. I didn’t want to give up work because, as I said, it was 125 percent of who I was, and logistically I was lucky to make a lot of money. And I was the bread-winner so if I didn’t work we had problems. And he was a horrible parent. Well, let me restate that; he meant really well. And to this day he does. He adores her, he’s terrific. But he wouldn’t bring her up the way I would. You know, he says, “I’m watching her,” by the swimming pool. And she fell in twice. And she never really wanted to learn how to swim, it was just—it was a little different. But anyways—

01:11:03 Q: But he did do the child care so you were able to work still.

01:11:06 Montgomery Rocklin: Not really, no.

01:11:08 Q: Not really, oh, okay.

01:11:08 Montgomery Rocklin: No, I got—we got nannies.

01:11:11 Q: Yeah.

01:11:11 Montgomery Rocklin: We had wonderful, wonderful—I really wanted a nanny from another country. I wanted my daughter to be bi-lingual, because kids pick up languages so well when they’re young. And the best candidates who came through were always these wonderful,

terrific, middle America white girls. Not what I wanted, but that's what Jessie had, and they were terrific. So I would feel comfortable. You know, I knew that she had good care because he—and he had kept losing his job along the way somewhere, too. But anyway, she was with the nannies. And then it worked out okay, he got another job, and he was in sales. And so I was still travelling a lot because my clients were wherever they were. And since he was in sales he could kind of master his own time. So he would come and bring Jessie, and take care of Jessie while I did my thing. And at night I had the pleasure of my daughter there. And I began to realize, I really liked having my daughter—not so much him.

01:12:09 For a lot of reasons we just were tearing each other apart. We were just fighting all the time. My daughter tells me later she's thrilled we divorced because she hid in the closet all the time because we were fighting. Ha! But anyway, I thought—I remember saying to my sisters, “I can do this. I stay married until she goes off to college. I can be miserable this amount of time, it's okay, I can do it.” And then my middle sister died. When Carol died it changed a lot of my world. I had wanted her to come live with us. First of all because we were very close, second of all because it would dilute, I guess, Jessie's dad. And then when she died, it's like, “You know, I can't stay miserable until Jessie goes to college.”

01:13:00 Q: She must have been young. She must have died young.

01:13:00 Montgomery Rocklin: So was Jessie was six or seven when we divorced. She was very young.

01:13:05 Q: And your sister was how old when she died?

01:13:07 Montgomery Rocklin: Forty-one.

01:13:10 Q: And what was her—?

01:13:10 Montgomery Rocklin: She was my younger sister—

01:13:11 Q: It was what?

01:13:13 Montgomery Rocklin: My younger sister, and it hit me really hard. We don't know why. She'd been diagnosed with long-term Lyme [chronic Lyme Disease] quite a while earlier and she had a shunt with intravenous I.V. And she was in a lot of pain, and so there were a couple of theories that—accidental or otherwise overdose, blah, blah, blah, blah. We did do a tox screen [toxicology test]. Her daughter was then old enough to say, "I do not want my mother to have an autopsy." She'd been cut up—every year she had some major surgery. She had a hysterectomy at twenty-eight, this poor kid. Angela refused an autopsy, so we don't know more. But we did do a tox screen and we know what it wasn't. That's all we can say. And it appeared to be a heart attack. She was supposed to meet her roommate for Easter brunch, and her roommate came home and found her lying in bed, New York Times in one hand, telephone was right there. So it must have been a sudden heart attack. That's all we can surmise.

But it changed things. Jessie's daddy—I don't call him my ex-husband because that's negative. Jessie's daddy, to me, is very positive. So he's Jessie's daddy. Jessie's daddy blames her, "It's all Carole's fault! If she hadn't died we would have stayed together!" I don't quite see it that way, but he was right. If Carol hadn't died, I don't know what would have happened.

01:14:37 Q: So this really triggered your thinking, like, "I have to do something more with my life than be unhappy in this marriage," right?

01:14:44 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, on the personal side. Remember, professionally, I am doing amazingly well, just amazingly. There was a New York Times, big magazine section article on executive women dressing for success. But anyway, so this big picture of me, half-page photo of me in the New York Times. I mean, I was, you know, doing okay. But personally no, I was a mess, total mess.

So we did get divorced and here I am, a single mom. She was six or seven. How the hell did I manage that? I know I started working more at home. I remember that part. I started being home more just because I wanted to be with her. I must have had a lot of babysitters [laughs]. Oh, I know—he did have half-custody, officially he did have half-custody. By the way I was supposed to pay him alimony.

01:15:41 Q: You what?

01:15:42 Montgomery Rocklin: To add insult to injury. Ugh! Anyway.

01:15:44 Q: I didn't hear what you said, you did what?

01:15:46 Montgomery Rocklin: I paid him a lump sum. I wasn't going to pay him monthly.

01:15:49 Q: Oh, alimony, oh.

01:15:53 Montgomery Rocklin: This was the year of the woman—you asked about women's lib and how did it impact. In that case using the doctrine of fairness that they were supposed to employ, I had to pay him alimony. Okay. Yeah, I had gotten him used to a lifestyle to which he had not been accustomed to [laughs].

01:16:10 Q: I imagine, yeah.

01:16:12 Montgomery Rocklin: It was a nice lifestyle. So anyway, I don't know what—oh, how did I get married again? I was very happy not being married. As a matter of fact I did not want to marry again. I realized, I'm not good at this. I pick men who are either alcoholics, which those two were, or cheaters, or this, that, or the other. It's like, This is not for me. I don't do well on this. And I was quite fine. I had my own house that I had built when I became independent.

01:16:43 Q: Where was this, now? Where was your home?

01:16:45 Montgomery Rocklin: This was in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. I moved there for the education system. It's a phenomenal education system. And Jessie was very young, and that was very important to me. I wanted her to have a really good education. I guess I got that from my parents too [laughs]. So, I'm in Basking Ridge and I meet this guy. I'm on the board of—I don't know if at that point it was the Joffrey Ballet, or the New York, New Jersey Ballet. I've been on a lot of boards. But I was on the board of some ballet, and we were doing this black tie benefit. We had this kind of social club in this community I lived in, so, of course, I invited the social club, really in my role on the ballet. "Hey, we need more people to come and give us money."

And this one guy came who appeared to be a little bit nerdy scientist. He was a doctor, who was now working for a drug company. He was a nice guy, and we'd do things together. We'd go to classical music together, we'd do stuff together, and he wanted to get married. And I didn't. I said, look, "I don't mind—" and he was ten years older than me and I remember thinking, "I feel enough about this guy that I will take care of him when he's older and I'm not, but I do not want to marry him." But he was very old fashioned, wanted to be married. So we get married. And I'm how many years old? I guess it was about eight years later, I find out he has a mistress. "Hello!"

01:18:21 Q: Now did he move into your house, or did you move into his?

01:18:24 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh yeah, he moved into my house. In the divorce, I had to pay him to get my house back.

01:18:31 Q: Oh, come on.

01:18:31 Montgomery Rocklin: I'm very stupid.

01:18:35 Q: No.

01:18:36 Montgomery Rocklin: When I'm in love, it's like, "everything is shared, you know, we're in this together, blah, blah, blah, blah." So we had this pre-nup [prenuptial agreement] which he sprang on me, like, two weeks before the wedding. We had discussed it but he never did anything. So I thought, "Okay." In hindsight I just should have called everything off, but—where I basically got nothing if we get divorced, which, at that point, I was actually okay with because he had two sons from a previous marriage that he wanted to protect. I was making good money. I—you know, I thought, "Okay, I don't need his money." And I don't remember what the clause was in there, but there was some clause that if we get divorced, then blah, blah. Well, so I put his name on the title of my house, which don't do that. So I had to pay him to get my house back. It's very—not good [laughs].

But, again, I thought "Yeah okay, I'll be fine. I'll go back to work." Then I got the MS diagnosis, that's what happened. In the middle of all this I had the MS diagnosis, realized I was never going

to go back to work full-time, and this is now a problem. But I needed to be away. I needed to be out of that marriage. I could not—I couldn't trust him, I couldn't believe him. You know, he tells me he's not going to see her anymore, he's not going to do this. And I go, "Huh. Let's see." So he talks me into going on one of the rug-buying trips with him. He collected, and we collected a lot of very good quality Native American art from a lot of very famous artists. He quite got me into it. I did quite get in—this jewelry is part of my wearable art.

01:20:18 Q: Beautiful, yeah.

01:20:19 Montgomery Rocklin: My wearable collection. So we were on this trip, and it was over Valentine's Day, and I picked up his phone to take a photo of a rug we were thinking of buying. And I see a text message from her. Now I didn't used to pry, but—so, I look at the text message and it says something like, "Thank you for the wonderful Valentine's gift." "That's it, you're out of here." And he says, "Well, it will take me several months to find an apartment, and to get settled." I said, "Yup, you're probably right. And that's why God invented hotels, she knew what she was doing. Out!" And so he moved out in a couple of days. I have been single ever since. I dated and I like men—I love men, I mean—you know.

01:21:08 Q: But you don't trust them [laughs].

01:21:09 Montgomery Rocklin: No, I don't. I would prefer to be in a relationship with a man, but I have this thread of distrust running all the way through. And that's my problem. I understand it.

So I'd probably turn away, you know, any guy anyway. But I'd had a lot of male friends. Not since I've moved here; my friends here have been mostly female. And male friends are fine. You know, I can play tennis with them, we can go bowling, we can do things. Friends are fine but I just kind of had it for a while, and I learned that I can't pick men. There's something wrong if I pick them. So, there are a whole bunch of people who have veto power if I ever meet someone again [laughs]. Truth of the matter is I would love to. It would be very nice, and I'm happier in a relationship, but if I don't, that's okay too. I have built my life here without it, and it's fine.

01:22:04 Q: Talk a little bit about your move out to Utah, and things that have happened since then.

01:22:08 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, move to Utah. There were two things that actually made that happen. At that point, before I moved out, in New Jersey, in this part-time job—because I just can't—you know, the MS. And pretty unhappy, but just kind of plodding through it. So—which happened first? I'm trying to get the order straight. I find out about the mistress and this is, “Whoa.” I'm not sure I was in love with him anymore at that point, but the betrayal—I just couldn't believe it. It really decimated me. And then maybe—I don't remember a time frame, soon after that, relatively, had a car accident. Nearly died. The EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] and the Police said they were amazed that I was alive in there. There was a deer and I subconsciously went not to hit the deer. This was not even—I don't even remember thinking anything—and smashed into this gigunda tree. Thank god for my Audi, it saved my life—I mean it absolutely saved my life. It was destroyed and it left me with a lot of things that I'm still

dealing with. I just had six hours of spinal neurosurgery about three and a half months ago, to try to fix everything. So that's part of me moving around so much as I try to get comfortable.

01:23:37 Q: Yeah, no, that's fine.

01:23:40 Montgomery Rocklin: But that's really—that's going to be fixed, that's going to be okay, I think. But, so I find out about the mistress, I get divorced. I move out of my house and I'm living somewhere else. I rented a place for a year, because I've always loved the mountains and I've always wanted to come out. But I couldn't even really walk. So the idea of coming out to ski when you can't walk was a little far-fetched for a while. When I was feeling better towards the end of that next lease, but no. In that whole three-year period, I find out about the mistress, I get divorced, I move out of my house, my daughter goes off for a Ph.D., so she's not coming home, my mother dies—no my father died. I almost died, and my mother was—it turned out that she did die just before I left. That was like, "There's a lot going on here."

01:24:31 Q: Overload.

01:24:33 Montgomery Rocklin: And I wasn't running away, like most people run, I wasn't. I wanted to go somewhere with a sense of community, where I could ski. Skiing is my passion. I wanted to get back to it. So I ended up picking up, taking my dog with me in the car—because I wasn't going to put my dog in the bottom of an airplane. And thank god, a sailing buddy of

mine—again a male but a buddy—we drove out, cross country and got here. And here I was, knowing not a soul in Utah.

And I guess that shy little person who never wanted to be noticed, is not quite who I am anymore. I think the real extrovert came out along the way. It was way before I got here, and I now have more friends than I know what to do with. Somebody baked me a cake for my birthday, which I've never had before in my life. If I'm sick people come over with chicken soup. I've had the most amazing group of people help me with this surgery. Every other day somebody came and brought me a meal. People I don't even know. I mean, this community is phenomenal.

01:25:36 Q: That's great.

01:25:36 Montgomery Rocklin: I love being here.

01:25:37 Q: That's just wonderful. You're very lucky, yeah. And how did you happen to choose? So the mountains and skiing, that makes Park City extremely attractive.

01:25:45 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, that was part. It could have made a lot of places possible. A lot of people here ask me, "Why Park City?" And my criteria were, number one I could afford it. Well, that was not number one, actually, but that I could afford it, which eliminated some places. I mean, Saint Moritz, that ain't happening. That there was a sense of community—that

was the most important thing to me. People full-time who lived there, not just a resort town. And I'd skied just about everywhere here in the U.S. And the ones—as I went through a couple of other criteria, the ones that kind of popped up were Steamboat Springs, which is in a corner of Colorado, and here. Well, Steamboat Springs, you have one place to ski, and that's kind of it. And I'd get bored pretty quickly if I could get my skiing ability back. And it was a really nice community, and I knew a lot of people—that was what the driver was, because I knew people there. So then I came out for an exploration out here, to see if this would work. I was really afraid that a non-Mormon, single—especially Jewish—woman would not be able to make it in Utah. And that may well be true in much of Utah. Not in Park City. It's fine. So I decided Park City, and there's an airport right nearby, we have great medical facilities. There are eleven major ski—well, now ten—major ski areas within an hour and a half of here. When I got it all together, it was a no-brainer.

01:27:06 Q: Sounds wonderful.

01:27:08 Montgomery Rocklin: As a matter of fact my hair dresser last week told me that Park City was voted the friendliest city in the country with some Travel and Leisure or something.

01:27:18 Q: Oh, that speaks very well for it.

01:27:22 Montgomery Rocklin: I don't want to advertise it too much because we're overgrown right now.

01:27:29 Q: Did you get a lot of snow, unlike the rest of the west?

01:27:31 Montgomery Rocklin: No, we didn't. We got very little. And I do not have a four-wheel drive car right now because I was not allowed to drive for several months after the car accident. Imagine living in rural New Jersey and you can't drive for several months. I learned Amazon delivers toilet paper. I never knew that before [laughs]. Thank god for Amazon. But when I was finally allowed to drive, safety popped up as one of the first criteria for the first time ever. Suddenly, I needed a safe car, but I needed a convertible. Need is a strong statement, but I did. I'd had a convertible my whole life except for when I was a responsible mom and I had a good car, very safe for all the kids I was driving. And I wanted another convertible. I ended up with a Volvo which is not—which is front-wheel drive, not four-wheel. We never got enough snow for me to test if it's okay. From what I'm hearing, I may find out this year.

01:28:22 Q: And how did you actually get into the skiing? You said it's been a passion of your life

01:28:27 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. One thing—I mean, yes, I've been married four times, but something good has come out of all four of them. The first one was the guy who took me skiing for the first time in my life. I'd never been. And I had no idea, really, what it was. I was maybe a high school junior or something. First time I borrowed clothing, I borrowed equipment, I had nothing. I remember—because I fell a lot the first time—I remember thinking, “Oh my god, I

have a frost-bitten butt. It's going to come off!" [Laughs] It was, "Oh, I'm so cold!" But then I went a couple more times. I'd been a gymnast and I'd been a ballerina, and skiing is mostly about balance and I just took to it. I just didn't have a problem. My second year on skis I was on the ski patrol.

The interesting thing about that—back to Barnard, tah-dah! By this point I know I'm trying to get out early. And remember we had a gym requirement, that was a class too. I don't know how I negotiated this, but if I did patrol that weekend and came in on Monday morning, and signed in that I'd done ski patrol, that counted for my gym. So I didn't need that class. Now, they did charge me tuition for it—which in hindsight [makes sound]. But that's how I got into it, and then after that on my list of, "If I meet a man," they had to ski. I just loved it. It's visceral.

01:30:03 Q: And having the sense of balance from early on, I think that helps.

01:30:07 Montgomery Rocklin: Which I now don't have, so it's really distressing. But I'm sure it will come back.

01:30:11 Q: It's going to come back, yeah, it's going to come back for sure. Okay, so what about spiritual journeys during all these other things? Were you—any particular spiritual or religious roots that sustained you over all these very good and bad things?

01:30:29 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, you know, as I told you, I didn't really have any religious background at all but I obviously, somewhere, got a sense of right and wrong. A sense of the Judaic-Christian, Ten Commandments, I got all of that. That must have been from my parents, because where else would I get it. So I had that but I didn't have any spiritual place to go, or person to talk to. I wasn't even sure I believed in god. Now I believe in some higher power, so if you want to call it god, that's fine, I don't care.

01:31:03 Q: She. Yeah.

01:31:04 Montgomery Rocklin: There's something, something that's more than just us. And yet I'm a scientist and I still—because you can't prove it, so I guess that makes me an agnostic. However, when I got to Park City, I ended up joining a Jewish temple for the first time in my life. I joined it for social reasons. I was very clear, I said, "Look, this social, this is not about a religious sect." But there was a—oh, I know, there was one class that they did on Jewish humor, or something of the ilk.

01:31:38 Q: Jewish humor, uh-huh?

01:31:40 Montgomery Rocklin: Jewish humor, which number one, is hysterical. Oh, it's amazing. But I really got a sense of what the Jewish culture is all about and I realized that—well I'd always felt culturally Jewish. I realized where that sense of my feeling came from. I did a lot of it. You know, the give back, the help other people. I'd give other people the shirt off my back.

You know, you have to do charity. When Jessie was young she had to give X percent of her allowance to charity. I just felt this is what you do. So I had that sense and I had, somewhere along the way, just gone to the High Holy Days with my brother. Oh, I know why—I went with Jessie because I wanted her to have a sense of being Jewish. I just wanted her to have that sense. Actually I gave her an option when she was younger, of going to Hebrew school to get bat mitzahed.

Now my daughter is very smart, so she looks at me and she goes, “Mom, can I have the big party without going to Hebrew School?” And I go, “No.” So she did not go and I felt totally hypocritical making her go. I couldn’t do that. But had she gone, I remember at that time, I thought, “You know, if she goes, I’m going to go to because I really want to learn about this. I just want to know more about it.” And I guess that’s the stage I’m in right now. I hardly ever go to services but the people are just so wonderful. They are what sustain me, to a great extent, through all this surgery I’ve been going through. They’ve been wonderful. And the High Holy Jewish days are coming up, and I will go for the important days and the service. Not for the whole thing, I’m not going to sit there all day, but I’m going for part of it. I do volunteer for a lot of what they call “Mitzvah Days” where they do a lot of good deeds for different community organizations. I do a lot of that with the temple. But I don’t know that I’d call it, really, religious or even spiritual. Some people might disagree and say, “Yes, you’re very spiritual and just don’t realize it.” But that’s where I am.

01:33:42 Q: Yeah, it's a name. It's a good explanation as any. Good, okay. What do you feel is probably your biggest accomplishment in life? Ah-ha! Another one of these superlatives, here. Hard to answer.

01:34:01 Montgomery Rocklin: I guess, the one that just went through my brain, so I guess that's what I have to go with, is when I started the bank mutual fund. It became a many billion dollar industry. It's a big deal. I haven't followed, I don't know what's going on now, but I remember being—working really hard to make this happen. Because I had to learn all about the Forty Act law [Investment Company Act of 1940], I had to learn law, I had to learn all this stuff, I had to negotiate with the president of Dreyfus Funds to make all this stuff happen. And when it finally—they call it, “Become effective.” It's when the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] and everybody approves you to start selling shares to the public. I was very elated, very much so. I thought, “Hey, this is a big deal!” So that's what hit me first, and I don't know why my wonderful daughter didn't pop up first.

01:34:49 Q: Sure, that's impressive. That's really impressive.

01:34:52 Montgomery Rocklin: Although I don't think in hindsight—let me give you the other side of that. It's like, “Did the world really need another mutual fund? I'm not so sure.” [Laughs] But anyway, it did what it was supposed to do. It gave people a chance to bypass stock brokers & go to the bank where they trusted people, because in those days market research showed banks are more trusted than stock brokers. So it did some things.

01:35:16 Q: You said that growing up, and even at Barnard, you really felt people were people. There was never a sense of you separating classes and races, I guess—

01:35:28 Montgomery Rocklin: From my point of view, yes.

01:35:30 Q: From your point of view, right. Do you think that you've maintained that throughout your life? Is that something that was a little tricky?

01:35:38 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, very much so. It just—there are unfortunately—and Park City talks about how diverse it is. And culturally it is very diverse, but racially, not so much. And that bothered me. There were one—Robert. Robert is African American, and I don't remember how I met Robert, and he ended up being kind of my handyman. He was wonderful. He was just terrific. I don't think race out here is a big deal, and while I say that I think, "But how come there aren't any black people here?" So I'm not quite sure how to say that. But in terms of, that was my point of view. I must tell you that my experiences are that not everyone feels that way.

At Columbia I was in one of the engineering classes, and again I'm the only girl. I sat and I knit through class. I had this amazing afghan. It was the first project I ever knit and I still have it, it's wonderful.

01:36:35 Q: What was the project? You were making a what?

01:36:37 Montgomery Rocklin: An afghan, a knitted afghan. A big blanket kind of thing. You know, I was like Madame Defarge. I sat and knit through class, and I still aced everything so—

01:36:46 Q: Okay, that was not part of the engineering curriculum, that's something—[laughs].

01:36:48 Montgomery Rocklin: Not exactly. So I end up in this study group with four Arab guys. So you know, I don't care, and we're going along for, I don't know, months, whatever, and I guess there must have been a Jewish holiday coming up or something, I don't remember, and they made some very disparaging remarks and I said, "I really don't appreciate that. I'm Jewish." And they stared at me. "You can't be, you're too nice." They really had a very hard time with it and literally felt Jews had horns, because that's what they were taught. And, you know, in my own little way, maybe I furthered Jewish-Arab relations, who knows [laughs].

01:37:30 Q: It's the best way, one-on-one.

01:37:32 Montgomery Rocklin: Also, did I mention "Amos 'n' Andy?"

01:37:35 Q: No.

01:37:36 Montgomery Rocklin: That was a TV show that was on—I don't remember when.

01:37:41 Q: Yeah, when we were young. I remember that.

01:37:42 Montgomery Rocklin: It wasn't until many, many, many years later I found out, "Oh. They were all Black," or African American, or whatever we used at the time. I never even noticed it because—

[CROSSTALK]

01:38:01 Q: So what about, when you entered Barnard, what kind of an adult career did you think you were going to have?

01:38:11 Montgomery Rocklin: I thought I would have a very successful business career. That was my goal. Barnard, at that time, was not necessarily supportive of that, p.s. I remember going into career services, or whatever we called it when we graduated, and their first question is, "How many words do you type a minute?" "I don't type. I'm not going to be a secretary. I'm not going to type." So Barnard was not necessarily helpful in that. But that was what I envisioned. And on that part of it, yeah, it worked for a very long time. It really did happen. So that was fine. What I got from Barnard was interesting. I majored in math, I start working on a Ph.D. in theoretical math and it's like, "Will you ever use this equation? Will you ever do anything with it?" And the answer's, "No," but I learned how to problems solve. That generic problem solving skill is what I took to consulting and everything else I did, and I'm forever grateful to Barnard for learning that. It's wonderful.

01:39:15 Back when I was at Barnard—I know there's a question on the sheet, something about mentors at Barnard and stuff.

01:39:21 Q: Yes, yes.

01:39:22 Montgomery Rocklin: My biggest mentor was Professor [Ellis R.] Kolchin who was the head of the Columbia math grad department.

01:39:29 Q: Oh, math grad.

01:39:30 Montgomery Rocklin: He believed in me. I'd get "A" plusses in his classes. Barnard didn't count the plusses, p.s. I would have got magna cum laude if they had. But he was wonderful. He believed in me, he wanted me to enter math contests for prizes and stuff. He never hit on me, so I think it was really, just, he believed in me. He was really supportive. He became my Barnard advisor. I somehow managed to have that to happen. I did not have a Barnard advisor, I had him. He helped me get into a lot of Columbia classes, because they were not cross-listed in those days. I had to fight for each one of them. So he was wonderful. We had classes—well, I counter-occupied the math building. He had a big apartment on Riverside Drive and we either had classes in his apartment or in a park or something. We still kept having classes.

01:40:24 Q: During the strikes, you mean.

01:40:25 Montgomery Rocklin: During the strikes and when it was shut down, yes. So he was wonderful. I mean, I'll tell you what a nerd I was, my daughter calls me a nerd. My favorite class in college was partial differential equations. I loved it. I just loved it! Yeah, I was a nerd [laughs].

01:40:43 Q: That's fantastic. So you had started out thinking that you really wanted to do engineering. How have you kind of reconciled that part of your ambitions, originally from when you were—?

01:40:54 Montgomery Rocklin: Financial. I could not afford—it was financial. I could not afford to stay five years when my parents cut off tuition the second year. It just wasn't going to happen. So that's really what did it.

01:41:10 Q: Do you think some of those gifts, though, as an intuitive engineer somewhat, as a child being able to build things, you know—how has that related into your adult life?

01:41:19 Montgomery Rocklin: Good question. Well, I've always loved working with my hands. I still do although the MS or whatever, my motor skills are not as good as they used to be. But I got into making jewelry. [Laughs] I actually, oh my god—maybe ten years ago one of my girlfriends down in Jersey, her car would not start. Would not start. And we're down on the shore, we're not even back at home where we live, two and a half hours away and everything is

going wrong. I don't even know how I did it—I fixed the car. I just figured it out and got the car started and I usually had that intuitive way of, "I've never seen this before, so let me figure it out." Not so much now. I've just been through a lot. I need to get my brain and my body back. But, yeah, I've always had that, and loved it. It's always been fun for me, and again, it's part of problem solving. Be it the physical part of a structure for engineering or it's just, "How do we fix this company? How do we make them thrive and prosper?" It's problem solving and I like to do that.

01:42:30 Q: I think you've kept up your relationship with Barnard. I recently got a letter from you. Talk a little bit about that.

01:42:38 Montgomery Rocklin: Yes you did. Well, I was president of the class for a while, and I was vice president also—no. Was I? Yeah, I guess I was president for a while.

01:42:45 Q: Oh, I didn't realize that.

01:42:45 Montgomery Rocklin: I came to very much remember Barnard as an institution and it's a place that really gave me a lot of new tools for my life. Clearly not on the personal side [laughs]. On the professional side, very much so. You know, I inherited my parents' belief in good education. When there were times when I had some money, and I would give a lot to Barnard, and Joffrey Ballet, or whomever. And the reason you got that letter—it's really weird. I put Barnard as part of my will, I don't know, five, ten years ago. And I told my daughter all

about it. I wanted her to understand—I only have one child—that she was getting, you know, of the three cents I have, she would get two of it but Barnard would get one. And she understood, and she knows how important that is for me. I always push on her to donate to her undergraduate school. So at one point the Barnard Athena society wanted people to write in why—apparently you become a member when you put Barnard in your will—why you did that. And whatever I wrote, which is in the letter, is exactly what I felt at that point in time. The person who called me said, “Your name popped up immediately. We all remember what you wrote, and you’d be the perfect person.” And I said, “I’m not even coming to reunion. My daughter’s getting married that weekend. I won’t even be there, I don’t want to do this, I don’t feel right.” But they talked me into it.

01:44:16 Q: No, it was a good letter.

01:44:16 Montgomery Rocklin: In that paragraph, which I’ve re-looked at and she sent it back to me. It’s like, “Oh my god, I wrote that? That’s good.” [Laughs]

01:44:22 Q: It is good. It was very effective. I’m thinking about it actually [laughs].

01:44:27 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, good. Please do. You know, I don’t know how many children—I don’t know what your story is, Frances, but you know, they left us all with something and I think Barnard is worthy of our support. I very much supported it as an institution, I was on the board when we voted to stay single-sex. I thought that was important

because I to this day think Barnard is the best of both worlds. You've got some support of a female-only environment, and yet, now, with everything cross-listed, and dorms, and all that, you've got all the wonderful assets of a great university. So I think it's the best of both worlds. And I was really not happy my daughter wouldn't even apply [laughs] but I guess that goes through the generations, huh?

01:45:20 Q: Where did she end up going? You said she's doing graduate school.

01:45:23 Montgomery Rocklin: Undergraduate at Franklin & Marshall, which with my upbringing, as Ivy League, I'd never heard of—which I'm very embarrassed to say, I'd never heard of Franklin & Marshall. It's just below Ivy. It's a very small liberal arts, and it was a terrific, terrific school for her, very nurturing. And Jessie's the kind that she wants to know her professor. And they'd go out and they'd talk about things, and if she has a problem outside of class she talks to her psychology professor, and that was so terrific for her. It was really great.

01:46:00 Q: No, it's a good school. A good friend of mine's son almost went there and then ended up going somewhere else—which was the wrong place for him. It was all about money, but anyway.

01:46:09 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, that often is. Well that became an issue with Jessie. When she first started I was married and he made a lot of money. At that point I was working part-time and not making very much but he made a lot of money. So we were paying the fifty-plus

thousand a year, or whatever—no not quite. She got a twelve-thousand dollar presidential merit scholarship.

01:46:31 Q: Oh, great.

01:46:31 Montgomery Rocklin: But it was not a total hardship. I was on a board of directors of a mutual fund and I used all my fund fees to pay her tuition. So it was okay. Then, the divorce comes. In the middle of this whole two-year divorce process I got politically bumped from the board because somebody else came in and wanted to take it over and put his own people in. So I lost that income and suddenly I'm getting divorced, I don't have his income, and what I'm making ain't going to do it. And it's like, "Oh my god, how am I going to keep her in Franklin and Marshall?" It was touch and go for a while, and she was apparently—well, with all the awards she won at graduation, she was a very good student. Some board member or somehow they'd made it up, she was able to stay. Now she wanted to graduate in three years, too. Partially financial, she knew how stressful it was for me, and maybe that was why. I was adamant she, "No, do not do that. It's not necessarily the education. Yeah, you'll take more classes but there's an emotional maturity that you're just going to miss if you do that." So instead she did finish all her coursework a semester early and her plan was to work and do all this wonderful stuff. Well, the day before I'm supposed to pick her up at school was that car accident that I almost died in, and she ended up being my nanny for six months. I mean really, she was my nanny. I couldn't do anything.

01:48:05 Q: It's good that you had her.

01:48:07 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, it was again, that's when I say, "Maybe there was some other power." It was coincidence that she happened to finished school work and she could be there when I needed that help. My sister has a saying, "Coincidences are god's way of being anonymous."

01:48:23 Q: Very interesting. I like that. Yeah, good. Okay, so what are you looking forward to in the future? What kind of hopes and dreams and fears do you have?

01:48:37 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, first one, I guess just because it's so top of mind with me, is totally recovering from this major surgery. I mean they rebuilt my whole lumbar spine. Took it apart, put it back together.

01:48:51 Q: Amazing.

01:48:52 Montgomery Rocklin: Apparently the doctor did tell me, I'm sure she did tell me, that that major surgery and the recovery is at least one-to-two years. I'm sure she did. Denial is a wonderful thing. I never heard it. I really, somehow thought that I'd be back, and up, and doing everything fine in a couple of months. I mean I'd had fourteen little procedures on my spine before the surgery, I'd had six or seven knee surgeries, I said, "I know what surgery is, no big deal." Reality hit—you know when you're in denial reality really sucks. So I apparently—I

mean, I crashed. I can only schedule one or two things a day and they include something like sitting at a card table playing cards. That's a big event. And I typically overdo it, and one to two days a week I crash. I can't do anything. So I'm still learning. My whole life, learning to moderate myself.

01:49:50 Q: Which is hard.

01:49:52 Montgomery Rocklin: So Energizer Bunny, I'm telling you. So that was my first, yes. I want to recover as quickly and as best as possible so physical issues are not issues, so I'm not in PT [physical therapy] and acupuncture, you know, four times a week, that kind of stuff. That's my first hope. But once you get past the immediate, I just want to live here very happily. I am retired, "Reluctantly retired" is what I call it. I never went back to work after the accident and the deer did not have insurance, so I didn't get anything out of it [laughs]. Yeah, poor deer. Lesson I learned: if you're ever in that type of situation, go straight for Bambi. Kill Bambi. Because you're more likely to get hurt worse if you don't and I also learned your car insurance, if you don't hit the animal, it's your fault.

01:50:45 Q: Oh, no!

01:50:46 Montgomery Rocklin: So it became an "at fault" accident, they paid me, I guess, around thirty, forty grand for my car and so my rates went through the roof. So anyway, where was I? I digress way too much.

01:51:00 Q: Yeah, your dreams, future, getting better, being strong again. You said you're part of a walking group as well, right? That's part of your—

[INTERRUPTION]

01:51:23 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, so yeah, I'm part of a couple of things here. It's mostly through clubs, I guess. There's a newcomers club, which is a misnomer because over half the people have been here ten years at least. But there are so many wonderful, fun activities that everybody stays. Now, again, I don't exactly fit because it's much, much more married and skews, for the most part, quite a bit older than I am. But I ended up—oh, I know, my neighbor. My neighbor is big with the Canasta group. I've never played Canasta in my life.

01:51:54 Q: Canasta, okay.

01:51:55 Montgomery Rocklin: And she goes, "This week it's at my house. You have to come. Just walk across the street." So I walk across the street, they teach me the game and I have a lot of fun with these ladies. A couple of whom could be my mother, easily. But they're wonderful, wonderful women and, as I think I told you earlier, I had never appreciated the company of women until maybe my forties. And now, as you know, I'm past my forties. But they're a wonderful group and they have a great time. And for me, the "type A plus, plus" business

personality to spend all Monday afternoon playing cards, it was like—I'm still, "Whoa, this is weird." But I'm loving it.

01:52:27 Q: Yes.

01:52:28 Montgomery Rocklin: So there's that group and they do a couple of other fun things and somehow they convinced me to be chair of Girls' night out. I kept saying, "I'm not going to do anything," because there's a lot of volunteering in this area and I will do a lot of it but I kept saying, "I'm not doing anything until I get myself physically healthy again." Somehow I got talked into doing that one. And I do do a lot of work for Peace House, which is a shelter for abused people.

01:52:56 Q: For abused people?

01:52:57 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. Men and women, as it happens. So I, yeah, I do work for those two. But anyway, so I meet all these wonderful women and I'm playing Canasta with them. Then, more to my demographic, is the Park City mountain sports club which has a lot of hiking and skiing, and very active activities. A lot of them are married too, but not quite as many, and they're just more active. And that's really what I want to be again. That is—I love to do it. And you know? I never thought of retiring and I never wanted to retire. I loved work. But events conspired and it didn't work out that way. And so, I just want to enjoy the fact that I am retired, and once I can physically do a lot of things again, get out and enjoy it, and then help this

community. And part of helping, I do work for Peace House, I do some stuff for them, I do some stuff for the newcomers group, and they have a leadership program here. I did go through a leadership program in Jersey. It's where you learn a lot more about the community and then they expect you to get involved and do something for the community. And I decided this year, I'm not physically able. I just can't do it. Next year I'd like to do that. It's just getting—there's part of me that does not want to be politically involved—this is not so much parties here, it's local politics—just because my experience from home. But that's a possibility, because I see so many things that are happening where my background, my strategic background—because I did a lot of strategic planning—is something that might help. Because this place—I went to a lecture the other day—we live in a bubble here. We just live in a bubble and it's not sustainable.

01:54:52 Q: You see yourself running for an office or something?

01:54:55 Montgomery Rocklin: I don't want to run for an office. See that's interesting. I don't. I certainly don't want to go through an election process. I hate politicians, I was talking to somebody about it this morning. I don't trust any politician; I hate them all. So I do not want to be a politician. So maybe be on a committee, there are a lot of appointed committees. That I can see doing.

01:55:12 Q: Right. Sounds good, sounds good. Okay, so reflecting back on your experience at Barnard, was there one decision or event that you might have done differently? I think maybe the marriage was one thing you mentioned [laughs].

01:55:28 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah that, clearly. Which precipitated the lack of funds to go to the joint engineering at Columbia/Barnard. I would have said the decision was not to continue with the path that I wanted, the engineering and the Barnard path. But economically there was really no choice. You're right, though, if I hadn't gotten married, that wouldn't have happened. Hmm, I wonder.

01:55:52 Q: It's little late to be—and you've done extremely well.

01:55:57 Montgomery Rocklin: I've got skiing from him. I never would have skied and I love it, it's my passion. It's—I've said many times, and I know when I say it this makes no sense: maybe skiing is my spirituality. Skiing has kept me going through all of these bad marriages, and being abused, and all these other things. Skiing has always kept me going.

01:56:20 Q: I think there's a tremendous amount of spirituality there. You're out in this beautiful setting and you're controlling it—

01:56:26 Montgomery Rocklin: Nature. Oh, the feel of just wind through my hair. I love sailing, and skiing, and driving my convertible—it's all the same to me.

01:56:34 Q: Anything with the wind in your hair. So the sailing? Tell me a little bit about that as well.

01:56:37 Montgomery Rocklin: That's why I look like this [points at hair], I always drive a convertible [laughs].

01:56:39 Q: I got caught in the rain yesterday and I just needed to wash my hair. But sailing as well? You said you sailed as well?

01:56:47 Montgomery Rocklin: I don't know about here, that's going to be a problem. I had belonged to a sailing club in Jersey and I sailed all sorts of places. I didn't do some of the best ones. Because I was married and he didn't sail. Well, no, he started. I will give him credit, he came on four sail trips. The first one I believe, let's see, he got allergic to the boat shoes I bought him. He ended up tearing—simply severing his rotator cuff getting on and off the boat. A couple of other bad things happened. And again, to his credit, he came twice more and he finally said, “Look. I don't enjoy this. I don't like it. I'm not going to come again, but you can still.” So I went a couple—so I didn't go as often as I would have liked.

But I love sailing. It's a type of freedom and being out in nature. But here, they do have—they tell me, “Oh there's a sail club.” And I can see if I walk up the block a tiny bit I see this—I mean I see all through ski mountains here and I see tons of mountains. Who wouldn't want that background, it's gorgeous. But I have these great views of mountains and if I walk a little ways over I have this great view of this beautiful reservoir. And that's part of why I pinch myself. I can't believe I live here. But the sailing is these little, baby boats and I learned on the big boats. I

mean, what can I say? So I have run across, recently, a whole bunch of women who sail, and sail big boats, and love it. And I actually started a list and I'm thinking next year when I'm more energetic—is that the right word? I may well do some offshore sailing. You know, we'll Bareboat rent. I can't be captain, I don't have a strong enough sailing resume, I know that. I'm a great first mate and great if I'm not the captain. But we could do that. Oh, and I recently was sailing! Frances, I forgot!

01:58:33 Q: Oh! You were? Okay.

01:58:33 Montgomery Rocklin: I worked part-time at the Deer Valley this season, in the ticket office, you know, selling ski tickets. And mainly it's because you get a free ski pass. So as soon as that job ended, two days later I went to meet a friend in Dubai.

01:58:48 Q: Oh, my goodness.

01:58:49 Montgomery Rocklin: Like, wow! I can't believe it either. I remember in November he said to me, "Do you want to go?" And I took about a nanosecond, I go, "Yeah!" [Laughs] And we—okay, Peter and I have been friends, probably almost thirty years. Well, there was one period where it was more than friends, but that was twenty years ago. But we've maintained our friendship after that and, yeah. So I went to Dubai, and it happened to be his birthday, and so I chartered—it ended up being the forty-two foot Oceanis, which is way too big for the two of us. But they made us take a captain, so the captain takes us out of the slip. And he looks at the two

of us, he goes, “I know you two sail.” So then he sat and drank beer all afternoon and we had a great time. We were sailing in the Arabian Ocean.

01:59:37 Q: Oh, my goodness!

01:59:38 Montgomery Rocklin: Not so friendly countries over there. You ever hear or see the Palm Islands that Dubai created?

01:59:45 Q: I’ve seen pictures of it.

01:59:47 Montgomery Rocklin: So we’re sailing in and out of the fronds of Palm. It was one of my best days ever. I just loved it.

01:59:54 Q: It sounds exciting, yeah.

01:59:56 Montgomery Rocklin: I’m sorry. That was sailing [laughs].

01:59:59 Q: Yeah, no that’s quite amazing. That’s really great. Okay, so if you could go back and whisper advice in the ear of yourself entering Barnard, what might that be? And you may have already touched on this.

02:00:12 Montgomery Rocklin: [Laughs] It's the advice I never could have heard. I would have never heard it, nor understood it. But the advice would be, "Have self-confidence. Believe in yourself. You really are smart. You really are good-looking. Just believe in yourself and go with it." And I wouldn't have heard it. Matter of fact, talking on the good-looking side, that picture I told you about? Oh, it's right here. This is my graduation picture for Barnard. I'm going to share it.

02:00:40 Q: Oh, you're beautiful! Absolutely!

02:00:43 Montgomery Rocklin: But nonetheless, there it is. So my daughter sees it once and she looks and she goes, "Who's that?" And I said, "That's me. My graduation picture from college!" And she goes, "Oh, you used to be beautiful!" [Laughs] She swears to this day she didn't say it with that intonation.

02:00:59 Q: [Laughs] Well—

02:01:01 Montgomery Rocklin: But the advice would be, "Just believe in yourself. I mean Barnard chose you." I was on the board, and one woman on the board came to me and said, "I was head of admissions, and I remember admitting you, and I'm so pleased we did." And at that point I'm still kind of wondering, but I'm thinking, "Well, maybe I belong here." [Laughs]

02:01:22 Q: No, you clearly did.

02:01:25 Montgomery Rocklin: And I got more than problem solving, I think a lot more. More than problem solving, I somehow got a sense of leadership from Barnard. And I don't know how that is. Because I look at all the things I did. I mean here I am, new to the place, I don't know anybody, and I end up heading a committee. I just always seem to do that. So it must have come from Barnard somehow because I don't know where else it would have come from.

02:01:49 Q: Well, you've worked on that skill over the years, I think, too.

02:01:53 Montgomery Rocklin: Maybe that, too. But I rose to the top—I mean here I was on my first job, I'm twenty years old.

02:01:58 Q: Amazing.

02:01:59 Montgomery Rocklin: And I have forty-year-old guys working for me. Now, then I was not prepared for leadership but somehow I ended up with it.

02:02:07 Q: Okay, well let's see. Is there anything else you'd like to share that we haven't covered yet? And we can go as long as you want.

02:02:17 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, let me just—I actually scribbled some notes last night.

02:02:21 Q: Yeah, take a moment.

02:02:22 Montgomery Rocklin: I have a hot tub and they suggest that I go in it every night because the heat will help and I don't hurt as much the next morning when I do. So I'm in the hot tub last night and going, "Gee, I have this interview tomorrow, I should really read this and think about it." So I did scribble some things, so let me just look and see what I scribbled, and if I missed any of it.

02:02:38 Q: Sure.

02:02:40 Montgomery Rocklin: You ask good questions, I think we got a lot of it.

02:02:58 Q: Well, everything doesn't get equally emphasized. There's always more to say.

02:03:02 Montgomery Rocklin: Yes, and it depends on the person. I certainly hope that all of these interviews that are happening now are edited as well as the ones we saw in that little pilot. It was just terrific. I realize I may get, you know, five seconds of air time out of all this talking you and I are doing but I hope it's done as well.

Meaningful—we did that, we did that. I think we did a lot of it. Oh, you know, as I was thinking about this—as a management consultant you always end up writing reports.

02:03:44 Q: Yes.

02:03:45 Montgomery Rocklin: But you always start with the summary which pulls all the ideas together and just makes it all understandable and coherent, and the sound bites that you work off of. And I came up with some—now I can't find them—I came up with some sound bites on my life that I'd never thought of before.

02:04:05 Q: Oh great, great.

02:04:06 Montgomery Rocklin: If I could find it.

02:04:07 Q: Take your time.

02:04:10 Montgomery Rocklin: Ah. That I felt like a round peg in a square hole most of my life, I just never seemed to fit. Until I got here. I just never really fit anywhere. You know I was—I wasn't masculine, I never looked masculine. As matter of fact I was told several times, that's part of my problem, "You're too pretty, so nobody takes you seriously."

02:04:32 Q: Yeah.

02:04:33 Montgomery Rocklin: But I wanted to do the things—I wanted to beat the men at their own game, which I did a lot. I don't know where that came from, but I did. So I wasn't one of

the girls, I wasn't one of the guys. You know, on campus, I wasn't one of the Jewish groups, I wasn't one of the things—the commuters didn't have a group. It's kind of been like that all the way through. It's not that I'm a loner. Well, I used to hide in the corner when I was in high school which, p.s., I'm not sure is actually true because we had a high school reunion and that's not exactly the way people remember me. But that's my memory. Now I am a true extrovert.

02:05:12 Q: Yeah.

02:05:12 Montgomery Rocklin: I'm energized by other people. I love having people around. I mean this recovery—part of what's been so hard for me is I wasn't allowed to drive for a very long time and all I had were physical therapists, and nurses, and shower assistants, and everything coming here—and I had my dog, thank god for my dog [laughs]. And I mean that, seriously.

02:05:34 Q: What kind of dog?

02:05:35 Montgomery Rocklin: Oh yeah, Bichon Frise. Come here, Hendrix. Of course he won't come when I call him. He listens to everybody but me. He's twelve years old now and even the vet said, "You know, I would have thought he was eight." He's a wonderful little doggie and very protective of me. I mean, he knows—he knew when I came home because I thought I was going to be gone for two weeks after surgery. Well, I'm in the hospital for a week, then they sent me to rehab, and they kept me there over a month. And I had arranged for two weeks care for

Hendrix, because that's all I thought I needed. So I was going crazy while I was at rehab trying to call people, "Who will take my dog?" I wasn't going to put him in a kennel and then part of that time I was a bit "over drugged," shall I say. So I'm not even sure what I did [laughs]. But, yeah, he is good and I talk to my dog all the time. I know that's crazy, but I do. He's one of these breeds—Bichons go like this [gesture]—it's like they listen to you. Their ears perk up, or they don't. I used to test all my speeches on Hendrix. If he went to sleep I knew it was no good [laughs].

02:06:41 Q: I love it!

02:06:43 Montgomery Rocklin: He's a good dog. So anyway, so that was one thing, that I felt like a round peg in a square hole for most of my life. And the other is—and maybe it's actually the same thing in a way—that I'm almost like a study in contradictions. You know, I look female—I am female. But I lived in a man's world in business. I am female but my friends were male. You know, I supported both sides of the demonstrators, in a way, by cooking and making cookies and doing all these things. I actually think I cooked real food, too. I remember carrying it on the commuter bus into—you know, bringing it in. But I counter-occupied, so it's like, "Who am I, really?" All of the above. It's just weird. I was at Chase for maybe—I don't know—I was there for ten years in total. Maybe, like, the third or fourth year or something I was really unhappy. You know here I was—if you looked at me from the outside—in an amazing professional career. Making, compared to most women, a lot of money. Even compared to a lot of men, most men. Anyway. And on the outside—

02:07:58 Q: Because you were good at this, yes.

02:08:01 Montgomery Rocklin: I guess. But I was miserable and I couldn't figure out—and it wasn't the—this must have been when I was single, or something, because it wasn't just the marriage problems. I was just not satisfied and I couldn't figure out what's wrong here. So there was a series of testing—I don't even know how I found it—called Johnson O'Connor. I don't even know if they're still around. And they tested what they purported to be your interests, but more so your aptitudes. And then they tell you, with those aptitudes, what you should do to make your life different. Their theory is that you have to use the aptitudes you have or you'll just be frustrated. So they tested and one of the aptitudes I had was mechanical—you know, put this thing together. Real good, I did that. One of the aptitudes I had was language. They taught you something called "Martian" and they said, "You learned Martian faster than anybody else, we've never taught anybody to speak Martian like that." And I can't remember what the other ones were. And so, when you sit down for their final review—I hope I still have that report, I haven't unpacked everything since I've been here. I hope I do. But anyway, I remember their going through and their talk line for me was, "Too many abilities and too many talents." That there were too many things I was good at. I guess I've got a touch of that old, "That's not really me" in me because I feel embarrassed even saying it, but that's what they said to me. And the reason I was dissatisfied is that I wasn't using all of them. They go, "You need to work with your hands." I ended up doing a lot of needlepoint, and just by doing the needlepoint, that somehow—I don't know. I don't know how it worked, but I was less dissatisfied. And they said the two professions

that you really should have done, that you would have been perfect for, were surgeon or architect.

02:09:56 Q: Or what? Or architect, mmm-hmm.

02:09:57 Montgomery Rocklin: Both of them. They both use—not language, per se, but you have to learn a lot of terms and things. And they both use their hands, and they both do this, and they both do that. And I thought about it for just a little bit because I had wanted to be an architect. I mean to this day, I love Frank Lloyd Wright. I supported his foundation when I had money. I just think he's amazing. Have the lamp right here, which you can't really see—it's a Frank Lloyd Wright lamp. I'd been out of school. I had an MBA & CPA by then, also. Yeah, that I did at night. I fit that in somewhere along the way. I wasn't going to go back to school. The amount of schooling required for either of those two things was such that I just didn't want to do it. And I was really pissed at Barnard because even though I managed to take classes across the street in a lot of things, I never got into the architecture school. They never let me take a course there. And I was pissed [laughs].

02:10:58 Q: Yeah.

02:10:59 Montgomery Rocklin: I shouldn't say that. I was angry.

02:11:01 Q: Yeah. No, that was quite a good school I heard.

02:11:03 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. So anyway, I love Barnard, and everything I said in that letter—which I can't remember—I really believe. I think it's an amazing thing. Even though I've had this really up and down life—it's been really up and down [laughs]. You know, professionally it's been a bit up and down, and personally it's clearly been up and down. The biggest up, p.s., is my daughter, whom I adore. And I just, we're almost like friends, now. It's just—and she has permission, if I ever get like my mother, she can shoot me. And I say that with due respect. I know my mother did the best she could, given the circumstances she was in, but Jessie and I have a great relationship.

02:11:46 Q: That's great. Well, you should be proud, she's done quite well.

02:11:49 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah. I think she has the ability. I mean the school she's going to is out to train health care leaders. That's what they want to do. Now, unfortunately, she wants to teach. She wants to be a college professor. She does not want to do what they want her to do. So we joke about, "Well, it's like she's gay, and she's in the closet, and she can't come out because then they won't let her take the classes and maybe take away her money." But she's not gay, I mean, she's getting married. [Laughs] But it's really—it's like she's kind of like a round peg in a square hole too. Hello? I just saw myself in her.

02:12:31 Q: Well, she's your daughter. There's got to be some—

02:12:33 Montgomery Rocklin: She's my daughter! She's inherited so much of me that she had no way of knowing. She did—I mean, every exam, everything I ever did at Barnard, and way before that as well, was last minute. If we had a term paper that we knew all term we had to do, I started it the night before. And most of the time I got decent grades. I don't know how I got away with it. I used to joke, "Well, I'm just lucky they asked test questions that I happened to know." But I only read the book the night before, it was the first time I opened it up. And I'd usually stay up all night, I'd take the test, I'd be fine. And she was the same way. It was like, "Jessie, why do you do this?" And, like me also, she is a bit ADD. She was ADHD when she was a child. Bouncing off the walls, and you need the constant stimulation. But she's inherited a lot of me.

02:13:24 Q: Well, good. Sounds like good parts of you. All right, well, anything else you need to add from your little cribs there?

02:13:34 Montgomery Rocklin: You know, it's interesting. I don't have as much to say about my time at Barnard as, probably, everybody else because I was a commuter. A disenfranchised commuter. I felt as though I was not a part of Barnard. Have you interviewed any other commuters?

02:13:49 Q: Well I was going to say, actually—I have, and it's a very common sentiment. And one of the—what we're hoping to do is actually a little video focusing just on the commuters and have that available at some point. Because it's a very different experience as you've articulated very well, yeah.

02:14:06 Montgomery Rocklin: Did they feel apart as I did? No, they didn't.

02:14:11 Q: Yes. They did, they did. Very much apart. I think that I, particularly, had no understanding of the different economic groups people were coming from. I just assumed everybody who lived anywhere near New York was rich. You know? I didn't realize that was not at all the case.

02:14:30 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah, I was lucky enough that that was not a financial issue for me until my parents cut off tuition. So that was a non-issue. But, to me it was not a really college experience. So here I am, I never had a real childhood because I was a parent to the younger ones, and I never had a real college experience [laughs] and maybe that's why, right now, for the first time in my life I feel really happy about where I am and what I'm doing. My card used to say, "President," or "Executive Vice President," and all that. My card now reads, "Professional Ski Bum." And it is the happiest thing, and the best thing I've ever done for me.

02:15:11 Q: Yeah, now that's fantastic. You're making up for lost time, there. I mean to be so serious, you miss those periods, yeah.

02:15:18 Montgomery Rocklin: And my parents both lived well into their nineties, so if I get what they got, I have time. And maybe not enough money, but I have time to enjoy it [laughs].

02:15:28 Q: You'll figure that out. Great.

02:15:30 Montgomery Rocklin: I know I will, yes, of course I will.

02:15:32 Q: Well, great. It's been wonderful talking with you and if you think of anything else here—well basically, this will get transcribed. You'll receive a copy of the transcription, and at that point if you want to change anything, you know, you can do so.

02:15:46 Montgomery Rocklin: We're allowed to?

02:15:47 Q: Yeah.

02:15:48 Montgomery Rocklin: I was a little concerned about that. Like I cursed several times, which maybe I shouldn't have done.

02:15:53 Q: Oh no, no. It's fine. It's fine, it should reflect what you want to say. I mean we don't want you to take the whole interview away.

02:15:58 Montgomery Rocklin: No, no, no. I wouldn't. I'd be curious just to look at it again.

02:16:02 Q: Yeah. You've mentioned a lot of names, which I usually jot down, but I didn't. So you'll have to do that kind of correction on some of the names, places. So look for that. But

yeah, you've covered a lot and it's a fascinating story, and you really are—you're different.

Which is delightful, but not always the easiest to deal with, right? [Laughs]

02:16:21 Montgomery Rocklin: Yeah it's different. One of our classmates was—worked in, I believe it was, television. In soap operas or something like that. I can't remember who she was, but I remember at one of the reunions—

02:16:34 Q: Oh, Michelle Patrick.

02:16:35 Montgomery Rocklin: Yes, it was Michelle, of course it was.

02:16:37 Q: Yeah, Michelle is the one who did the first eighteen interviews, yes. With her husband who is a documentarian, yeah.

02:16:44 Montgomery Rocklin: Right. Michelle said to me at, maybe it was our fifth or our tenth—it must have been our tenth or our fifteenth—whatever, I didn't come to all of them but I came to most of the five years. She said to me, "Your life is a soap opera." [Laughs] And it's like, "I guess so." But I'm resilient. I know that about myself, I'm very resilient, I'm a survivor, I've had a lot of interesting stuff thrown at me and yet I'm still bouncing back.

02:17:10 Q: And you still are, which is wonderful. Okay, well good. It's been a pleasure and if you think of anything else give me a call. We can always add more.

02:17:19 Montgomery Rocklin: Okay, thank you. And I wish I'd gotten to know you when we were students, but I didn't know most of our class [laughs].

02:17:24 Q: I didn't either. Well, take good care, and good luck with the therapy—what?

02:17:29 Montgomery Rocklin: Were you a commuter?

02:17:30 Q: No, no, I lived in the dorm. I lived in the Midwest and I was—I have my story too [laughs].

02:17:39 Montgomery Rocklin: Did you get interviewed also?

02:17:41 Q: I did, I got interviewed by Katherine. Oh, my goodness, it was like a psychotherapy [laughs].

02:17:46 Montgomery Rocklin: Well, that's kind of what this felt like. It's like you'd ask these great questions and, "Oh, I never thought of that!" [Laughs]

02:17:53 Q: I know.

02:17:54 Montgomery Rocklin: Anyway, nice talking to you and I look forward to the transcript.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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