

BARNARD COLLEGE CLASS OF 1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Reminiscences of

Darlene Dartt

2015

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Darlene Dartt conducted by Frances Garrett Connell on September 28, 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: Darlene Dartt

Location: Via Skype

Interviewer: Frances Garrett Connell

Date: September 28, 2015

00:00:02 Q: Okay, so, first of all, thank you for being willing to be part of this. And we are doing an interview with Darlene Dartt. Are you at your office—

Dartt: _____ (??)

00:00:17 Q: —or are you at home, in Boston? This is for the Barnard College Voices Oral History Class of '71 Project. The interviewer is Frances Connell. And today is September 28, 2015. Okay, so we usually start by asking you to talk a little bit about where you were born, your family, your childhood experiences, what you remember of school, of playing as a child, all those kind of formative things.

Dartt: Okay. So I was born—let me know if it's too much detail because I can do a much—

00:00:55 Q: No, as much detail as you want to share.

Dartt: Well, I was born in Oneonta, New York. I was the oldest child. My sister was born about two years later, still in Oneonta. Then I have a brother who was born four years after that, but in the meantime my father worked for the telephone company and he got a chance to work on the

distance early warning line, which was in Alaska, that was set up so if there were incoming missiles from the Soviet Union it would detect them and warn people. So I guess the telephone company was in charge of that. So he was going to be in Alaska for two years, so we moved with—I think I was around three or four—we moved with—out to Seattle—Olympia, Washington. We went in a trailer (Connell laughs) and drove out there. I think we—I don't remember where we got the trailer, but maybe it was in the Chicago area, because I remember my grandfather putting us on the train. And the reason I remember that is he came on the train with us and I was so afraid he wasn't going to get off in time. (both laugh) And so I don't remember anything of that trip except we got out there to Olympia, Washington and we had a trailer, and my father had relatives in Olympia, Washington. So we lived in a trailer park near the relatives so my mother would have people to hang out with there. And he was away for a—one year and in that time his parents came out to visit, probably just one time or something. And I remember they had—my grandmother's brother lived out there, and he lived on this tiny little island called Steamboat Island that had the ricketiest bridge. I was petrified every time we crossed it that it was going to collapse. But they lived in a little cabin on this island in the middle of Puget Sound.

00:03:20 Q: Oh, wow.

Dartt: And I remember it being a reasonable-sized island and actually, I went back to it like three or four years ago and it was the tiniest island (laughs) I've ever seen in my life. But—so we were there with—we spent time there with my grandparents and their family. And then there was also—people had, you know, ranches out there and stuff. So I don't remember too much of it,

but we were out there for a year.

00:03:53 Q: Yeah. Okay.

Dartt: And then—and actually for Christmas my mother had a picture, you know, a formal picture taken of my sister and me and her, that she sent back to her parents. And it was, like, the most beautiful photograph.

00:04:12 Q: Ah! What was the setting that made it so beautiful?

Dartt: It was just that we all looked really good. (both laugh) My mother was probably about thirty and I was four and my sister was two. So, you know, little kids are always cute so—and the photographer just got a very nice picture. And it was, you know, a formal picture so we weren't like—

00:04:39 Q: Yes.

Dartt:—be casual or anything. It was really nice. And then my father came back after a year. And of course we didn't recognize him because he had a beard. (Connell laughs) And we drove the trailer down to Prescott, Arizona where my mother had relatives. I think one of her uncles lived there—they lived on a ranch. And we were again in a trailer court someplace, you know, in the area. I think we were in Tucson and they were in Prescott. I think it was Prescott they lived in.

And at that time both sets of my grandparents came down to visit at one time or another, and my cousin came with them because he had asthma so Arizona—

00:05:30 Q: Oh, Arizona, yeah.

Dartt: So the one thing I remember about that—I remember picking up a cactus, which was a very painful experience (laughs) and then also—I don't know if you remember—they had this laxative at that time called Ex-lax?

00:05:49 Q: Yes, yes. I do remember. (laughs)

Dartt: Well, I thought it was chocolate so I got into the refrigerator and with my friends we ate like the whole bar of Ex-lax, and with really disastrous consequences, and part of that time we were down in—we were down at the ranch and they only had an outhouse, so it was really pretty gross.

00:06:12 Q: I guess, yeah, right.

Dartt: And then, also at that time, I think when we were first there and my father was there and they had horses, and they put him on this white horse and then someone slapped the horse's butt and the horse just took off with my father on it. (laughs)

00:06:30 Q: Was he able to stay on or did he fall off? (laughs)

Dartt: He was able to stay on.

00:06:35 Q: Oh, fortunately, yeah.

Dartt: So I remember it as a lot of fun, although I don't remember too many specifics.

00:06:45 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And then after that was done, after the two years were done—

00:06:50 Q: So wait. Was your father still—at this point he was still working on the same contract or—?

Dartt: He went back for the second year—

00:06:55 Q: Oh, okay.

Dartt:—to Alaska and we stayed in Arizona for the second year.

00:06:59 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And then when he finished we moved back to Oneonta, but not for too long, and he got a

job with the—an official—like maybe a more—a type of engineering job with the telephone company, and we moved to Albany, New York, and that's when my brother was born. And after he was born we moved into a house—(phone rings) Sorry. I think we only stayed there for about two years. And the most notable thing that happened to me there was I started first grade and I didn't do very well and finally in second grade they realized that I needed glasses.

00:07:56 Q: Oh no.

Dartt: I couldn't see the board and that's why I wasn't doing very well in school.

00:08:01 Q: Explains a lot, yes.

Dartt: So after I got my glasses I started doing much better in school.

00:08:08 Q: So, this is a public school?

Dartt: Yeah, yeah, in East Greenbush, New York.

00:08:15 Q: Okay.

Dartt: So they really didn't test kids for vision when they were little at that time.

00:08:21 Q: Okay. So you're in first grade, second grade now. Who are your friends? What does the school look like? Are you settled in this new town now for a while?

Dartt: Not really because we actually lived in a house that was on a relatively major road so I didn't really have any friends close by. I don't really remember any friends from there. I remember some people who lived back up on the hill but more as grown-ups. So I actually don't really remember too many friends. I know I was in a play there. I think I was the Christmas fairy in a play or something. (Connell laughs) Because I had long, you know, very blond hair. So I don't—I really don't remember too much about friends there, actually. And I had to take a bus to school. That was a new experience for me.

00:09:23 Q: The bus?

Dartt: And then in second grade we moved to Clinton, New York and my father was transferred to Utica, New York, and that's actually where I lived, you know, until I went away for college. So it's a small town and they have a college in it called Hamilton College—

00:09:48 Q: Um-hm.

Dartt: So my parents chose it because it had very good schools for the area. And a lot of the reason was that most of the kids from the professors at the college went to the school, so I think they were really pretty concerned about schools. So we also got, you know, really—you know, quite smart kids in the school, along with people in the town. So I think it was a little different

than just going to school in a small town in upstate New York. So I remember a lot of friends from there. We lived in—we bought a house in a new development that—it had been an apple orchard and there were five houses built around this block there and they all had backyards that went together. And they were all people that moved to the telephone company basically at the same time as my father and they all had kids. So we used to play in the backyards all the time. And there was a woods nearby; we used to play in the woods. So we— you know, it was a time where you could just go out—we didn't really have play dates— we just hung out and played. We had a tree house in our backyard in one of the apple trees. And people had gardens and swing sets, and so we just played. We played the Cartwrights. Remember that show?

00:00:11:25 Q: Yes.

Dartt: So we played that we were the Cartwrights. (Connell laughs) And we had Barbies, and we played with Barbies, like all the, you know, imaginative kinds of play that kids do. At least they did. I don't know how much chance they get to do it anymore. But because it was, you know, a small town and really safe, we just could go out and play.

00:11:55 Q: Yeah, it's a lost art I'm afraid.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:11:58 Q: Not too many places—

Dartt: Yeah, and kids get so overscheduled now. But the other thing was it also ended up being fairly boring because—you know, once I got older, because there wasn't so much to do.

So, yeah, so growing up as a kid, you know, I did well in school. I liked school a lot, and I had friends; we hung out together through elementary school. And in the summers we didn't do a lot, unfortunately, so it was a little boring. But my father—he had been a pilot in World War II, so he joined the Air National Guard, so he went—he had to go off and practice flying every other weekend. So sometimes he would come with—one time, I was a little older at this time, he went out to fly helicopters and he would come to our neighborhood and land in—

00:13:08 Q: Amazing!

Dartt: —and take us all for rides in this helicopter.

00:13:11 Q: Oh my goodness! That's amazing!

Dartt: Can you imagine that happening now!

00:13:16 Q: No! Security would never allow it.

Dartt: No. And he actually flew me back to Barnard [College] once in one of the planes.

00:13:24 Q: Oh no! Where did you land, on the roof or something?

Dartt: No, we went—we landed at the airport in Teterboro, New Jersey, and then I just took the bus into NYC.

00:13:36 Q: So he was a serious flyer.

Dartt: Yeah, when my parents were first married he had a plane and a motorcycle, but then they had kids, I guess. (laughs) They had to get a car. (laughs)

00:13:51 Q: I love it.

Dartt: That was the most—that was the most wild they ever got, though. They were pretty staid—

00:13:59 Q: Can you tell me a story about your mother that would, you know, tell me a little bit about how she was, or what you remember growing up with her?

Dartt: So my mother was a stay-at-home mother and she cooked really nice meals for us every night except when my father wasn't going to be there, because he would go golfing (Connell laughs) once a week with his friends from the telephone company and she would make us eat TV dinners. (Connell laughs) She'd buy scallop TV dinners, which were like the worst thing in the world. (laughs)

00:14:38 Q: I think I remember those vaguely, yeah. Yeah.

Dartt: Yeah, I found if you held your nose while you ate the scallop it wasn't as bad. Well, she was trying to get us to eat fish. So, I don't know, she was a loving, supportive mother but—I don't know—and she did a lot for us, but somehow I didn't end up being all that close to her in some ways.

00:15:11 Q: Right.

Dartt: I mean, you know, I saw her a lot, and I continue to see her a lot, but emotionally we're not all that close, really.

00:15:21 Q: So she's still alive.

Dartt: Yeah. Yeah, both my parents are still alive.

00:15:25 Q: That's great.

Dartt: Yeah. My mother's ninety and my father's ninety-five. And my parents—yeah, they—I have no idea how they ever communicated about things because they never fought, but I don't know if my father just made all of the decisions or if they ever talked things out. That just was not at all apparent in their relationship. So—

00:15:58 Q: And what about the family background? Where did your family come from originally?

Dartt: So my—actually, my father's father—they came from Southern England before the Revolutionary War.

00:16:12 Q: Okay. So way back!

Dartt: And they came to Connecticut. And I'm not sure if this is true but what I think is they tried to fight in the Revolutionary War but they never quite caught up with the battles because, you know, (Connell laughs) they weren't fought everywhere, so it was hard to find out where you were supposed to be. So my father's mother's parents came from Northern Ireland and his mother was born in the United States. So both my grandparents were born in the United States—well, obviously my grandfather was. And my mother's family is from England and I'm not sure when they came over, but I know my grandparents were born here and probably even their parents were born here. And my mother's father actually went to Cornell University, to the School [Department] of Animal Husbandry, which became the Department of Animal Science at the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and he got a degree from there. And he raised chickens for his livelihood, but he died relatively young. And my mother was the youngest by far of her siblings so she sort of grew up from age thirteen on with her mother, her father having died. And they all lived in Oneonta, New York.

00:17:46 Q: Oh, so this was kind of the roots?

Dartt: Yeah. So I had—both my grandparents were in Oneonta and some of—a lot of my cousins were in Oneonta as well. So we used to go visit them a lot and I would play with my cousins, and they had a farm, which was really fun. So I just remember a lot of, you know, a lot of good family memories growing up. My father's father would, you know, take us to do all sorts of stuff. He really liked kids so—he had like this four horse-powered motor or something like that, and we would go to the lake near Cooperstown and he would rent a boat and we would go with this little motor around and around the lake. And he would take us swimming at the swimming pool and then he would take us to the playgrounds. There were two different playgrounds in Oneonta. So I have really, I would say, quite happy childhood memories of doing a lot of stuff with the two families.

00:19:04 Q: That's great.

Dartt: So I don't know. I mean—

00:19:11 Q: That's okay. So, how about in terms of schooling—no, in terms of your family fitting in with the rest of the neighborhood, did you ever—or even at school—did you ever feel different than other kids for any reason?

Dartt: Certainly not ethnically because, you know, it was a very homogeneous community. And we were—I was Methodist and it was a big Protestant area. The people who were most different were the Catholics, and then there was one Jewish family that lived in our town for a few years.

So, you know, it was really a very homogeneous community.

00:19:55 Q: Okay.

Dartt: So the only way I felt different was more in high school when I, you know, really liked studying and stuff like that.

00:20:07 Q: Can you say some more about that? What was—Do you remember some teachers that were encouraging of your academics, say, in middle school, high school?

Dartt: So I went to—they had a middle school that I went to, and then they built a new high school just before I started. And they were all together and, you know, middle school and high school were not the best of times, really. It's hard being that age, just trying to fit in with everybody else. It's not so easy to do it. But I had some really good friends. I had this one friend who we started being friends in seventh grade that I'm still in contact with, and we still visit each other occasionally. And she actually—she actually is a singer and a voice talent—and she actually is the voice of Siri on the iPhone.

00:21:01 Q: You're kidding! Oh my goodness! I always wondered who that person was.

Dartt: If you look up “voice of Siri,” she went on one of the television shows—I didn't know until a couple of years later when my brother told me.

00:21:15 Q: That's fascinating!

Dartt: Yeah, so I stayed really good friends with her, and I was in her wedding, and visited her—we visited a lot. We don't see each other a lot but we, you know, we keep up contact.

00:21:30 Q: Yeah. Yeah. So, in terms of the academics, did you say they were—you sort of felt different because you were a high achiever. In what areas? And what about some of the teachers?

Dartt: So they—they tracked in my school, so they had like the “A” group for the smart kids. So I was in that from seventh grade on. And you know, I guess the kids who weren't in it probably were a bit resentful and—I mean, it wasn't terrible but just not completely comfortable. And we had some really excellent teachers there, I would have to say, particularly in high school. I had a social studies teacher who was really good and they—the school board or the principal devised a special course for us one year that instead of studying world history—this was senior year— they divided the course into like—We did a whole thing on the Supreme Court and something on the Constitution, and I forget what else. And this really good teacher taught it and because it was so different he really had a wonderful time. And then we had one quarter of the year to study world history basically on our own, and then you had to take these Regents Exams as final exams. These exams determined your final grade. We had to take several—lots of courses had New York state exams that you had to take at the end of the year. And then we had to study so we could take the exam. And I had a wonderful math teacher; she was just a wonderful teacher. Some very good English teachers. Lots of times they would have, like, some of the wives of the faculty from Hamilton College; even though they weren't probably registered as public school

teachers, they would teach courses for us. And I had one that taught a great English course, one that taught French, so—really good teachers. I think the weakest ones were the science teachers, which of course I went into science so—

00:22:47 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: And I played lots of sports. I liked playing sports, even though I wasn't that good. So I played on every team that they had. There weren't teams—

00:24:01 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: There weren't any intramural [teams]; it was just, you know, different teams within the high school. So I played softball, field hockey, basketball, volleyball, whatever they had.
(beeping noise)

00:24:14 Q: And were you involved in other activities? Yearbook or clubs?

Dartt: I probably worked on the yearbook, I would imagine. I worked on the junior prom. I worked at the plays; I was the property manager for one of the plays. I was in—I had this really minor part in one of the plays. I don't know, I must have done other stuff. There was the—there was the Yorker Club, which, you know, from New York; it was a little historical club. I was in that for a while.

00:24:59 Q: Historical? Oh, okay.

Dartt: Yeah, I think that was the club. We went to visit some—I'm not sure if it was the club or it was part of school—we went to visit, like, Fort Ticonderoga and stuff like that. I don't know what else there would have been. Yeah?

00:25:15 Q: So the sports and some of these clubs—

Dartt: Yeah.

00:25:19 Q: What else do you remember of the social life? Did you have boyfriends? Did you go out on dates?

Dartt: I became—I got sort of overweight by the end of high school, so I didn't really have boyfriends. So that was a negative part, although I had a lot of friends who were boys. But not really boyfriends. So dating was not a very—I had forgotten about that. Thank you for remembering! (laughs)

00:25:49 I'm so sorry! (laughs)

Dartt: It was not the best part of high school.

00:26:02 Q: No, no, although I remember junior high being much worse. Okay, good, good. So who would you say was probably the most influential person in your life prior to going off to Barnard, and in the years since?

Dartt: The most influential? Well, actually—I guess—so we had—we belonged to the Methodist church and one of the religion teachers at Hamilton College—his wife was a musician, and she was the head of the choir. So I did a lot with the church, too. I was in the choir and the youth fellowship.

00:26:39 Q: Right. I understand _____(??)

Dartt: Yeah. I also was in the Girl Scouts when I was younger, too. So anyway, I—she taught the choir and my family got to know her really pretty well, and I babysat for them. They lived up at the college. And she actually, while I knew her, got a PhD in music. So she was very—unlike a lot of the wives around there, she actually had a career that she was starting and she was trying to manage a career and kids. So I was sort of around while she was, you know, starting her PhD. So I think that she was probably fairly influential in that she was a really well-educated person and had a family and just was intellectually engaging and had a very intellectual household.

00:27:45 Q: Okay. So having been brought up as a Methodist, I'm particularly interested in whether you—you found that sort of supportive of you in those years, or was it something that you ended up wanting to challenge at any point?

Dartt: Oh yeah, I ended up wanting to challenge because I wanted to be a minister, but women couldn't be ministers at— (laughs)

00:28:08 Q:—at that time. Oh!

Dartt: Yeah. You could be a deaconess but that didn't sound very interesting to me. So I sort of became—I don't know, I would always do things—I would like—you know, usually boys were supposed to light the candles at the beginning of the service—the ones in the front of the church near the pulpit—but I did it once just because I wanted to do it. Of course I embarrassed my mother as only boys were supposed to light the candles. Only boys were supposed to ring the bell, but I wanted to ring the bell. And, you know, I wanted to wear pants and you weren't supposed to wear pants. So, as a teenager, I had a lot of stress with my mother because she was really trying to keep me like—you know, like, a sort of, I don't know, quiet, non-rebellious, normal, fitting-in-with-everything teenager and I was not too interested in that. And we always would have fights over what I wore to school, even though I can't imagine how bad it was because, you know, compared to today you really couldn't go too far wrong. And I would always end up leaving the house in the morning and I would slam the door I would be so mad at her and—and we had a regular door and then we had a glass door like, you know, that you have for screen doors, and I would slam the door so hard I would break it. (laughs)

00:29:32 Q: (laughs) That's a lot of anger.

Dartt: And these doors I broke. And she would go, as I was leaving, "Don't slam the door!"

00:29:38 Q: Oh no.

Dartt: She didn't want me to break any more doors. So I was—I mean, I wasn't so—I was just rebellious, I would have to say, but not so that I got-into-trouble rebellious.

00:29:51 Q: Um-hm.

Dartt:—but just I didn't want to do anything my mother wanted me to do, basically.

00:30:00 Q: Um-hm, um-hm. You knew early on that you wanted a different life.

Dartt: Oh, yes. Yes. And I didn't—you know, I did not want to grow up and be a housewife.

00:30:09 Q: Um-hm, um-hm. So what about the family dynamics? You had mentioned before that you weren't sure how your mom and dad even communicated. Did that sort of follow over with all of your siblings as well or were you close with some of them or—

Dartt: So I was close with my brother, and my sister who is two years younger—we did not get along at all well by the time I was in high school. We didn't get along well. But once I left for college, then we—you know, now we get along really well. So—but when we were growing up together we did not get along.

00:30:47 Q: And you were all in the same school at this point?

Dartt: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It was not a big community. I had, like, a hundred and thirty-five in my graduating class. I think we had three thousand people in our town.

00:31:00 Q: (laughs) Three thousand. Okay.

Dartt: It was small. But it had a nice center of the town. It had a little park with a fountain in it, and all the stores and businesses were around the park. So it was very, you know, it looked—and there were churches—big white churches—churches that were all around the park. So it was—it wasn't like a park—it was a small park, you know, like a town square kind of park.

00:31:30 Q: Yeah, yeah. It sounds lovely.

Dartt: It was a very pretty little town, but it got very boring. Like in the summers we wouldn't do much and I was really bored. But I was—

00:31:42 Q: So—Go ahead. Uh-huh.

Dartt: So I was—they did have some—they did have some classes in the summer at Colgate University that I went to.

00:31:51 Q: And how far away was that?

Dartt: That was about maybe thirty miles.

00:31:54 Q: Oh, okay.

Dartt: Or maybe it was in—maybe it was in the fall or something like that. So I did that. And then someone taught Russian up at Hamilton College for any of the kids in the town. I think it was mainly for the professors' kids but I got to go to that. So I went up there to learn Russian. And someone taught Italian, so I learned a little Italian. So any time I could do something like that I would do it. And I used to go to the college library to do the papers that I had to write. And I went to a lot of plays at the college and musicals, you know, music productions and things like that. So it made it a lot more interesting—

00:32:46 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: —than most little—most little towns.

00:32:50 Q: No, there was definitely culture.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:32:55 Q: Oh, good.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:32:58 Q: Okay. So what about your kind of exposure to events happening in the world at that point? Do you remember any particular world events, local events that kind of shook you up or that you wanted to learn more about?

Dartt: So I remember in the Cold War era after—I don't remember much about the [Cuban] Missile Crisis, but I remember that our neighbors built a bomb shelter—

00:33:23 Q: Oh no!

Dartt:—and stocked it. And I was, like, so worried that, you know, we wouldn't have a place to go if we needed it, because they were, like—they had the only one that I knew about. So that made a big impression—

00:33:40 Q: Yeah.

Dartt:—on me and also, you know, the [John F.] Kennedy assassination, too, I remember pretty vividly how—about that. But probably not a lot of world affairs too much.

00:34:01 Q: Um-hm. Was there—was there any interest in the Vietnam War at that point, any protest going on in your—in your town or your area, at the college?

Dartt: No.

00:34:14 Q: Okay.

Dartt: I don't—

00:34:16 Q: Not that you were aware of—

Dartt: I actually was a transfer student at Barnard. So I went to this small women's college called Wells College—

00:34:25 Q: Yes.

Dartt: —on Cayuga Lake for two years. But I didn't—It was really not a good place for me, so then I transferred to Barnard from there.

00:34:36 Q: Okay. Let's go back and talk about that whole process of beginning college. So what made you choose Wells at that point?

Dartt: I guess I didn't want to go too far from home and I liked Hamilton College so I still wanted to interact with, you know, things that were happening at Hamilton College. So that's why I picked Wells College. And a couple of, you know, other people from my high school had

gone there beforehand. So I was—my parents didn't really go to college, although my father—my father did, he went to the University of Iowa after he came back from the war. But it was very different, you know, than people going to college now. So most of the people in my—well, in my high school, obviously all the kids from the professors were going to college. A lot of people who were living in the town area went, but then there were a lot of people from, like, the farms and really tiny towns nearby who came to our school, and they—they wouldn't be going to college.

00:35:52 Q: So, give me a little bit of a geography; Wells is right near where you're living now, or no? Where you were living then?

Dartt: It was about maybe a hundred miles away. It was just north of Cornell University.

00:36:05 Q: Okay.

Dartt: —on the lake.

00:36:08: Okay. And you—It's on the lake as well?

Dartt: Yeah.

00:36:10 Q: What—what do you remember about that college? That you didn't fit in and—? But you must have done some things—you did two years there.

Dartt: I did two years there. Yeah, well, I didn't know—I mean, my family didn't really know that much about college so I didn't really know that much about transferring except that at the end of my freshman year one of the people I knew there transferred colleges. So I found out that you could do that, so—but I did it at the end of my second year there. But it wasn't really a very intellectual place and a lot of the women there, they just wanted to get married at the end. So if they had boyfriends, they were getting engaged in their senior year—you know, a lot of things like that. So—and, you know, it was in the middle of nowhere. Looking back, I don't know why I ever wanted to go there but—There wasn't a lot happening and it was very limited.

00:37:12 Q: Had you—did you apply to other colleges at that time?

Dartt: When I first went to college?

00:37:19 Q: Yes.

Dartt: I applied to Ohio Wesleyan [University], and, I think, Cornell.

00:37:25 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And I got into Wells and Ohio Wesleyan, but I didn't get into Cornell.

00:37:34 Q: I think it's probably hard as a New York person to get into Cornell.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:37:38 Q: Okay. And you said there were things going on back at Hamilton that you wanted to keep in touch with. What were some of those things that were still drawing you?

Dartt: Boys.

00:37:46 Q: Oh, boys. You had a boyfriend?

Dartt: No, but—

00:37:51 Q: (laughs) There were boys—there were no boys at Wells.

Dartt: Yeah. Right. There were boys at Hamilton and I wanted to get to know them.

00:37:55 Q: Okay, very healthy. Okay.

Dartt: One of those good reasons for picking a college, you know?

00:38:03 Q: Yeah, in those days, perhaps. Okay, great. So what about—you decided to choose Barnard, on what basis?

Dartt: So after my first year, I came to Boston and went to Harvard [University] summer school for a year and took a Russian course.

00:38:23 Q: For a year or for a semester, you mean?

Dartt: For the summer.

00:38:25 Q: Oh.

Dartt: It was the summer—Harvard summer school. Sorry.

00:38:28 Q: Yes.

Dartt: And, like, no one in my family likes cities at all. I mean, they hate them. So I came to a city and I found out that I really liked cities. So I think that's what got me interested in applying to Barnard because I heard that they took a lot of transfer students. I also applied to Brown University. I think it was called Pembroke [College at Brown University] at that time.

00:38:55 Q: Pembroke, yeah.

Dartt: Yeah. But I—and I applied to New York University. So—and I decided to go to Barnard.

00:39:05 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And my father drove me down, moved the stuff into my room and then left. (laughs)

00:39:12 Q: (laughs) Great.

Dartt: (laughs) Left me in the middle of New York City because he did not like being in the city.

00:39:19 Q: Oh my gosh. Did they—So where did you land? What—

Dartt: I was in Plimpton, the off-campus dorm?

00:39:26 Q: Okay. It was new at that point. Yeah. So you're a junior starting at Plimpton.

Dartt: So I never lived at Brooks, Hewitt or Reid [Halls].

00:39:35: Okay.

Dartt: I lived in Plimpton [Hall] both the years I was there.

00:39:38: Okay. And what about roommates? Suitemates? What do you remember of that?

Dartt: Because I was a transfer, they put me into a suite that hadn't filled up yet. (Connell laughs)
Everyone else in the suite was a member of SDS [Students for a Democratic Society].

00:39:54 Q: No!

Dartt: Oh yes! So I learned a lot about SDS that year. And actually, one of the people in my suite, she ended up living with her boyfriend. So she rented her room to—I think she was someone in the Journalism School.

00:40:14 Q: Oh my goodness!

Dartt: And she was doing a paper on the Black Panthers, who were—it was, I think, just before they got arrested.

00:40:24 Q: Okay.

Dartt: There was a group that got arrested around then. And she started dating one of the Black Panthers. (laughs)

00:40:32 Q: As part of her research, right?

Dartt: So he would come to her room. (laughs)

00:40:37 Q: Oh my gosh!

Dartt: There was one of the Black Panthers in our dorm.

00:40:41 Q: In your dorms.

Dartt: Yes.

00:40:44 Q: _____(??) remember.

Dartt: Yeah. It wasn't all that many times but, you know.

00:40:48 Q: Was he—did he act quite militant or did he try to blend in? (laughs)

Dartt: He was fairly nice as far as I could tell. But can you imagine if they knew that this room was being rented out and a Black Panther—a Black Panther was coming to visit? (laughs)

00:41:05 Q: That is such a wild story. I really—I think there were a lot of secrets that people never knew about, that they kept from the Barnard administrators. Oh, that's crazy. So how about academically? What are you—What are you studying now at this point? Are you—have you started in the sciences again?

Dartt: Oh, I've been in the sciences—oh, you mean in college—

00:41:25 Q: I mean in college, yes.

Dartt: So I was a biology major and I took a lot of science. Well, I was trying to decide between biology and Russian. So, I was biology major but I took some Russian—Russian courses. Russian language and Russian history. I took this wonderful course about Russian poetry.

00:41:43 Q: Oh my!

Dartt: This woman, she wasn't a regular faculty member—it had about six people in it, I think. And she was an intellectual from Russia who was living in New York City and she like, you know, she loved this poetry and she used to go to the opera in Russia and she would see, like—who was that famous dancer that hung out with the poet? I forget her name—but she would see them at the opera. And she would read the poetry and she just loved the sound of it. It was like a course that you wouldn't—I don't even remember if we had exams or anything, but she just loved this poetry. It was a wonderful course.

00:42:28 Q: And you were reading everything in Russian. So your Russian must be pretty good at this point.

Dartt: It must have been, yeah. (laughs) But I couldn't—So I took the Russian history course, but I couldn't really—my Russian wasn't good enough to really read source materials in Russian to write papers. So I had to stick to the English. So I also took a lot of—took a lot of science

courses. I worked for this professor—her name is Pat [Patricia N.] Farnsworth and she taught physiology. And she, like, became sort of one of my main role models in my life, I guess I would say, because she had—Her husband was a professor at Columbia Law School, and she had four children, she was gorgeous, she dressed well, she was a scientist, she taught a course—so she really, you know, had it all. Unfortunately, Barnard decided not to promote her—

00:43:34 Q: No tenure?

Dartt: Yeah, so she left after my senior year. So she was there the two years that I was there. It really—it was really sad. She ended up, actually—So I work in ophthalmology, in eye research—and she ended up—she did blood research when she was at Barnard. And she ended up working on the lens, so I saw her through the years at the eye meetings I used to go to. So she did really well. She went to Rutgers School of Medicine and did really well. So I think it actually was good that she left Barnard but, you know—

00:44:16 Q: It's a loss for the other students, though.

Dartt: She was a good teacher; she was very inspiring. She did research, so we did projects in her lab and, you know, just to have a woman like that teaching at that time. You know? So what a missed opportunity.

00:44:34 Q: Yeah. But you had her at least.

Dartt: Yeah. Yeah. So and—so my first year there was pretty interesting, living with all the people from SDS. (laughs) So I used to go to—so I missed the big 1968 when Columbia was closed and everything. And I was in the middle of nowhere at Wells College, so nothing was really happening there except Cornell—they had a big—they had big protests and they had to close down the university. So we used to go there occasionally to study and—so it was a little strange when we had to go there. But otherwise it didn't really touch us where we were. But then when I came to Barnard, I started being more involved, and I went to that big march that they had on Washington, DC.

00:44:32 Q: Um-hm.

Dartt: I don't know if you remember that.

00:44:34 Q: I do, yeah.

Dartt: I went to that. And my family would always look for me at the protests in New York City to see if I was there. (laughs)

00:44:42 Q: Your family would look?

Dartt: Yeah, on television, you know, they'd have pictures of protests so they would look and see if I was there. (laughs)

00:44:48 Q: So these were—these were the anti-war marches.

Dartt: Yeah. Yeah.

00:44:52 Q: And what do you remember of that? Of those experiences?

Dartt: Well, actually, the one I remember the most was the one where we went to Washington, DC and—and we were there—I went with the people from SDS and we had our little—We had a, you know, the march and everything and then we came back to protest at this building, it was some kind of military building, and we were out in front of it, and all of a sudden someone threw a rock, and I don't even think it was one of us, and broke the window, and, like, all these soldiers in riot gear came out. I mean, like, fifty of them, and so we sort of just slowly walked away. It was really weird. (laughs)

00:46:45 Q: No police at this point? Just soldiers, though?

Dartt: Yeah, I think—it looked like they were soldiers. I don't know who they were but they were in riot gear so it didn't really matter who they were.

00:46:52 Q: No.

Dartt: And I don't think it was anyone from our group because it came from way in the back.

And I was with two of my roommates and we were going to stay at one of her sisters' houses—

her sister was married and lived in the DC area. And that's when there was another march that was taking place that was really well-organized and it—I remember all these people coming up one of the avenues in Washington, DC and then it—I don't know where they went or what stopped or what happened, but they started being tear-gassed, and so they were, like, running back; there was tear gas everywhere and we couldn't find this person's house so we ended up going—her family—one of the people's family was an ambassador or something like that, and we ended up going to one of her family's friend's houses. And it was one of the broadcasters on CBS or something like that—I forget exactly who it was—and his wife. And there were, like, eight of us who just showed up on their door and we'd been, you know, in the tear gas and we didn't know what we were doing. And she, like, took this big meal out of her freezer and she made us all dinner. It was like—

00:48:12 Q: Aw.

Dartt: _____(??) So we finally got to this person's house after everything had calmed down but it was really crazy when they were, you know, doing all the tear gas and people just running around and—I don't remember seeing any police particularly, but I just remember all the chaos. So that was my most memorable moment of the protests, I would have to say.

00:48:43 Q: Yeah. Oh, okay, so what about—do you think you were affected by your roommates? Were you sympathetic to SDS? Or any of their causes?

Dartt: For a little bit, but then—then I met some people and got some other kind of friends—

because I was just plopped down in the middle of this—I didn't know anybody. So then I slowly started to meet other people and got a lot of—you know, got friends that way that I hung out with more. And then the second year I was going to room with them but there was this huge big mix-up on the rooming, so they ended up—they ended up being in one suite with a person who transferred in, and then I ended up being put in another suite that had an extra room again. (Connell laughs) And this time it was the kosher suite.

00:49:35 Q: Oh no! (laughs) Interesting contrast, uh-huh.

Dartt: Yeah, so I had known, like, one Jewish person in my life and so it was quite an experience. But they were all really nice—

00:49:52 Q: Yes.

Dartt: —but they were none too happy to have this person who had no idea about keeping kosher or anything in the suite; but they—we sort of worked it out. But I had to learn all the rules. And there was one person who had just come back from Israel, so she was there—she, like, tore off the toilet paper beforehand so it would be already torn for the Sabbath and, you know, they would have a—they would have kosher meals, so they would, like, be leaving the burner on low, and I would ask, “Should I turn this off or not?” And they couldn't tell me. It was a little crazy. Then they would roll up one corner and I could have my little cup of coffee and milk or something in the corner, so—because it was on a tablecloth. And then they had a flowerpot of

sand, of dirt, so if things got trayfed—contaminated milk with meat or with my food—they could put it in there and bury them so they could get cleansed again, so it was, like—

00:50:49 Q: My goodness!

Dartt: They were really—really orthodox Jewish people. So here I was from upstate New York. But one of them I stayed friends with and still am really close friends with. I don't see her tons, but we do keep up and I saw her, like, maybe two years ago when I was in New York City. And so I've seen her on and off quite a bit over the years, so—so I've kept up.

00:51:19 Q: Who is that?

Dartt: I've kept up friends with her. Her name—you want her name?

00:51:23 Q: Yeah. I'm just curious.

Dartt: Rachel Theilheimer.

00:51:26 Q: Oh no, I don't know her.

Dartt: She was a year younger than I was.

00:51:32 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And actually, one of the people was Deborah Rosenthal, who I think is a fairly famous artist now.

00:51:40 Q: Mm, um-hm.

Dartt: And she married this guy Jeb someone, who is, like, an art critic or something. I forget his last name. And I went to their wedding. So it worked out okay, but it was quite an experience, I would have to say.

00:51:57 Q: You say that very tongue in cheek.

Dartt: Not a bad experience. I'd forgotten about it. Looking back on it, it was, you know, not knowing anything about Judaism at all and then to be put in the middle of it, it was really—it ended up working out okay.

00:52:16 Q: Good. Well, that speaks for your versatility as well. (laughs) So what about social life during those days? Were there—did you meet any guys at this point at Columbia or anywhere or—?

Dartt: So actually, I met a couple of guys—there was a guy who came over into our biology class, Carl Rechy, and he had a friend, Peter Shlossberg, and they had a bunch of friends. And Peter Shlossberg had just gotten an ice cream maker. (Connell laughs) The hand-cranked ones?

00:52:46 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: Like every weekend he would come over because we had little kitchens in Plimpton, and we'd have an ice cream party and we'd make up, like, all these crazy flavors and—So we really had a lot of fun doing that. Then I hung around with them a lot and—And then I knew—did you ever know Maureen Strafford?

00:53:07 Q: Oh, yes. She's still in Boston. Yeah.

Dartt: Yeah. So I haven't kept up with her at all, but I was really good friends with her and Mary Gordon and Kathy [Kathleen] Biddick and those people. So we hung out. And I did a lot of stuff with Maureen.

00:53:24 Q: Yeah. Yeah. Maureen is one we're still trying to get interviewed, but it's going to happen. (laughs) If we've got you, we can get her, I think.

Dartt: Maureen's—it was fun—I was sort of—sort of not—I was a relatively quiet person, you know, sort of ordinary, and she was a little crazy. So it really worked out well to sort of make my life more interesting and—So I had a good time with Maureen.

00:51:53 Q: Good, good.

Dartt: But we've sort of lost touch over the years. She also worked with Pat Farnsworth.

00:53:58 Q: Oh, good. Okay. So that was a woman who inspired you both, I think.

Dartt: Yeah, there were a lot of us in my class that were inspired by her.

00:54:09 Q: Yeah, so many of our class went on to be into medicine in some form or another.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:54:14 Q: We were real pioneers in those days.

Dartt: Yeah, yeah.

00:54:15 Q: Which we're going to talk about more in a second. So let's just touch on a couple of—sort of superlatives here. Like, can you tell me about a moment or a day that really changed your life?

Dartt: A day that changed my life.

00:54:30 Q: Or even a—yeah.

Dartt: While I was in—up until this point in time?

00:54:40 Q: Sure.

Dartt: Well, I guess—I guess what—Sort of a day that changed my life is when I met Pat Farnsworth and I found out she actually had a PhD in physiology, which was at a—was of course out of medical school. So I was really doing biology until this time and then I found out about physiology and that's what I decided to work in. And that was just what I wanted. I didn't really want to be a doctor but I really liked the medical research. So, I would say finding out that there was medical research and you could get a PhD in it really changed my entire life because that's what I ended up doing.

00:55:26 Q: Okay. What about obstacles that were placed in your way? You went back, you know, in your girlhood, in your teens, your mother was somewhat in conflict with you about how to move your life forward.

Dartt: Right.

00:55:40 Q: Other obstacles that you remember over—in the next couple of years or even after that as you moved into your graduate work and career?

Dartt: Obstacles. Well, it was still relatively new for women to get PhDs. I mean, a lot more were but not a ton. So, I mean, there were a lot of obstacles in the PhD program. At Barnard—well, at Barnard obstacles—Barnard was not a warm and fuzzy place. Did you—are you a Barnard

graduate?

00:56:27 Q: Yes, I am. I'm actually from your class.

Dartt: Yeah, so you were there at the same time. So I think you probably remember that, like, if you wanted to do something, you had to really advocate for it and do it and they weren't going to really help you. So I think that was an obstacle, but you sort of learned how to deal with it. And I think it made, at least me, a little more aggressive about my education and deciding what I wanted to do and going for it. You know?

00:56:58 Q: Can you—so what was a particular situation in which you had to advocate for yourself because Barnard was not being supportive?

Dartt: Well, if you wanted to take a course at Columbia, you had to arrange a conflict. No, I forget what you did—you arranged a conflict at Barnard and then something and then you dropped it and then you could take the Columbia course. I never did anything like that.

00:57:25 Q: Wait. So did you take Columbia courses?

Dartt: I think I took a Columbia physics course. So they—you know, it was—you had to really manipulate the system to take any courses at Columbia. Oh, I wanted to—well, Pat Farnsworth went to Boston for a semester—or maybe it was for a year—and did a sabbatical and I wanted to

go but they really weren't going to let me go because I had been—was a transfer student so I hadn't been there long enough so I had to really advocate for that, although I ended up not going.

00:58:04 Q: Um-hm. What a shame. Yeah.

Dartt: Stuff like that.

00:58:07 Q: Yeah, that is frustrating. Totally. Okay—

Dartt: I also had to take gym when I got there because—

00:58:15 Q: Oh no! (laughs)

Dartt: I actually had—at the place where—at Wells College I took gym for a year and then I was able to not take it again because I passed enough tests or something. But when I came to Barnard they wouldn't accept that so I had to take gym for a year. (laughs)

00:58:33 Q: What did you do? Tennis or—?

Dartt: No, I did swimming and basketball.

00:58:37 Q: I'm sorry—what? Oops, we lost you there. Hold on.

Dartt: Swimming and then I did basketball, I think. But I passed my gym requirement.

00:58:57 Q: Okay, that's crucial.

Dartt: Yeah.

00:59:02 Q: We're having a little trouble with the connection here, but I think we're still on. Do you hear me?

Dartt: I do. Can you hear me okay?

00:59:08 Q: Yeah. I still hear it. You're doing fine.

Dartt: I can't see you but I can hear you.

00:59:12 Q: Okay. I think it's working. Okay. I think we're working.

Dartt: Yes.

00:59:17 Q: So, anything that—anything else that really defined those years at Barnard for you that you want to share? Or defined *you* in terms of those years at Barnard?

Dartt: Well, in the summer in between my junior and senior years I worked for Pat Farnsworth in

the lab. And Maureen was there and a couple of other people. So that was really a great experience to work—to work in a lab.

00:59:50 Q: And this is the lab actually right in—right in the—at Barnard? On the grounds or somewhere else? Okay.

Dartt: At Barnard, yeah, she had a lab at Barnard in the—I forget—there was a big tall science building there at the time.

1:00:01 Q: Right. Yeah, I think that's been rebuilt several times and enhanced, but yeah.

Dartt: Probably, yeah.

1:00:07 Q: Okay. Good.

Dartt: Yeah.

01:00:10 Q: So any long-term relationships that came out of that, out of those two years?

Dartt: Well, Maureen I was friends with for several years but sort of lost touch there. Rachel Theilheimer I'm still friends with, but she's probably the only one that I've stayed friends with from Barnard over the years.

01:00:37 Q: And when you were a student at—what did you most want out of life? What did you see yourself becoming?

Dartt: I was just going to say I had a good time at Barnard. I really liked living in the city and we did a lot of fun—a lot of fun things, so it was nice not being bored anymore and— (Connell laughs) Like, Rachel Thielheimer and I, like, I think every night winter, summer, fall, we went down to Baskin Robbins for an ice cream cone. And we had those guys that we had the ice cream parties with and we did other stuff with and it was—we really—it was a lot of fun. But anyway, what was your question?

01:01:14 Q: So I'm just wondering: were there other experiences that you feel really shaped you? I mean, clearly this relationship with Professor Farnsworth was crucial. Other things that sort of define you as a person that you've taken with you over the years that might have started back then?

Dartt: Well, I think—

01:01:31 Q: Politically, socially, academically, what-have-you?

Dartt: Yeah, so I think that what I really liked about Barnard is everyone there was serious about—at least who I hung out with—was serious about their academics, and wanted to go on to higher, some other degree afterwards. So I think every person I knew ended up getting a MD or

PhD or some kind of degree. So that was really what I was looking for there. So I think it really helped, you know, confirm my love of academics and wanting to continue on in education.

01:02:17 Q: Okay. So what about your—let's go then from Barnard—in terms of what you did afterwards. So you had worked in the lab. You were very much taken with the notion of physiology as a specialty—

Dartt: Right.

01:02:34 Q: So how did you sort of go from there?

Dartt: So I applied to PhD programs in physiology and I got into the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. And I had a scholarship there so I didn't have to pay for it.

01:02:5a Q: Wow.

Dartt: For the science they had pre-doctoral fellowship programs. So they had a number of slots for it and I got into one of them. So they weren't huge programs; I think there were four of us who started.

01:03:08 Q: Oh my goodness. That is small.

Dartt: And so I moved to—

01:03:16 Q: Now, this is part of the medical school or—?

Dartt: Yeah. Yes.

01:03:18 Q: All right.

Dartt: Absolutely. So the PhD you get in the School of Arts and Sciences, but all your classes and all the people you work for are at the medical school.

01:03:30 Q: Mm, um-hm. Okay.

Dartt: So that was just what I wanted. So—actually, I was the only one of the four people that ended up finishing the PhD program. There was a lot of dropout in all the classes around me. One of the people ended up going to medical school. And I'm still in touch with her. So—

01:03:58 Q: So was it half women, half men or—?

Dartt: It actually was half women, half men, but there were only four of us so that's sort of meaningless statistics. (laughs)

01:04:08 Q: Yeah, right.

Dartt: But there were women around so I wasn't the only woman in the program, and I actually ended up doing my PhD for—I think there were two or three women in the department; it was a pretty large department—I ended up doing my PhD for a woman, actually. So, you know, not easy going through a PhD program, you know, just the usual crap.

01:04:37 Q: _____(??)

Dartt: There was one—one of the faculty members who really was very anti-women. He was actually Iranian. But it was sort of easy to stay out of his way.

01:04:52 Q: And how was this manifested? Was he—he wouldn't grade you well or would he ignore you or—

Dartt: Yeah, he would sort of ignore you and I, like, when I first signed up for the first physiology course there, we had tutorials by the different faculty, and I didn't know who he was so I signed up to be with him. And he basically kicked me out of his group and sent me over to someone else.

01:05:18 Q: Ah.

Dartt: So actually, it wasn't very nice but in the long run it was the best thing that could have happened.

01:05:28 Q: So how long was this whole process of working on the PhD?

Dartt: It took me seven years.

01:05:34 Q: Okay.

Dartt: And I had—I had really—I mean, it was difficult doing the PhD, but I had a lot of fun in Philadelphia.

01:05:42 Q: How so?

Dartt: Well, I just met—well, I had one boyfriend for a while and then I met the guy—the person I actually married. And we, you know, I didn't ever live with him then but I lived in places around Philadelphia and we just had a lot of fun. It was around the bicentennial so a lot of things were happening in Philadelphia. There were a lot of good restaurants. It was a lot of fun.

01:06:04 Q: And how did you find the culture of the University of Pennsylvania and the graduate school there after being in a women's college in New York and before that in upstate New York?

Dartt: Well, it wasn't very different—I didn't have any problems adapting to it, really, you know, because I was used to a city. And we knew a lot of boys from Columbia, so it's not like we were just in a girls' school, really.

01:06:34 Q: Sure.

Dartt: And I'd been in a coed high school so it really wasn't—it wasn't a problem adapting to having men around again.

01:06:48 Q: Probably welcomed it. (Laugh)

Dartt: Yeah. Yeah.

01:06:50 Q: So how did you meet your husband-to-be? At that point you were—he became your husband—

Dartt: Yeah. So I actually, there was, like, a pick-up hockey game that we used to play hockey in the evenings. There were some medical students who wanted to. And I liked hockey; I grew up in upstate New York and I did figure skating. So I—

01:07:12 Q: Oh, okay.

Dartt: —knew how to skate. And I never really played hockey because women didn't play hockey. There were no women's hockey teams at that time. But my brother played hockey and we used to play road hockey and stuff. So I had decided to play with them. And there was one other woman on the team and—well, I guess there were a couple other, but one other—and I had

a party at my house and invited her and she brought my husband-to-be along with her. So we met at this party at my house. And so then he asked me out after that.

01:07:44 Q: So this was the hockey team. Did you continue playing hockey?

Dartt: Oh, yeah. I played—I think I played the whole time I was there. It was just—it was just very informal. And we didn't raise the puck or anything; we didn't check. Most of us didn't have any equipment. I had my brother's old hockey equipment. And I played on figure skates because I'd never used hockey skates before. So I ended up actually being the only woman that stayed on the team, but—(phone rings) I just have to—my husband's calling. Let me just—I'll get back to you. Just a sec. (conversation with person on phone) Sorry about that.

01:08:39 Q: It's okay.

Dartt: So yeah, so I—we used to play at eleven o'clock at night because that's when you could get the ice time. And there were maybe—I don't know—fifteen people that played throughout the—I think I played for maybe three or four years. It was really fun.

01:08:59 Q: Oh, wow.

Dartt: It was really great because I was working on my thesis and I was having trouble from the people on the committee so hockey was a great way to get frustration out.

01:09:10 Q: Ah-hah. Perfect, perfect. So I was—I actually lived there from '76 to '79 when my husband was in law school at Penn.

Dartt: Oh, yeah.

01:09:18 Q: I was teaching—I was teaching, actually, foreign students at that point. So yeah, I remembered it being a wonderful city so I—

Dartt: Yeah, I was there from '71 to '78.

01:09:28 Q: Yeah, okay, so we might have crossed paths.

Dartt: Yeah, who knows?

01:09:33 Q: Okay. So, let's see. And what did you end up doing your dissertation on?

Dartt: So I did it on the lacrimal gland which is an exocrine gland that secretes tears onto the surface of the eye.

01:09:48 Q: Say more. (laughs)

Dartt: Related to dry eye disease. If you get dry eye, your tear production goes down. And this is one of the glands that produces a lot of your tears.

01:10:00 Q: Okay, okay. And from there you ended up becoming a specialist in ophthalmology, right?

Dartt: Well, I stayed working on the lacrimal gland for my whole life, basically, and then added some other stuff. So after graduate school I went to Copenhagen, to the University of Copenhagen, and did a post-doctoral fellowship there. And then I came back to Boston.

01:10:28 Q: And tell me how that—tell me how you happened to end up at Copenhagen? Was that a specialty ____ (??) somehow?

Dartt: So I worked in the secretion area, protein secretion area and signaling, you know, how cells—how nerves activate cells to cause secretion. So I went to work with someone whom my advisor knew, who worked on the neurohypophysis in the brain that was a different kind of secretory system, and it was more biochemical.

01:11:02 Q: Okay. Okay.

Dartt: So she knew a couple of people; she suggested two different ones and I ended up going to work with this one.

01:11:12 Q: So this is a one-year postdoc fellowship? _____ (??)

Dartt: Right. So I got a fellowship from the Danish American Foundation that was part of the Scandinavian American Society.

01:11:19 Q: Um-hm. But you have no Danish blood in you, you just—(laughs)

Dartt: No, but I went to work in Denmark.

01:11:24 Q: Yeah. And how did you find that after Philadelphia?

Dartt: How did I find that? So it was difficult adjusting there because I had had, you know, so many people around, so many people to hang out with. It was a lot lonelier. But I did make friends there and I made a lot of Danish friends, and actually, one of them, we're still friends. We've stayed friends since then, and I go to visit her, like, almost every year or every other year. We Skype now every couple of weeks, so we stay in really close contact. But it took—you know, Denmark, it's a small country and people don't move around like they do in the United States so it's a little harder to get friends there. It took a while. But it was a wonderful experience after being in the United States. And I was there during the Iranian hostage crisis. Hello?

01:12:27 Q: Yes, I hear you. Uh-huh.

Dartt: And that was when—what—oh, president—Jimmy Carter [James Earl Carter, Jr.] was president. So the hostages got taken just about when I started my fellowship and released just

about when I ended the fellowship. So I knew how much time they'd been in—you know, they'd been in captivity. And also Denmark is this little country and they do not affect what happens in the world at all, whereas the United States is this huge country and it really controls a lot of what happens in the world and it was just—it was very—it was very eye-opening to be in this country where just this craziness was happening around you and you couldn't really do anything about it—not that I could do anything, but at least I felt that my country could do—always did stuff about it, good or bad. So that was a really interesting experience. The other thing was that it was, like, so much safer than West Philadelphia. If you remember West Philadelphia at the time, it was not a safe place and you had to very careful. The same with where Barnard was. And it was just amazing to be at a place that was so safe, and I, like, remember riding my bike through one of their parks at night and, like, sort of thinking back through my old times, I should really be scared. You know, if you were alone riding through a dark park at night, you know, something bad would happen if you were in West Philadelphia or Morningside Park. But then I realized I didn't have to worry, there was no problem, so it was really—it was very—I really liked living in a foreign country for a year.

01:14:17 Q: And did you ever do that again as part of your research or your career? Have you lived abroad again?

Dartt: No, I haven't. I've traveled a lot but I haven't ever lived anywhere.

01:14:28 Q: Okay. Again. Okay.

Dartt: I did—we did go to San Francisco for three months on a sabbatical.

01:14:39 Q: Oh, San Francisco, that's almost another country. (laughs)

Dartt: (laughs) My daughter was living there; she still is living there. So I worked at the Berkeley College of Optometry, part of the University of California at Berkeley. So that was really fun.

01:14:51 Q: Oh, okay. It's a beautiful city. I have a son who's there there now, too, but he's going to have to move because he's finding the apartment situation way too insane. (laughs)

Dartt: Yeah, yeah, everyone's children live in San Francisco, I think.

01:15:07 Q: (laughs) That's what they're finding out. Yeah, that's why there's such a shortage of housing. Okay.

Dartt: All our kids are there. I know so many people in San Francisco.

So, yeah, my husband and I, we were dating for, like, the last four years of graduate school, but he couldn't decide if he wanted to marry someone with a career. So he was in medical school; he went on to do his internship in Boston where he was from, and I went to Copenhagen. And he had a really miserable year. So I came back and we got married.

01:15:47 Q: Mm. Was this '79 or something?

Dartt: So I came back in 1979 and we got married in 1980. And I actually converted to Judaism.

(laughs)

01:16:00 Q: Oh, really? Interesting.

Dartt: Yeah.

01:16:04 Q: What was that process like?

Dartt: Oh, it was—actually, it was worse for my husband than for me because he really—he hated Hebrew school and after he got his bar mitzvah, he told his Hebrew schoolteacher to fuck off and they kicked him out of Hebrew school.

01:16:21 Q: (laughs) So did you have to learn Hebrew?

Dartt: No—well, we learned how to sort of read Hebrew, but no, I've never done it very much—So we actually didn't go to temple regularly or anything like that because he really didn't want to. But I did convert. It wasn't too bad. It was a course in summer, so it was not too much. So—

01:16:54 Q: Now, I don't know how that process works then. Are you required before your marriage is recognized to convert or was this your own choice?

Dartt: This is our own choice.

01:17:03 Q: Yeah, okay. And then did you end up raising your children in Judaism?

Dartt: Well, they're Jewish sort of more ethnically. They celebrate some of the Jewish holidays. And Howard's sister would invite us over for Passover. We do some of those. But they never went to temple; they never went to Hebrew school. So, actually, two of them are Jewish, but my youngest daughter decided to convert to Christianity. (laughs)

01:17:32 Q: It's a circle, right?

Dartt: So she's a Christian. And she was pretty devout for a while but then doesn't go to church anymore, so—

01:17:44 Q: Okay, okay. All right, let's go back just briefly to those days again at Barnard and Columbia. Are you—Do you remember the kind of racially-charged period? I mean, do you remember relationships with black students or Hispanic students or anything like that? Any sense of, yeah, animosity between the two groups at that point?

Dartt: Yeah, no, I didn't really have any—any friends that were black or Hispanic, I would have to say. I didn't really know all that many people because I never was in, you know, all those dorms in the beginning where I think you got to know a lot of people. If you were in a suite in

Plimpton, you knew four people and then the next year you knew four more, and then I met some in my classes, so I didn't really know a ton of people when I was at Barnard. I think the only time—once we went—so that didn't really affect me at all. When I played basketball, there were some black women who played basketball but I didn't really have any interactions with them, I'd have to say, that I can remember.

01:18:57 Q: Do you remember any particularly impactful events from that era of social, political, cultural change? The riots? Well, you weren't there at that time, but—

Dartt: I wasn't there for the riots.

01:19:13 Q: Yeah, you were gone. I'm sorry.

Dartt: People really—like for the whole time I was there, they always talked about them, but I missed those. They had one—they had one small shutdown, I think, when I was there. It was in 1970, I think that was. Right.

01:19:30 Q: Was it with the Kent killings? The Kent State—?

Dartt: It could have been something like that that I took part in, but it was nothing like the 1968.

01:19:44 Q: Okay. Have you—Do you feel you've been a political person over the course of your career or is that something that you've tried to stay away from?

Dartt: I haven't really been particularly political. I do vote—

01:19:59 Q: Which is better than half of the country. (laughs)

Dartt:—religiously but I haven't really become politically engaged.

01:20:08 Q: Okay. How about the whole feminist movement? I don't know that much about your particular field—and we're going to talk a little bit—but is it something that you—you're somewhat of a rarity being a woman in this area? Have you struggled with that?

Dartt: So my thesis advisor, who was a woman, you know, said—told me that a lot of bad things happen to everyone and if something bad happens to you, it's not just because you're a woman. And I think that was actually really a good perspective. I mean, obviously it was difficult for women, but to not interpret everything bad as, you know, anti-feminist I think was a good perspective to have, because I really don't think I've had a lot of anti-feminist things happen to me in my career. I've had bad things but honestly I don't think they were because I was a woman. I've been able to—you know, I came back to Boston and got a fellowship. I got to work in a lab at Tufts [University] that was really a nice lab that worked out well. I was able to get a scholarship from the National Institute of Health for my postdoc and then I've been able to get grants so I've had—I've had really good success getting grants. I was at Tufts for maybe three or four years and then a new chair of the department came and he essentially didn't want me to stay

there anymore, so then I came over to Harvard Medical School, to the Schepens Eye [Research] Institute where I've worked since 1985.

01:22:06 Q: 1985! Oh my goodness!

Dartt: Yeah, and there's actually—there actually were a lot of women faculty here, so I think it was different from most places. And I'm not sure how so many women ended up here but there was a lot of women faculty and one of the people who ran the place one year gave us all promotions and salary raises to make parity among, you know, the women compared to the men.

01:22:38 Q: Bravo! Yeah.

Dartt: Yeah, so that was really nice and then, you know, I was director of research here so I was helping run the place for about ten years. And now another person—a woman is running it and our chair of ophthalmology is female, so—And it took me a while to become—so I'm actually a professor of ophthalmology—it took me a while to get it, but not because I was a woman, because there was a woman here who really hated me and did anything she could—

01:23:12 Q: Oh, dear!

Dartt: —to keep me from getting my promotion and she was successful for a while but in the end she was not. So, I'm not, you know, I don't really feel like I've had—surprisingly—a lot of feminist things to overcome—

01:23:29 Q: Um-hm, um-hm. That's fantastic. So what—

Dartt: Probably there were some but, you know, but they were too subtle for me to notice. And I started—I started very early in my field so I was sort of one of the leaders in it—so—and stayed in it, and developed a reputation, so—Yeah.

01:23:56 Q: Has there been a lot of public pressure—a lot of pressure to publish, to continue on a certain level of research or have you found your niche and then been able to sort of stay there? I mean, I don't know—I'm curious how the process works, this being your whole career. Yeah.

Dartt: Yeah. So I started in this one area and I've expanded into a couple of other areas now so I could get additional grants, but, yeah, to get promoted here you have to really stay funded and you have to publish, so— I was—yeah, so I was under a lot of pressure, because all my salary I had to generate from my grants.

01:24:40 Q: Uh-huh.

Dartt: So there's a lot of pressure to publish and write grants and to get grants.

01:24:47 Q: And what are you most proud of in terms of those years at that institute?

Dartt: Well, I think I'm proud that through everything—and there was a lot of nasty stuff—that I stayed—I sort of stayed true to myself. And I was—I tried never to—I tried always to be helpful to younger people, particularly younger women. I tried to really support—although I wouldn't ever turn—I always helped young men, junior men as well. And I tried always to make my lab an enjoyable place to be, and not to have—to keep it so that people got along and make it a cooperative lab so that people who worked here, they would help other people on their projects. So—and still doing that to be able to keep getting promoted and to make it to professor and not to end up being, you know, an angry, mean—(Connell laughs) I mean, there are a lot of people that are like that around.

01:26:04 Q: You say that with a little shake of your head.

Dartt: I went through a lot here, I would have to say.

01:26:11 Q: Um-hm, um-hm.

Dartt: But by another woman! So that's why I can't really—that was the worst; the men were nothing compared to her!

01:26:23 Q: I can believe that. I've had a similar experience with directors who are women. So it speaks well that you've kept your equilibrium and still moved forward.

Dartt: Yeah. And I have three girls—

01:26:37 Q: So tell me a bit about your family, yeah, I was just going to say—

Dartt: So my husband got his MD from Penn and he'd also gotten a PhD from Cornell in physics, theoretical physics. But there were really no jobs then so he went to medical school. And so we met at Penn and we finally got married like five years later. And he worked in an emergency room for most of his—for a lot of his career. And we have three girls now. And one is a lawyer, one has a masters in public health and is a biostatistician, and the youngest one has a masters in music and is trying to establish herself in cello performance.

01:27:27 Q: Cello! Ah!

Dartt: Yeah.

01:27:29 Q: My favorite instrument. Okay, okay. Where did this music come from, do you think?

Dartt: From my husband. He's very musical. And he actually did music with the kids—they did—they started with Suzuki. So the two older girls did Suzuki violin and the youngest one did Suzuki cello. And then I did the sports with them. So I would take them to girls' softball and girls' soccer and things like that.

01:27:58 Q: So you raised them in Newton?

Dartt: Yes.

01:28:02 Q: That's where you've been living for the last whatever years.

Dartt: Uh-huh. Yeah, since 1981.

01:28:06 Q: Oh, okay. Good.

Dartt: We bought a house and we stayed there.

01:28:13 Q: And how—it's almost a trite question but how have you been able to juggle, or how did you juggle in the early years when your children were young?

Dartt: I have no idea.

01:28:23 Q: Anything you want to share about that? (laughs) You said you kind of divided up the tasks. They were—the dad was doing the music with them and you were doing the sports.

Dartt: Yeah. So we had—when the two older girls were younger, we took them to a family daycare two days a week. My husband because he worked in the emergency room would have them one day and I would have them another day. I think that's—maybe he would do two—

yeah, I think that adds up to five. But we didn't have a lot of—we didn't have a lot of help and that's the one thing I wish I'd done differently is—had a little more help when they were growing up. Eventually we did get someone to clean the house and do the laundry. That was a big help. But he participated in the family, in the childrearing—

01:29:20 Q: Well, you obviously did very well—

Dartt:—equally.

01:29:24 Q: Was there any assistance ever from your family or from his family with childcare and—?

Dartt: Not on a daily basis. His parents were a bit older so they really weren't able to do that. And my mother would come—like if we wanted to go away for a vacation for a week, she would come and take care of the kids. So she did that a few times. You know, sometimes when our kids were really sick or something like that, she would come help us out, you know, from upstate New York. So my mother did help out when we needed it, but not one day a week or anything like that.

01:30:03 Q: Right. So as a family have you kept up—did your kids know about your—I mean, do they see their aunts, uncles?

Dartt: Yeah, because Howard's sister lives in Southern New Hampshire, my sister lives in Southern Massachusetts, and my brother lives in Peabody, so—

01:30:19 Q: Oh!

Dartt: —they're all nearby, although they don't have really many cousins because my sister and brother never had kids and then Howard's sister had two daughters, so—

01:30:32 Q: So in terms of like—of changes in yourself, or your view of yourself since you were first a college student, how do you think you as a woman has changed over the last forty years?

Dartt: So I'm a lot more—I'm a lot tougher, a lot more driven, a lot more focused and hard working, I think, than I was then.

01:31:07 Q: And you said at one point in medical school that doing the hockey had been a good outlet for you. Are there—do you have similar things now?

Dartt: Well, I do go to the gym. I don't have anything like hockey, though. (laughs) No one to beat up. (laughs)

01:31:22 Q: No one to beat up! (laughs) No pucks to shoot. What is it like living in Boston for you? You said you always liked big cities?

Dartt: Yeah, I've really enjoyed Boston. It's really changed a lot since we've been here. It's gotten more metropolitan, I think. The restaurants have improved. The restaurants were not very good when we first moved here, just the ethnic ones, and now there's, like, a lot of good restaurants to go to, lots of good plays. We did go to a lot of music stuff when we were first here. And we did bike—we go bike riding and hiking and skiing. We did a lot of skiing as a family.

01:32:08 Q: Oh, great! Where do you usually go?

Dartt: So we went to Killington [Ski Resort] a lot.

01:32:14 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: And then Howard's sister had a home in Loon Mountain in New Hampshire that we went to occasionally. And then once the kids got a little older we would take a trip to a ski area out West for one or two weeks around their February vacation.

01:32:32 Q: So what about travel yourselves? You said that you haven't lived abroad again but you've done some traveling. Where? What places have you been to?

Dartt: So I do a lot of traveling with my work.

01:32:44 Q: Okay.

Dartt: So I've been to conferences all over the world, basically.

01:32:50 Q: As an expert in your field.

Dartt: Yeah. Yeah, and usually you know people there; you can take some time before or after and go visit places around. But my favorite thing is to go to a place where I know people who live there and then to do things with them where they live, because they know all the good stuff to do.

01:33:13 Q: So these are your colleagues that you know.

Dartt: Yeah, so I've had a lot of postdoctoral fellows in my lab and, you know, they now have careers and so sometimes I get invited to visit them or to do events where they live or things like that.

01:33:33 Q: And what would you—What's been your favorite place, or some of your favorite places?

Dartt: Well, obviously I like Denmark. We go there a lot because I lived there and I have a good friend there. Favorite places? I like Spain. I was just there.

01:33:54 Q: Where did you go in Spain?

Dartt: I was in Valladolid, which is a little north, it's about maybe about a hundred miles northwest of Madrid.

01:34:03 Q: Oh, okay.

Dartt: So I've been to several different places in Spain, so I like Spain. I did not particularly like China a whole lot. My oldest daughter actually taught English as a second language in China for a year, so I went to visit her there.

01:34:27 Q: Was she in one of the large cities or out in the boonies or—?

Dartt: No, she was in Shenzhen, which is one of the areas of economic excellence that was started about thirty or forty years ago. And it's near Hong Kong.

01:34:40 Q: Oh, okay. Okay. In Guangdong province or something. Yeah.

Dartt: I don't know the name of the province.

01:34:47 Q: Well, my—I think that's where my daughter-in-law's from. That's why I happen to know. (laughs)

Dartt: Yeah, so, I guess I like—I liked Australia.

01:35:00 Q: Sydney or Melbourne or—?

Dartt: Yeah, I've been in Sydney and then on the Sunshine Coast.

01:35:07 Q: Oh, yeah.

Dartt: I haven't been to Melbourne yet. I'd like to go back to Australia. I'd like to go to New Zealand as well. Unfortunately, my husband doesn't particularly like to travel so I do a lot of my traveling for work then.

01:35:21 Q: Mm. Um-hm. Any particular causes apart from your very impressive career that you've kind of pursued over the years?

Dartt: No causes, really.

01:35:36 Q: Well, I mean the work in itself is a major cause.

Dartt: Yeah, the work and three kids.

01:35:41 Q: And three kids.

Dartt: Three kids and a husband. That was plenty.

01:35:46 Q: I think that's more than enough.

Dartt: Yeah.

01:35:48 Q: Particularly to accomplish as well as you have.

Dartt: Well, some—a lot of people do things like that, but I did not really.

01:35:59 Q: All right, so in terms of spirituality or faith or anything like that—anything that you—that's kind of moved you forward? You said that one of your daughters had gone back and become Christian and you raised your kids as secular Jews.

Dartt: Right.

01:36:16 Q: Anything in your own personal life?

Dartt: Yeah, not—not particularly. We didn't particularly—Yeah, I sort of—I got angry at Methodism because of the sort of the not being able to—you know, the anti-feminist—you couldn't be a minister and stuff like that, so I left that. And it was also pretty boring too, like the sermons. And then my husband was not religious, so we did not really have a spiritual life.

01:36:58 Q: Okay. All right. Can you tell me a little bit more about your spouse in terms of how you two have supported each other all these years? It's often a delicate balance, especially with two very high-achieving careers.

Dartt: Yeah, I don't know, we just—Well, my husband let me travel when I needed to. I didn't travel so much when the children were little. I just did like two—I'd go to two meetings a year because it's hard to leave when life is so chaotic with two people. So my mother would come and stay there with my husband, and help out. But, you know, he supported me when I became a director of research and other things in my career that would take time even though, you know, it would be less time I would have with the family. And, you know, we split things up pretty well. And he—he had to leave the emergency room after twenty-five years so he worked part time and then took a computer class at Harvard Extension School and ended up getting a masters in information technology and then went back to work as a—in a health care company so using sort of the medicine and the computers. So he got a computer job at sixty-two years old, (Connell laughs) which is pretty good. And then he just retired from that job in February, and after, like, four months, failed retirement again and he got offered a job—he's going to start in about two weeks. So he's going to do another similar kind of job.

01:39:02 Q: In IT [information technology]?

Dartt: IT and medicine. Health care.

01:39:07 Q: Now, is he affiliated with Harvard as well?

Dartt: No. He went there as an undergraduate, but he never worked for Harvard.

01:39:17 Q: I'm intrigued by his story because my oldest son is an ER doctor and he started out at Harvard as a—in computers. He was teaching as a freshman, actually. And then he went into medical school many years later.

Dartt: Uh-huh. So he might end up—

01:39:33 Q: It's sort of a reversal of what your husband's done. (laughs)

Dartt: Yeah.

01:39:37 Q: He may end up what?

Dartt: Well, you know, there's a lot of, you know, big data kinds of medicine now. It's just, you know, so he maybe will find a—if he wants to find—a niche there as well. If he wants to stop the—you know, retire from emergency room.

01:40:00 Q: Yeah, we'll see. So what about your—I've lost my train of thought. Okay, so in terms of plans for the future, what do you see yourself doing the next five years? The next ten years? What would you see yourself doing and what would you like to be doing? And maybe

they're the same.

Dartt: Yeah, so I probably will work for the next five years, I'm guessing; it depends on how long I can keep getting funded. But then I think I would like to retire. But I haven't really figured out what I'm going to do, because you have to have something that you really like and keeps you engaged. And I really didn't develop that over the years because it sort of took all my energy to do the kids and my job. And even now the job is a lot. So I have, I guess, five years to figure out what I want to do when I retire. You know, I go to the gym; that takes up time, but I sort of need something—a cause, and I don't know what that will be.

01:41:14 Q: And what would you say the biggest changes have been in your field and in medicine in general over the last—what? Forty years? Thirty-five years?

Dartt: So the molecular biology has been really the biggest change—that you can actually know what the proteins are that are doing things and you can manipulate the proteins and then can look at the genes that are controlling them and so you can do really interesting experiments that manipulate a single protein, which has really been a lot of fun.

01:41:54 Q: And this is with obviously quite a lot of equipment. That's evolved as well, I take it.

Dartt: You can do that in animals, too. So you can get these transgenic animals that have just one gene knocked out and then you can study it. So that's been pretty interesting as well.

01:42:12 Q: Um-hm. That's fascinating. That's absolutely fascinating.

Dartt: But now they're doing a lot of, you know, big data set analysis and SNP [single nucleotide polymorphism] analysis and things like that that you really need a lot of specialized talents for, so I have to see how I can work that in.

01:42:31 Q: So keeping up with this fast-moving juggernaut, have you had to take other classes too? Or have you really learned on the job yourself or learned in your institute from other people?

Dartt: You learn on the job, you collaborate. Collaboration is really the biggest thing—

01:42:48 Q: Which is something you pushed you said as well.

Dartt: Yeah. So that's been—that's actually been a big change since I started. People collaborate a lot more than they used to, and science is done by—well, sometimes huge groups. I haven't done any of that but, you know, you get a lot of different people that have specialized talents. And then you can do a project. So you get a lot more done. So it's been—it's become almost more—science is a more friendly, social endeavor because you need to work with other people to succeed and to get new ideas and—So that's been really nice also. And I have collaborators all over the world. And you can do that because we have Skype and people travel more and students come and go into different labs, so it's been really—it's been really fun.

01:43:46 Q: Yeah, that's fantastic. Okay, well, I'm going to—we're going to start to sort of wind down and so I'm going to ask you a few kind of questions in closing, I guess—and some of them are a bit generic so answer any way you want, obviously. So, what are some of your dreams and maybe some of your fears for the future, if any? (laughs)

Dartt: There's not much future left, really. (laughs) I don't know. Dreams for the future: I would like to have many years of retirement in which I'm not working but find something else I would really like to do that will keep me engaged and young. And my fear is, I guess, getting disabled and not being to do a lot of the stuff I do now.

01:44:45 Q: Um-hm, um-hm. Yeah.

Dartt: And mentally disabled as well.

01:44:52 Q: Have you experienced that with colleagues or with family? Either of those?

Dartt: Well, my father who's ninety-five is, like, just slowly dying, basically. I mean, he's relatively happy; he's not in a lot of pain but, you know, he just keeps getting older and older.

01:45:12 Q: Yeah. Yeah, it's hard to watch.

Dartt: Yeah.

01:45:18 Q: Okay. I'm curious, as someone who comes from a family that's had issues in old age with—not that we're old age yet but—with vision, how—any fears in terms of knowing so much about ophthalmology that might affect you or people you care about?

Dartt: A lot of the really bad things are inherited, inherited retinal diseases—

01:45:44 Q: Yeah.

Dartt: So we're probably all past the age that we have to worry about that. And a lot of the things that—like my mother—I take care of her ophthalmology, and she has some—She has glaucoma and some macular degeneration, but, you know, she goes to a really good ophthalmologist so we're keeping everything at bay pretty well. So—

01:46:15 Q: Yeah, that's a challenge.

Dartt: Yeah, I mean, I don't have the best eyesight—well, and it's gotten worse, so I hope that five years from now I still can read reasonably well, although, you know, with the computers you can make things bigger. And every year I notice that when I'm reading documents I make them a little bigger than the year before.

01:46:36 Q: Yes, yeah. That comes to all of us. Yeah.

Dartt: But I guess—you know, lots of times I can't think of words, so that's really troubling. So when I give talks I—well, I always practice them beforehand so I won't be up there trying to think of a word. So that's really been a problem.

01:46:55 Q: Do you enjoy public speeches? Do you enjoy speaking in groups?

Dartt: Giving scientific talks, I do.

01:47:04 Q: Yeah?

Dartt: Yeah.

01:47:06 Q: Because you know your material?

Dartt: Yeah, I think I'm reasonably good at it so it can be enjoyable to do.

01:47:13 Q: Um-hm. Good. Okay. Two more questions then. Well, actually three and they're—
(both laugh) In reflecting back on your experience at Barnard, was there any one decision or event that you might have done differently? (long pause) You had a mentor. You were exposed to lots of multicultural changes. (laughs)

Dartt: I don't know—I haven't really thought of—that's not the kind of thing you can just come up with. Anything I would have done differently at Barnard? I guess—I mean, no—I sort of am

thinking all of career—career type of things—but I guess I was there training for my career.

01:48:25 Q: Well, I think in terms of career as well. You can certainly answer it in that way.

Sure.

Dartt: Yeah, so I did a project in Pat Farnsworth's lab when she was on sabbatical and that did not work out very well. And I wish that I hadn't had to do that without supervision so early in my career.

01:48:45 Q: What was the project on?

Dartt: It was on red blood cells. So it didn't end up being all that successful. And I think she thought we could work independently but looking back now, I would have never done that. I mean, because I really supervise people in my lab well so they know what they're doing.

01:49:15 Q: It sounds like a terrifying experience, though, to be left on your own with something like that.

Dartt: Yeah, so it didn't work out that well and, you know, I felt bad about it, but it wasn't—I don't think I should have been expected to really be able to—you know, I had almost no experience; there was no one around. I mean, you really shouldn't be leaving people like that, I don't think.

01:49:41 Q: Well, you would know. Yeah.

Dartt: And now you would never do that; it's too dangerous—a lab and everything. So we used to collect blood and—sickle cell anemia blood—from some place in New York City and without the proper precautions, and that I never got some terrible disease to me is, in retrospect, completely amazing.

01:50:12 Q: This was the pre-HIV AIDS issue as well—

Dartt: So that was not, that was not a good situation.

01:50:23 Q: Yeah. Well, you learned—

Dartt: I don't know if I would really sort of like that to be published, though, you know—

01:50:31 Q: That's okay. We won't. We won't. You can take out anything you want, don't worry. Or restrict it. Yeah. Okay, so let's see. So if there was a moment in your past when you could go back and whisper a piece of advice to yourself, (Dartt laughs) what would that be?

Dartt: So, I guess—so someone said this thing to me that even now—I think it's: “Spoiler alert: everything is going to turn out okay.”

01:51:15 Q: “Spoiler alert, everything's going to turn out okay?”

Q: You know, like, if you have a movie and you don't want to know the ending and they're going to tell you the ending—

01:51:25 Q: Ah.

Q: And on TV they say, “Spoiler alert, if you don't want to see this, turn off your TV.” So you won't find out how everything ends up before you go see the movie. So: spoiler alert for life.

01:51:39 Q: (laughs) That's very rich; I like that.

Dartt: Yeah, I forgo —someone just told it to me recently or I heard it someplace; I have no idea where it was but, yeah, that would be good. And—and I don't know—I mean, there's small things I wish I had done differently, relatively small things, but—I guess the one thing I wish—it's not exactly your question—but I wish we had moved in mid-career and I went to a different place for the last maybe ten, fifteen years. I think that would have been good for us, for the family, even though they would have fought it tooth and nail—and for me as well.

01:52:44 Q: Do you have a place in mind where you might have preferred to have been?

Dartt: San Francisco.

01:52:49 Q: Oh, here we go again! San Francisco. Okay.

Dartt: The University of California at Berkeley. That would have been—well, I would have liked to have worked—like, I'm at Harvard Medical School but I'm not really there because we're in a different part of town. It would have been fun to work at a university where there are undergraduates around and—you know, it's just a much different feeling. I work in the middle of the city and, you know, it's not a campus.

01:53:14 Q: Wait. Where is Schepens in the city?

Dartt: So it's near Mass [Massachusetts] Eye and Ear, Mass [Massachusetts] General Hospital, in that area.

01:53:20 Q: Oh. Okay. Okay, well, I guess the last thing would be if there's something we haven't covered in this interview that you feel is very much a part of your life at your core that you feel should be shared, now is your chance.

Dartt: (laughs) I guess—well, I guess I went to this—I was giving a talk with someone else and she was talking—we were talking about writing grants and she had this thing, you know, for a career path, and instead of it being a straight line from one place to another she had something that went all around like this and I think that's really—instead of—Like, some people now really plan their careers out really carefully, and want to make certain milestones and things like that, but I really didn't plan out my career and I really didn't know you were supposed to plan out a career and I sort of, you know, fumbled around a lot, but I think in spite of that it worked out

okay.

01:54:37 Q: I think so, too! Well, listen, congratulations and thank you so much for your time and I'll make sure you get a copy of this and you can look over what you want and include and exclude what you want.

Dartt: Okay. Thank you for persisting in getting in touch with me. I really appreciate it. I wasn't very cooperative, so I appreciate that you were persistent.

01:54:57 Q: I think it's called busy. I think you're busy. (laughs) Okay. Take good care then. Thank you, bye-bye.

Dartt: Okay. Thank you. Nice to meet you.

01:55:04 Q: Nice to meet you, too. Bye-bye.

Dartt: Bye.

end of interview

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