

BARNARD COLLEGE CLASS OF 1971 ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Reminiscences of

Patria Pacis

2014

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Patria Pacis conducted by Michelle Patrick in December 2011. 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 Class of 1971 Oral History
Collection

Interviewee: Patria Pacis

Interviewer: Michelle Patrick

Session One

Location: Interview by phone (New York,
New York to Montauk, New York)

Date: December 2011

Q: Can you tell us something about your family background, your parents, how you were raised, whether you had siblings, whether you went to boarding school, that sort of thing?

Pacis: Yes. I was born in Manila, Philippines on May 28, 1949, and I'm from the Philippines. My father, Mauro Baradi, married my mom, Eden Guevara, who just celebrated her 100th birthday last June 12, She's still with me today. I left the Philippines at the age of six to go to the United States. My father was the Philippine Representative to the United Nations, and he was assigned to Mogadishu, Somalia, East Africa. He later became the Philippine Ambassador to Africa, South of the Sahara including Madagascar. I lived most of my childhood days in Africa. My parents had four children: my sister, Perla, my brothers, Mauro Jr., Jose [Joe], and I'm the baby, Patria. We all left the Philippines on May 27, 1956.

Q: So you were in the Philippines until 1956.

Pacis: Yes. I was six years old when I left. I celebrated my seventh birthday twice crossing the International time zone on May 28.

Q: Were you schooled by a nanny or home-schooled before 1956?

Pacis: I went to kindergarten in Marikina, a suburb of Manila, when I was six. I attended many different type of schools since my father was a diplomat, and we traveled all over the world. My first school was Italian, La Scuola Di Corso Italia. I skipped first grade, because I knew how to sign my name, so the principal put me in second grade. I went there for four years.

Q: An Italian school in the Philippines?

Pacis: No, in Mogadishu, Somalia, East Africa. The Philippines was strictly kindergarten; I started grade school in Mogadishu. Since they did not have American schools in 1956 because Somalia was under Italian Administration, my brother Joe and I went to Italian school. We also went to Sunday school and was taught English by the Mennonite Missionaries, Wilbert and Rhoda Lind, who we are still in contact with today. We also learned English by reading comic books and playing with childrens: Larry and Nancy Nudson from the United States and Leslie and Clive Dodman from England. Riccardo and Carla Barbiconi were our Italian playmates. I was tri-lingual right off the bat because at home, my parents spoke to me in Tagalog, the main Philippines, dialect.

Q: No one spoke to you in English before you got to Mogadishu?

Pacis: No, not really. It was mostly in Tagalog until I was six. Everyone speaks English in the Philippines. The school system is strictly English, and we take our own language as a

foreign language, but, since I was six, no, I never spoke any English at all. Many Filipinos also speak Spanish since the Philippines was under Spain for about two hundred years.

Q: Do your sister and brothers speak English?

Pacis: Yes. We all speak English. My sister and my older brother had to stay in New York, whereas Joe and I, who was nine, left for Somalia with our parents.

Q: Why did your siblings have to stay in New York?

Pacis: To go to school. We knew that my father's assignment was a hardship post, and we didn't know what to expect in Africa. We were one of the first Filipinos to arrive in Africa, and my dad was there to help the Somalians gain their independence from the Italians in July 1960, so that's why we were there from 1956 to 1960.

Q: And your older siblings were in high school?

Pacis: No. Both graduated from high school in the Philippines. My brother, Mauro was sixteen and my sister was nineteen when we left them in New York.

Q: So you're in a Mogadishu school from a Filipino background, and you're being taught in Italian.

Pacis: That's correct.

Q: Is this a happy experience or a frustrating one?

Pacis: Well, I remember I loved growing up in Somalia. We lived across the Indian Ocean, next to the United Nations Compound, since my dad worked for the U.N., so we had a lot of things to do. I had a very happy childhood. I enjoyed growing up in Africa.

Q: The unraveling of the Empire, did this have an impact on you?

Pacis: Yes, it really bothered me, and before the war, we were able to go back two years after we left in 1960 to visit with friends, visit our school and our house. We went to the house and knocked on the door saying: "We used to live here, can we take a look inside?" Luckily it was peaceful then so I still have fond memories of growing up in Mogadishu. Unfortunately, that's not the case now, I wouldn't want to go back, because it would be very disconcerting to see. I want to remember Mogadishu the way it was.

Q: The War for Independence was in what year?

Pacis: 1960. There was no war. It was peaceful on July 1, 1960. The Italians did give up their reign. It was a peaceful transition. I still have lots of pictures of the parade and all. I'm a pack rat, and I pretty much have a lot of pictures of my growing up years and now.

Q: And yet you experienced the end of the Empire as a deterioration?

Pacis: No. The deterioration ended up much later; 1960 was still good.

Q: And when you say much later, you mean?

Pacis: The '80's, '90's.

Q: I see. Obviously my second question is your exposure to racial/ethnic diversity, but that is a moot point, because living in Mogadishu you would have been. Tell me, were there all sorts of ethnicities going to the school that you went to in Mogadishu?

Pacis: Yes. I also learned Swahili while growing up there, because a lot of the students were Somalians who spoke Swahili, and there were a lot of Italians, and some Americans. Basically, I grew up in multiracial/ethnic/social backgrounds, so, as a child, I wasn't aware of any prejudices. To me, everybody was the same.

Q: Did your parents have any particular political leanings?

Pacis: No, but I know, in the Philippines, my father was a Nationalist. We have two parties, a Nationalist and Liberal, so it's just like, I guess, the Republicans and Democrats. He was more of a conservative Nationalist, but I didn't have any really until

here.

Q: When you say here, do you mean the United States?

Pacis: New York.

Q: Well, first of all, let me ask you why did you choose Barnard [College]?

Pacis: Having attended different types of schools, public, private, boarding, and Calvert School of Correspondence, experienced Philippine, Italian, American and British Schools, I knew that Barnard was one of the best. I applied to NYU [New York University], Columbia [University], and Adelphi [University], and was fortunate to be accepted to all three. Even though I was leaning towards NYU because it was co-ed—and my younger brother, Joe was going there—I decided on Barnard, an all female college. My parents decided on Barnard. My older brother went to Columbia and my sister went to both NYU and Columbia.

Q: The first day at Barnard, and you're walking through the gates carrying your suitcases, do you remember what baggage you brought, and I mean that literally and metaphorically? Do you remember what you wore? Do you remember what you packed? Do you remember what mementos you brought? Do you remember what attitudes you brought? Do you remember what academic expectations you brought, what social expectations, what romantic expectations, fears, hopes, wounds? You can take a few

minutes, if you want. I want to know the baggage you brought; good, bad and neutral.

Pacis: Baggage, baggage from life or literally?

Q: Both

Pacis: I was a commuter, so I didn't bring any suitcases. As far as baggage from life, I knew that going to Barnard wasn't going to be easy knowing it was the best of the best of colleges. I came to Barnard at a disadvantage of because since my family travelled a lot, and I was always trying to catch up with school. In a way, that sort of hindered me, but in away, I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world because it really taught me a lot of experience in how to deal with bullies and adversities. Because I was always new to a school, I always had to make new friends. I always had to say goodbye to them too. By the time I got to Barnard, I really appreciated getting into Barnard knowing it was one of the few top schools in the country, so I was there to study seriously and make sure that I graduated. As far as expectations, I expected, or my parents expected—that I would do well, because, as a child, I was always praised, and I always loved going to school. I love learning, so I figured Barnard would be a great place to learn. Hopes, in 1967—I wanted the best and my classmates and I wanted to change the world. We knew that we could make the world better especially with all the things going on and in an almost all-male world, we knew we had a lot of challenges ahead of us. We persevered through hard work. I think most of our Barnard sisters did prove to be great leaders. One of them is my fellow classmate Ellen Futter '71 who became the youngest Barnard president and went

on to become the President of American Museum of Natural History.

Q: How did you want to change the world, in which direction?

Pacis: Being a woman, I wanted women to have more equal in pay and status. At that time, a lot of fields were mostly open only to men. I was privileged to see many different types of customs around the world, and I knew that I was blessed to be in the U.S. to be able to express my freedom. Coming from a different culture, I've seen women who are subservient to men, men who walk ahead of women, or women who have to cover their bodies from head to toe. I was ecstatic to be a Filipina at an American School Barnard knowing the best of both worlds. That was your question wasn't it?

Q: Yes, it is. What were your social aspirations? What sorts of friends did you think you would make?

Pacis: My first recollection was meeting Elyse von Egloffstein. There are seven of us that still keep in touch after forty-four years. We've gone through marriages, divorces, christening, and even a death of a spouse. Our bond is so strong, and I'm proud to say it's because of Barnard that we're leaders in our field. Basically I'm a very friendly person, and I have no prejudices, so it doesn't matter whether my friends are black or white. I never look at people that way until someone mentions it. I do not see color, so I had a whole circle of friends that I went around with and still do.

Q: And you said you've brought rice. Is that a significant thing?

Pacis: Brought what?

Q: Rice. I'm sorry. I may have misunderstood you, or did you mean life, when I said you packed your bag; what did you put in it?

Pacis: I was literally thinking suitcase.

Q: I did mean that as well.

Pacis: Okay, because my first impression was it was a suitcase. Orientation week was just overnight. I remember wearing a miniskirt and a turtle neck. Those were the miniskirt days, and I wore white go-go boots. I had very long hair down to my waist. Long hair was "in" and so were bell bottoms pants. As far as other things, I tried not to bring too much, because, as a commuter, I really didn't have to bring much. I'd just go home, except for that orientation week. I believe we met our Big Sisters who were upper clansmen who showed us the ropes. Besides Elyse, I met Linda Nealon who became Class President of our freshman year, Winifred Montuori, who's half Filipina half Italian, Ettie Ward, Melinda Sherer, Lee Canossa and Julia Hong. We still all keep in touch, so it's a happy, group. I enjoy them—we know each other so well.

Q: Where were you commuting from, your grandmother's?

Pacis: Commuting from Manhattan, 40th Street and Second Avenue and I took the subway. I did a lot of my study reading in the subway until I got off on 116th Street, Morningside Heights. I also worked part-time at Bohack's Supermarket and at Woolworth's, to earn money since the college tuition fee was \$900 a semester, I still have the old receipts. Books were \$50. That was a lot of money in those days. I wasn't afraid of work and I took any work I could get—cashiering at Woolworth's. Bohack's which is now Gristedes was located below our apartment. I was cashier there also. I baby sat too so I was a busy. I did most of my studying between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., then left for class then to work. I was a full-time student and a commuter too, so I didn't really have much time on my hands to get into trouble or to play. I lived with my parents, and brothers and sister.

I found Barnard to be very competitive, and to keep up the grades, I really had to study because of the language barrier. I had to take an English entrance exam. I passed that, but, as a foreign student, I thought I was at a disadvantage with the schooling because I didn't have all the prerequisite classes that I needed at Barnard. It was a tough four years of strictly studying. I knew girls who fought to get grades from A to A+, stuff like that. I had a B average, and I was chosen to go to Princeton College, then an all male school, for the co-ed experiment, which I enjoyed for one week, taking engineering classes, which I knew nothing about in 1968. I enjoyed that.

Q: You were hand-picked to do that?

Pacis: Yes, one had to have at least a B average and in good standing, if you wanted to go —I'm not sure how many, but ten or twenty were picked, I was one of them.

Q: Now, did you live with your parents?

Pacis: Yes.

Q: And did your grandmother live with you too?

Pacis: No. My grandparents stayed in the Philippines. Both grandparents on both sides passed away. My mother is still with me today at almost 101 this June 12.

Q: You were the youngest child?

Pacis: Yes, I was the baby.

Q: That's amazing, That's a blessing.

Pacis: Yes, and most of my Barnard classmates and their spouses came to my Mom's 100th birthday party including her friends from all over the world.

Q: That's wonderful. Were any of your expectations of Barnard not met or discarded?

Pacis: I was basically interested in trying to be the best student and best United States citizen. We were told, at the time, by a professor that we were on the top 10% of the schools academically, and they expected a lot from us, and I was ready to meet those challenges, and that's why I studied hard. I never felt let down by Barnard, no. I've never even entertained the thought.

Q: Were you aware at that tender age of having been affected by the sexual revolution?

Pacis: Yes. I'm proud to tell my younger nieces, because of us girls at Barnard, we were responsible for the women's liberation movement. We paved the way for them so that they could have the opportunity to choose or be whatever field they want to enter in without having to fight for it. I know a lot of young children today take it for granted that we've always had that freedom. We gave them the choice to be a stay-at-home mom if they chose, or have a career. At the time when I entered Barnard, in some cultures, women had stay at home to raise their children and could not go to work. Now, if you paid a woman for what she does around the house, you couldn't afford to hire. That's my opinion.

Q: Your own preference, when you entered Barnard, did you think that you would be a stay-at-home mom, or did you think that you would have a career, or some combination of both?

Pacis: Both, but I knew that I wanted to establish a career first, and the fact that the sexual revolution was coming, and Planned Parenthood was established. I was proud to be able to have the choice of not being afraid to go to Planned Parenthood and ask for birth control. I felt I wanted to establish my place in the work field first then when my husband and I were ready, we would have a child.

Q: Sexually speaking, did you become sexually active before Barnard, during Barnard, or after Barnard?

Pacis: During Barnard. I got married sophomore year.

Q: Tell me about that.

Pacis: Well, I found my Prince Charming, Camilo Pacis. I had high standards for a husband, and, although I didn't want to hurt my parents because they thought I was too young and were against the marriage, I knew what I wanted in a man and made a pro and con list. I remember having to go to the Barnard counselor, and her advising me, "Pat, only you can decide, but once you've made your decision, you must accept the consequences. So I've always followed that rule, and, with that ruling, I've never had any regrets, because even though I might have hurt my parents for getting married at a young age, fearing that they thought I wouldn't finish school, I was able to graduate. And now he's called Saint Cam, because he's the best son-in-law, because I knew that they didn't have anything against him, they just didn't want me to marry young. I was twenty. At that

time, there was a list of how to have a successful marriage the couple should: 1) be of same religion. I was Protestant and so was he; 2) come from the same background; Cam was born in New York but he's of Filipino descent and was brought up the Filipino way same as me; and 3) respect for each other. The one fault he had was that he smoked, but he gave that up for me. I didn't want someone exactly my age either, because the men my age were being drafted to the Vietnam War and I didn't want to have become a widow. Cam is eleven years older than me. So I made my decision, to marry him six months after he asked me the first time and we eloped.

Q: Are you still married to your husband?

Pacis: Going on forty-two years this June 14. I married him five times already. We renewed our vows on our silver wedding on the 25th, and my Barnard friends and their spouses were there too. We had a cruise around Manhattan, a dinner cruise. We got married in Hawaii three times. We're reaching our forty-five years soon, so I'm going to make him a deal he can't refuse so that he'll marry me again.

Q: That's really very lovely. It's very lovely, and I'm sure unusual among the class. Do you remember your very, very first friend that you made at Barnard?

Pacis: Yes. We just e-mailed each other this morning, and she concurs that she was my first classmate that I met, Elyse von Egloffstein and we still are.

Q: Von Egloffstein, was she Dutch?

Pacis: German. She is now married. I was trying to convince the rest of my Barnard sisters to join me in a group interview, but logistically it was difficult to meet. Most of us live in New York and New Jersey, except for Lee Canossa, who's in Washington D.C. so we still get together pretty much as much as we can.

Q: Well, you will be in the mini-doc, but the oral history program will be going on for a couple of years, and ultimately we'll have a full documentary, so they may change their minds. There was a deadline for the mini-doc to be shown at the dinner, but otherwise there aren't any deadlines. We'd just like to get this thing wrapped up in about two years, so you never know. They may decide to take part.

Pacis: One thing I want to make a note of, us Barnard sisters had such a strong bond with one another that the spouses and boyfriends had to be approved by our group. Hopefully, I can convince them to be interviewed. They're not as much of a ham as I am.

Q: Only the Barnard women can be interviewed, because we're the ones that went to Barnard, but the fact that they had to be approved by all of you certainly says a lot.

During the first few months at Barnard, did you experience any sort of culture shock?

Pacis: Well, I graduated from Julia Richman, in Manhattan which is an all girls school, so an all girls shock wasn't that much. As far as attitudes, as a Filipina, in our language we

have a syllable, “-po” that we add to the verbs in a sentence to denote respect to anyone older than us. They could be a month older or a day older. I cringed when I heard some students call their professors by their first names or call their parents by their first names. Also, I was amazed when we took tests that it was on an honor system, and that was a revelation to me because the professor would say: "You're on your own," and they would leave then come back to collect the test papers later. That was a shocking. As far as the revolution? I had to go jump over protesting Barnard students and Columbia students to go to my classes, because I didn't want to jeopardize my education. A lot of students took education for granted, but I had a mission to accomplish. I couldn't afford to be expelled. Even though I wanted to join some of the fights, as a foreign student, it's so easy to be deported or anything like that, so I basically stayed as a student and did not participate in any of the sit-ins. I was torn, because it was important, I thought, and I wanted to do what we had to do to get things changed, but I could not jeopardize not finishing college, not finishing Barnard.

Q: Of course. What was your understanding of the strike?

Pacis: The war. A lot of students were against the Vietnam War—going into a war that was not popular, and I guess the students started thinking we shouldn't have to go to a war that we shouldn't have gotten involved in. A lot of students felt that way, and they had to make a stand, and some went to Canada to avoid the draft. I could empathize with them, but, at the same time, coming from a different background, we respect the office of the Presidency. I wouldn't even think of going against our Philippine president, because

he was our leader, so that was very disturbing to me—I had a lot of thoughts about that, because we knew we wanted to show the world that we didn't approve of the war, but, then again, we should back our president in whatever decision he makes, we might not like decision, but he's the only president that we have and one should respect the office of the presidency. Instead of criticizing what he does, we should all work together as a nation to make a better world. At that time, of course, I was a green-card holder. I was a foreign student with a G4 visa. I couldn't really vote or couldn't really participate in all the stuff that was going on, but that was one of the culture shocks, I thought.

Q: Were you outside or watching from one of the rooftops the night of the bust? Do you remember the night of the bust?

Pacis: No. I was a commuter, so I was at home, but I still have the *Columbia Daily Spectator* newspaper dated March 5, 1969 in my files. I still have some of the term papers and a lot of my Barnard books and little notes I made and pictures. The bust, no, I was not present, but I was present at a panty raid. I heard about it.

Q: Talk about that first, panty raid. Do you remember that?

Pacis: Well, I didn't participate in it, because I wasn't in the dorms, but I would hear about it. Basically more or less I was on the outside looking in, and just the thought of having panty raids and going bra-less and experiencing what Linda LeClair went through, who was expelled because she was co-habiting. All those things were going on all at

once. It really made you think. I figured she wasn't hurting anyone, so why would she be expelled?

Q: Do you remember the curfew? I know you didn't have to adhere to them, because you were a commuter, but do you remember the curfews and the dress codes and the teas and the parietal, any of those?

Pacis: I don't know what parietal meant.

Q: That meant if the hours during which a boy could visit your room and how far open the door had to be.

Pacis: That I found shocking. One of the first experiences—I thought it was fascinating that a boy could go to a woman's dorm. I stayed a couple of days with one of the sisters one time and I experienced that. As long as the door was open, a boy could come to the floor. That fascinated me, because my father was very strict, and my mother always fought for my sister and I. She would say to my Dad, "Let her go out," but we would have to be home by 9:00 pm. We really didn't stay out all night nor sneak out. I guess, I was a Pollyanna, goody-goody-two-shoe girl compare to my fellow classmates who were visited by their boyfriends. I thought it was nice, but I found that fascinating. I don't remember exactly; I think the boys had to be out by 10:00 p.m. or something like that. But just the thought of a co-ed going into an all-girl Barnard dorm was revolutionary to me because at the International of Ibadan boarding school in Ibadan, Nigeria that I went

to—a British boarding school—no boys were allowed in the women's dorms. In fact, one of the holidays, I think a couple of boys went to the dorm, and most of them got expelled, so I thought that was something. The world was changing, I guess.

Q: Did you or anyone you know have any experience with drugs?

Pacis: My only experience with drugs is someone handed me marijuana at a party, and I got a headache, and that's the only thing I've experienced. It was a drug revolution then. I didn't know a Barnard or a Columbia students who took drugs but I had friends outside that I knew were on drugs.

Q: Did anyone you know have a lot of drug experience?

Pacis: Acquaintances but no, not at Barnard, no.

Q: Did you or anyone you know have to undergo an illegal abortion?

Pacis: I think I know one, but it was never really talked about, but the fact that Planned Parenthood was established, as I mentioned before—I was happy that women who needed an abortion could go for help instead of having to die in a back alley somewhere. I felt that a woman had a right to her body, whether she should have a child or not, and I still feel that way.

Q: Do you remember the best, most wonderful time you had at Barnard?

Pacis: We have a close-knit Barnard group. We enjoyed going to parks together, going to movies together. We had private parties. In those days, we would give our own parties at home, just getting together. We would go skiing together as a group and going through different boyfriends and, as I said, having the group's approval or him or not. The spouses that are spouses now really had to go through a lot with the group. We still get together, with the children, and now the children are getting married. I still enjoy it.

Q: The friendship was really the best thing about Barnard for you.

Pacis: Yes, friendship loyalty. Even though a lot of us don't say that we're proud that we went to Barnard, you can tell by where it took us all. Professionally and personally, you can tell that we're basically grateful for having studied at Barnard. I recently just participated in an alumni paper that's going on now to write about the most influential person that affected me at Barnard, and I recently just finished writing it. I mentioned a lot of the questions you've asked and Professor Barbara Novak was my mentor, and I owe it to her in going to Barnard what I am today. So hopefully I can tell that to her in person, since she's being honored April 6th, including Ellen Futter, a fellow classmate, who's now the president of the Museum of Natural History as mention before.

[Interruption]

Q: So you were saying that you had written an article?

Pacis: Yes. For Barnard's 40th reunion we got a deadline also for March 10th to send in an article about the most influential person that affected me going to Barnard, and I dedicated it to Professor Novak, Barbara Novak, who was my art history teacher—then she was an associate professor, but now emeritus, and I've yet to tell her in person, so hopefully I can attend the April 6th award to do so. I don't think she knows how much she influenced me as a Barnard student and a Barnard graduate. (Unfortunately, I didn't get to tell Professor Novak personally of how much she influenced me.)

Q: She influenced many, many people. She influenced many of us. Were you aware of the gay community at Barnard and Columbia when you were there?

Pacis: As a Filipina—the gay community is very open in the Philippines, so it wasn't a shock to me. We even have a gay parade May 1, and they dress up as beautiful queens with escorts, so it's part of life in the Philippines. Some of my best friends are gay. Being gay was accepted in our culture.

Q: Could you say the first sentence again? I think I talked over you when you said that gay life was so accepted in the Filipino community. I think I said something like, "Oh—" If you could just repeat that.

Pacis: The gay community is accepted, openly accepted in the Philippines, so it was not a

big deal for me. Some of my friends were gay— are gay— and it didn't affect me one way or another. We're still best friends. Yes, I was aware.

Q: When you left Barnard on the day that you graduated, what were your expectations for your adult life?

Pacis: I expected to go whatever field I wanted to. I've always traveled as a young child, so I had wanderlust, and my aim was to work for the airline and have free travels and go to all the different places I didn't get to. And so having to speak three languages did a lot, so I started with Alitalia Airlines and started summer jobs, and worked with Air France and Air Canada because I took French at Barnard. Then I worked for Delta Airlines for thirty years before I took early retirement and luckily I still have benefits as a retiree with my husband and my mother.

Q: That's terrific. What did you do for Delta?

Pacis: I worked twelve years in Reservations, and I transferred to La Guardia Airport as a ticket agent; and then I was promoted to a red jacket or a passenger service agent. It was hard transfer to the airport coming from Reservations. It's completely two different departments. You had to go through a lot of interviews and prove yourself, and being under 4'10" and eighty-five pounds, I had to prove that I could lift a seventy-pound bag and work behind a ticket counter, and you can do what the guys do. So after much persistence, which is what Barnard taught me—to never give up—after my third

interview, I was lucky to have been asked to stay because I knew ticketing and fares. The La Guardia Airport needed ten ticket agents or ten original Indians as we were called. I was the eleventh—to transfer to the airport just to help them out temporarily but I guess they decided to keep me. I never did go back. A promise that I made to a manager there, who was a woman, one of the very few women bosses at that time, said, “Just promise me one thing, Patria, when you go to Atlanta for the interview, wear your highest heels, put your hair way up, and don’t look so feminine. Wear your pantsuits and just look tall,” and that cinched it. That was the third interview. I got away with it, and, “Don’t apply for the ramps.” I said, “No, I’m not going to apply for the ramp,” to be bagging, so I stayed at the ticket counter until 9/11/01 until I decided to retire on January 1, 2002 after thirty years and at age fifty-two, the magic number for Delta, so I could be a full time caregiver for my mom. One thing, though, when the chiropractor came around Delta, he said: “You are the perfect height for the ticket agent, because you lift the bags with both hands, so you won’t have any problem with your back. Everything is eye level. You won’t have any backache.” So there! I proved it. It can be done if you are persistent.

Q: Speaking of first glimpses, I don’t know whether I asked you how you met your husband. Did I?

Pacis: No. It’s funny how fate plays a role. My father was a lawyer in 1929, and his mother, was a nurse, and they were on the same ship that came to the U.S. from the Philippines. Both worked under Camilo Osias, who was the Philippine Senator—my husband, Camilo was named after him, his uncle. So we’ve known each other basically

before we were born and before our parents were married, and basically we just grew up more or less as close friends. He dated Americans. I dated an Americans. I just grew up— caught up with him, then we got married.

Q: Could you spell the names that you just said, coming over on the boat?

Pacis: Mauro Baradi was my father, a lawyer. His mother, the nurse, was Escolastica Mina then who later married Procopio Pacis. That's how far back our families have known each other, and they were working for Senator Camilo Osias, who was assigned to Washington, D.C. from the Philippines.

Q: And was your grandfather also part of this?

Pacis: No. My grandfather was the mayor in Bani, Pangasinan, that's where my father was born, and his wife died, my father's mother, died at a young age and remarried. No, none of the grandparents came to the States. It's strictly my father and mother. My grandparents stayed in the Philippines.

Q: Do you have children?

Pacis: No. I mentioned that in my article. As a career woman, that was my main goal at that time, to be a career woman, so we kept postponing, postponing, until, I guess, it was too late.

Q: Do you regret that?

Pacis: I figured that God has his plans, because, as my sister said, “You’re childless, but you have so many nieces and nephews that you take care of.” We’re always the godparents, and we have dogs. We have Princess Penguin a black labrador from Kauai, Hawaii that we adopted and she's our latest daughter now; our son, Benji, a German Shepherd, recently passed away. My auntie Julia, my father's younger sister, wrote me and said that there was a reason for me being childless, because I'm taking care of everybody. "You keep the family unit together." No, I have no regrets.

Q: Do you deal with the children in your life differently than your parents dealt with you, your parenting style, say? Is it different than your own parents?

Pacis: I guess fathers will always be stricter to their daughters because they’re men. I guess they know what goes on in a man’s mind, and the woman is usually more lenient. But in this world now, I don’t envy anyone rearing children. As children, when we grew up, we could stay out all day just come back when it was dinnertime, didn’t have any cell phones, didn’t have any of all these internets and all that, and we played out, and we never even thought of any dangers. And now, unfortunately, there’s so many dangers that you have to be aware of, and I would find it very difficult to bring up a child because you’re just scared to do anything. There’s just so many things that can go wrong. Growing up in Africa, was wonderful. You just ran across the ocean and then played all

you want. There were no evil thoughts in people's minds, that I knew of. I guess I was sheltered and very protected, but living in New York sort of made me aware of all the dangers. My husband made me streetwise, because I always think everybody has good intentions.

Q: Is religion a factor in your life right now?

Pacis: Yes. I practice Protestant. My father was Protestant. My mother was Aglipay. They had four children. My sister and elder brother practice Catholic. My brother, Joe and I practice Protestant. Even though I don't go to church every Sunday, I live religiously. I pray a lot, being taught by Mennonite Missionaries, I started religion at a very early age, and it's something to be proud of.

Q: And your husband is the same?

Pacis: My husband is Protestant, yes. We don't go to church every Sunday, but we both live religiously.

Q: Where are you now? You'll be sixty-two. What goals do you have for yourself? Do you have any specific goals, or are you just hoping to go with the flow and enjoy yourself?

Pacis: Well, I'm told to go with the flow, but that's not my style. Ever since I retired, I've

been more active than ever. I am a tour guide at the Montauk Point Lighthouse—I live in Montauk now—and I’m a writer, reporter for the weekly, *Montauk Pioneer* newspaper. I’m also a full-time caregiver for my mother, and I’m active in the community. I’m on the Board of Directors of the Montauk Village Association. I’m living a very full life at this point, more so than when I was working for Delta, and I enjoy it. I left Delta after 9/11. It was getting to a point that going to work wasn’t fun anymore, and I didn’t want to lose that passion. We went through a difficult thing after 9/11, and it was time for a change. I did some acting. I’m in *The Interpreter* with Academy Award winners: Nicole Kidman, Sean Penn, and Director Sidney Pollack. That was Mr. Pollack's last film before he died.

Q: I saw that film.

Pacis: Well, I’m an extra, but I was there with my brother, Mauro. He worked for the U.N. for forty-four years, and one of my classmates, Winnie, called me one Saturday and says, “Pat, this sounds just like you. What are you doing tomorrow, Sunday?” I said, “Nothing.” She says, “Go to 60th Street on the West Side. They’re having auditions for *The Interpreter*, and they want someone dressed up as a diplomat,” so she said, “This is you. You love acting. Go.” So I went in front of two thousand extras, and my brother found out I was there. He came taking pictures of me, and he was brought in to audition, and we both got the part to be Philippine delegates, and it was fun. I loved it. I did some modeling here also. I enjoy painting. I enjoy swimming, everything that I really couldn’t do at work, while working, so I’m doing everything that I want to do now. I’m going back to painting again. Montauk is such a nice place to do all these things.

Q: So you would say that you're happy with your life, and that it's opening up in ways that it hadn't before.

Pacis: Opening up as far as being able to do whatever I want to do, when I want to do it. I love to write, but I don't want to be bogged down, so I freelance. I have the freedom to do that, and I just send in what I write. I attend all the events here, and I write it up, and the editors like it, and they print it. So I'm very happy. I'm a very up person, a positive person.

Q: One very last question. If you could go back to September 1967 and whisper a word of advice to the girl that you used to be, what would it be?

Pacis: I would say stick to your guns, do what you feel in your heart, and do whatever you dream, because there's nothing impossible. We've proven that through our class of '71. Now, there are women CEOs and presidents. The glass ceiling has been broken, and all we're waiting for is a woman president in the U.S. We've already had women presidents in the Philippines. Just be who you are. Stay loyal. Stick to your beliefs and don't let anybody tell you that you *cannot* do something. They say that one can always tell a Barnard girl by the way she enters a room with her head up high, confident and proud to be a woman!

Q: Well, I have to tell you this has been a pleasure, and I hope it wasn't too exhausting

for you.

Pacis: I enjoyed it very much.

Q: I'm glad, because I enjoyed it too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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