

## Transcript of Dr. Pamela Shipp '69

*Interviewed on May 2, 2019 by Kirk Woundy*

Kirk Woundy: This is an interview with Dr. Pamela Shipp for Untold Stories, May 2, 2019. We'll start by talking about your childhood a little bit.

Dr. Pamela Shipp '69: Ooh, I love talking about my childhood. I was just really a blessed child. I grew up in East St. Louis. I was born in St. Louis and our family ... Well, then we lived in East St. Louis, in a very large family. My mom's the youngest of 10 kids, really 11 but one died, so she says 10, and we go with 10, and hopefully ... So, one of the good things about growing up in a large family, for me, I always felt loved, and I always felt that I belonged, and it was just absolutely refreshing and sometimes comical because when we moved ...

PS: I moved to Denver with my mom who took a job in Colorado and we moved to Denver where I discovered that everyone didn't love me, and of course, I'm just a little kid but still I'm anticipating that everyone is going to want me and love me and be there for me, which was not the case when we moved and I noticed that in elementary school. So that was a nice kind of ... I think it was a nice understanding that I got to have very early that I still had the foundation of knowing that I was loved and lovable but knowing that there are people that are not going to love me, and I learned that at an early age, so that's why I think that was kind of good for me. I know that was a good experience for me because even when people were not loving me, my family continued to and there was a lot more of them than the others. So, it was very, very nice.

PS: My mom and dad, both of them being very, very intelligent, they were smart enough to realize that it was okay for me to spend the whole summers with my grandmother. So, I would ... When school ended, I would be shipped off to East St. Louis and it was just fun and a wonderful time for me and it's only since I've gotten older that I realized how smart it was for my parents to get rid of the kid for three months and that would even happen for Christmas break, so any time I had at least a week off I was on the train, the train to East St. Louis.

PS: And the train in those days, and this is the '50s, was an experience, and the conductor took care of me and there was wonderful food, and I had my little note that said where I belonged and when to get off and people were checking on me all the time. Again, I'm feeling loved, kind of special. It was a good experience for

me and then of course, spending the summers in East St. Louis with my family was just spectacular. Now, one of the things and again, I did not realize this as I was growing up, we were poor, and the streets were not paved. We did not have indoor plumbing and one of the blessings about being a young person is that I didn't have to take this lawn chair out to the outhouse. So, other people took care of that stuff, but I do remember taking baths every night in the tub (No.3 washtub) and my grandmother boiling the water on the stove.

PS: I remember her ... And we had chickens in the back of the house, and the first time I saw a chicken running around with their head cut off, it was kind of alarming but ... And then there was, of course, the train that ran in the back of the house and every now and then, there would be passengers on the train, and we'd wave at them as kids, and they'd wave back at us. We didn't realize how polluted that was at the time and yeah, so I didn't have those negative feelings about growing up as a poor child in East St. Louis. It was kind of refreshing that everybody else was poor too. But we were the first in East St. Louis in our neighborhood to get a TV. In fact, not only a TV, but a telephone.

PS: So, the neighbors would come and use our phone. So, our home became, my grandmother's home, the hub. So, folks were coming in and out all the time. Not to mention my aunts and my uncles and my cousins were always coming to my grandmother's house, and I was already there. So, I was feeling very special and very, very loved. So, those early days growing up, I think they were great. I did not have any complaints. I studied hard. I wanted to be a good student. I wanted to make my family proud. I wanted them to be pleased with me, and it was already ... There was a distinction because I didn't live in East St. Louis. I wasn't living around my family.

PS: So, sometimes my cousins would tease me about how I talked, and I didn't have a little southern twang. I didn't have the St. Louis or Missouri twang. I had the Colorado twang, and they would tease me, but I knew they loved me, and I knew I still belonged. So that was ... It was a good time. I learned the importance of respect. I remember maybe being 8 or 9 years old and went down to the grocery store, the corner store, got some penny candy, which was a real big deal and came back and one of the elders was sitting out on her porch, one of my grandmother's neighbors, and she spoke to me, and I just looked at her and said well, yeah. Well, that was not what I should have said and by the time I got just next door, my grandmother was ready with a switch. It was yes, ma'am and no, ma'am and show this woman respect and just because you're from Colorado, you still have to respect people. That was a good learning too that there are customs that I had to learn how to respect and to honor.

PS: So, at a young age, I learned that there are dualities in life. That there are some places where it's going to be just fine to be as crazy as I needed to be and have as much fun as I needed to but there were times when I really had to put on a

different hat and be as respectful and honor people as much as I possibly could. That was nice to learn that at that age for me. So, I may be saying more than you want me to say or need to say.

KW: No, no, not at all.

PS: Because I can go on and on and on.

KW: I was just going to ask how different Denver was in the '50s and '60s as compared to East St. Louis?

PS: Oh, totally different. Yeah, because East St. Louis was really segregated and again, I didn't understand that that well but I did know that the only white person I knew owned the grocery store and everyone else had colored ... Were like me. But one of the wonderful things I remember, my grandmother, who taught me how to pray and prayed out loud and every night, all the kids had to pray, and I would listen to her pray for this white man, who sometimes was not nice to us but my grandmother still prayed for him and she was praying for lots of people, and I didn't quite understand that. I wasn't going to pray for people that were mean and ... But under her guidance, I think I learned that those are the people we pray most for, the ones who are the mean people. So, I'm saying that to say that I got a real nice grounding, not just in the dualities of life but the spiritual components of life and the importance of God and of that connection and that belief. So, I had such a wonderful, wonderful foundation.

PS: I mean I have no complaints about that and went to elementary school where I realized some people didn't like me, especially the boys. I was tall and in the eighth grade, I think ... I mean in the fifth grade, I still wore like a size nine shoe and I was kind of arrogant. I know I had a little swagger because people love me. I was cool but the boys still teased me and that was sometimes awkward and definitely uncomfortable but something that I, in my mind, always rose above and it was so nice to have my dad around to remind me, "They're doing this, Pam, just because they like you, because you're cute." And at one point, he said, "Well, Pam, you're not that cute yet." And I remember this vividly, sitting out on the ledge and I'm kind of complaining so and so did so and so to me and he said, "Oh, Pam, don't worry much about it. You're kind of awkward-looking now but you're going to grow up and you're going to be beautiful. They're going to see that inner beauty in you." And I said, "Well, thanks, Pops. I'm going to grow up and I am going to be beautiful." So, even going through those awkward adolescent years, I'm still feeling like I'm okay.

KW: So, yeah, those adolescent years, you were going to school, high school, in Denver-

PS: In Denver.

- KW: How would you characterize that time?
- PS: Oh, I became very popular and it wasn't an intentional thing but I became ... I ran for the student council and I lost. In junior high school, I was head girl and we didn't have middle school then, so in the ninth grade, I was a big deal. I was the head girl and that's student council president more than anything else, which got more privileges, a little bit, I got to maybe get up in front of the line at lunch or something, I can't even remember. But in high school, I was not head girl. So, it was a striving for me to be accepted again. I went to a high school where a lot of my middle school kids did not, my friends did not attend, so I was meeting new people but I wanted to be who I had been in middle school.
- PS: I was still feeling well, I should be even ... I should have more friends, but I didn't have more friends but by the time I graduated, I was a May queen and did those little fancy things. The guy I was dating at the time, he and I, we were the sweetheart couple. Now, I think about it and just kind of ugh, I want to gag. I was a debutante in Denver and I remember so vividly not wanting to do that and to be a part of the bourgeoisie and in that time, there was some distinction. You just wanted to be a real person, solid but I didn't have to be accepted by the elites in Denver. My mother, she was a little more interested in me being part of that group and my father convinced me, "Well, Pam, I think you should do this debutante thing," and I kept asking, "Pops, am I beautiful enough yet?" He said, "Well, not yet, but you can still do it. And your mom's going to love it." So, I went to all of that.
- PS: So, high school, again, I felt eventually by my senior year, I was accepted. I ran for student council every year. My sophomore year, my junior year, and didn't win an election until my senior year. So, I also learned something about persistence and I was not going to give up. I wanted to be a cheerleader and the ... I was never accepted as a cheerleader and one of the comments around that, the lady that was coaching the cheerleaders, she says, "Well, your daughter's just a little too gangly." At the same time, I had been modeling at one of the department stores downtown and getting just wonderful praise for my stature and my ability to walk and being recognized for some of the grace I had and there was a time when the department store was asking my mom, "Well, we could do more modeling for her," because I was tall and she could really have a career in this and my mother said, "Oh no, no, no, she's going to school." It's not about that but of course when the cheerleading coach said, "Well, she's just too awkward," well, my mother went off.
- PS: She said, "I know somebody that knows a little more about talent than you," and again, even though it was a negative, I still knew in my mind, I was okay. Yeah, I could get a modeling contract if I had pursued that and I don't know if I really would have but I was getting that type of recognition for what I was doing and I was in a number of fashion shows and [inaudible 00:14:53] but I never became a cheerleader but I did join the pep squad and I loved that cheering and the pom poms and high school was a good experience.

- KW: Then you chose to go to CC.
- PS: You bet, you bet.
- KW: So, how did that come about?
- PS: Yeah, so deciding on college, I wanted to go to an HBCU, specifically I was kind of interested in Howard. My mother wasn't quite there yet. She wanted me to ... Well, she just wasn't into doing the historically black and wanted me to get more of a rounding and more of an appreciation for all kinds of people. So, I applied to other schools but Colorado College offered me the biggest package and a wonderful man came who was the head of admissions at that time, Dick Wood, came to my school and did some recruiting. Now, the principal of the school had already told me, "Well, a representative is coming from Colorado College but you don't have to go to that one. You're going to have a hard ... You wouldn't get into CC. You're not going to get into Colorado College. But there's [inaudible 00:16:20] next week coming from the University of Colorado and that's a better fit for you. That's a better use of your time."
- PS: Well, the minute he says that, I'm going to CC. And there was Dick Wood and I mean this man is just wonderful. I have loved him all my life, so much because of his honesty. "We have a lot of ... We have a couple of black guys on campus here and there are no black women on campus and the Board of Trustees is getting kind of anxious about these black boys just dating these white girls. So, we need to provide some opportunities for them, are you interested?" Yeah, I'm interested. I'm thinking I'm going to get some scholarship money. I may get some dates. I had my boyfriend but I was still looking around and yeah, I didn't have any problems with it and it wasn't that far. That was one of the things that really was not attractive to me, coming to Colorado Springs.
- PS: This is in 1962-63. Colorado Springs had a horrible reputation of being just racist and not an easy place to be for a person of color, and the blacks in Colorado Springs had the reputation of being standoffish, so I wasn't anticipating to be accepted by them right away and my family, we talked about what to do and I decided and we decided that CC, we'll try it and one of the first things my dad did was buy me a gun, which I couldn't do. I said no, if I have to have a gun to be in college, that's not going to work for me. So, we left that alone but that's just how fearful my parents were and so concerned about protecting me. And I remember my first day at Colorado College and meeting some people and feeling like these kids are okay.
- PS: I had come from a large high school, I went to East High School in Denver. So, at the time, my graduating class was a little larger than the total student body at CC. So, I was going all right, okay, we can make this work, Pam, can't we? But I was still questioning and because of Colorado Springs and the reputation of Colorado

College being ... Well, not having minority students, the reputation was just what Dick had told me. There just aren't people of color on campus. I had insisted and granted permission to have a roommate and in those days, freshman didn't share rooms but I was able to share a room with another black woman that was accepted at CC, and she and I had been friends in high school and when she found out I was applying, I said, "Well, apply, Carol, they need girls. They need us." And then I remember just kind of joking about it but of course, we were going to live together and when we got together ...

PS: Another story is we just kind of went separate ways even though we stay connected with each other but that freshman year, it was just wonderful having a familiar black woman on campus and the funny thing about it is that whenever we would walk around campus, they would call me her name or her my name and the joke for us was no, we're the other one.

KW: I guess were there really-

PS: [inaudible 00:20:25] and then there was another woman who lived off campus. So, there really were three but they didn't get to see her that often. So, yeah and it was also comical that ... And I bet there were maybe about four black guys and they weren't dating us. They weren't interested in us. You can't force that kind of stuff but I did become friends with them as well. So, that was my freshman year. Understanding who I was, struggling with my own identity, which is part of the struggle of an 18-19 year old person. My identity, who am I, where do I belong and was coming to the conclusion I don't belong at CC. It just was not wearing well on me.

PS: So, I would escape every weekend to Denver until I think it was maybe my junior year, my sophomore year, my mom said, "You can't come home anymore, girl. You have to stay down there." And then my interest was in transferring. I said well I need to go to ... Now, remember, I wanted to go to an HBCU in the first place. So, I was really grounded in my blackness and I just loved that and this is the '60s and the '70s where we were protesting and by any means possible, I was going to ... Those conversations and became a part of that movement and there just was not an opportunity to engage in any of that at Colorado College.

PS: In fact, I felt victimized oftentimes and I have stories about classes that it was just ridiculous the things that happened in that day but it was that day and I started losing some of my confidence. When you're immersed in a system and a situation and a condition where people just don't like ... Well, people don't know you but I interpreted it as not being liked. I think back on it now and I know some of those people. I think they were totally indifferent but my interpretation was I wasn't liked. No one here loves me except my roommate and I didn't belong. No matter what I tried to do to belong. I joined a sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma and that was a shock to me that they even chose me but again, I'm looking for

belonging and I joined that sorority my sophomore year. I joined it late in the year looking for belonging, looking for those connections and my sorority sisters were absolutely wonderful to me but it only took one time for one of the alumni, you had to do alumni events, coming up to me and there were a little group of them and she says, "Honey, I'm so happy to have you. We just never had any black women and I want you to know we are in love with black people. We're glad you're here."

PS: Well, that alienated me. I didn't want to be the first and I didn't want to be singled out like that. So, that created some distance between me and the sorority and to their credit, my sorority was always active in trying to bring in other minority folks. In fact, would go to conventions and plead my case and I wasn't even pleading my case. So, I got to the point where I don't even want to be in a sorority even more. So, I wanted to deactivate, yet an alum, someone, kept paying my dues. I stopped paying dues. I stopped going to meetings. I just stopped but the connection kept going on and my mother kept getting copies of the newsletters and the bulletins and she would be telling me things and this is a small campus, so I knew what was going on but I just kind of lost my zest for that too. So, I said, eh, sorority's not even working for me. So, this was not the place. I had to find my sense of belonging somewhere else and it was always back in Denver and when my mother cut that off, I had to decide well, this is it, Pam. So you better figure out how to fit in here.

PS: By this time, I'm a junior, late in my junior year, almost a senior and the college had been trying to ... They started a black student union and some of the underclassmen were very involved in that, which was wonderful but I wasn't involved in that. At this point, since I couldn't go home, I was in the books. I was trying to get out of going to college as quickly as I could which drove a wedge between me and some of the other students because I wasn't interested in the BSU but I never lost interest in my black identity or the liberation of my people but I was on a different wavelength.

PS: And I want to back up one more time because there was a time, my junior year or sophomore year, I can't remember, the years run ... I mean after 50 years, these years run together but I do remember Dick Gregory coming and speaking at our college and made a real point of saying how there were black students out there in the fight, in the struggle but then there are some sitting it out and all they want to do is just get a nice education and be themselves. I'm the only black person in the room that was over in Olin Hall and I was going wow, he's talking to me and it hurt me. It really hurt me because that was not where my head was. So, I'm back and the wonderful parents explain to me that Pam, that's not your role right now. You can't be out there in the streets. You need to prepare yourself. You need to get ready for the battle, and I said, oh, okay.

PS: Because my dad was ... Well, both of them were real activists. My mom was

interested always in voting and she was always the mother who was doing the voting things and helping people register to vote and my dad was a little more militant ... He was a lot more militant but it was nice growing up with both of those, that balance, to have the radical and the one that was more traditional but they understood where my head was and where my heart definitely was. So, don't let somebody, and at that time it was just a comedian, turn you around. I'm sharing this story with you, [Kurt 00:28:06], because I have been able to say that as a counselor to other students, especially the black ... The South Africans.

PS: When I was working in the Counseling Center when Nelson Mandela was still in prison, and I had a young South African student come and her issue was she was not in the struggle. And so I was able to say to her, well, that's not your place. You have to do this to prepare yourself and then you'll be ready for the struggle and it just reminds me of how things just come back because after I finished my degree, I became very active again and I had more to offer our struggle and the condition and to improve who we are. It just comes around. Also, one of the highlights of my life, when I was in college, Nelson Mandela started in prison and that broke my heart and that was one of the reasons why I wanted to quit school and start marching and protesting.

PS: Well, after I graduated, and Nelson Mandela's released and it's just a beautiful thing, I had the opportunity to lecture at Fort Hare, where he attended college in South Africa. Well, that was just a huge deal to me, and I could lecture because I'm a Ph.D. now. People want to listen to me now and I was really feeling like I had come, not full circle but oh, I had satisfied some of that yearning that I had as a young person of not being involved and not being able to participate on that level but it did come back to me. So, my mom was right. She was right.

KW: You said that there were some ridiculous things that happened when you were on campus, in your classes-

PS: Oh yeah.

KW: Any specifically that really stand out?

PS: Oh yeah, yeah. I had to apply ... Well, registration, we'll start there. In those days, we registered over in Cossitt, and it was a big free for all and there were people milling around and I walked into Cossitt and was totally overwhelmed, did not know what to do. I'm standing at the door and a professor just motions come over here, to me. It was Beidleman, and he says, "What's up? What's going on?" I said, "Well, I have to register and I don't know what to do." And I think by this time, I had even started crying and so he just kind of took me by the hand and walked me through it. I was not the first ... My mother went to college but it was not something that everyone did in my family. So, I did not anticipate what this would be like, just the admission process, the registration process. I just thought I just got to show up and go like high school but it was quite a bit different.



PS: Subsequently, I got into a wrong class. I got into a sociology class, it was an upper-level class. I think it was a 300-level class and it wasn't a freshman class, and I'm sitting there and I had not seen any of these people at meals and I knew I was in the wrong place but the professor, sociology class, made a point of sharing with the class that I was in the wrong place and how colleges are just bending over backwards to let these black kids in, this affirmative action and he's saying that could be okay because now we have black kids sleeping with white kids, I mean the world's changing and he's saying this trying to be really intellectual about it and grounding it in ... And I can't remember now but he was grounding it in some theories but it was painful listening to him.

PS: After class, one of the students came up to me, as I'm also about in tears, I'm going, I just don't know if I can ... If this is going to be ... And I'm not a crying person. He says, "Listen, Pam, we all don't feel like he feels." And that's all he said to me and I saw him throughout the years and that was just really reassuring that I knew everyone doesn't think like he's thinking. I went home and of course, called my mom and I'm crying again and that man, he didn't last a year. We had to get rid of him and I don't know all of what happened but I know I was called to the Dean's Office and blah, blah, blah, blah and had to explain all this stuff and the bottom line is he was gone and I stayed but it was hard and that's just one of those stories that stands out in my mind and I shared it with a couple of people, my sorority sisters, who have a hard time even believing it and that's one of the things that I have found that people who are not of that mindset oftentimes just can't even fathom that this stuff happens and it happens and it's so blatant but if your heart's not there, you don't accept it.

PS: So, I was fortunate enough to be with people who had good hearts. I was fortunate enough to even ... the administration at that time was willing to learn and stayed open even though there was some blaming ... I was being blamed for some things that I didn't do and didn't happen but their hearts also changed and opened up to me, and I put it in the category of being a pioneer. The pioneers, they're the people shot first. They're trying to make a way. I didn't know I was a pioneer. I just thought it was a 19-year-old kid but I was one of the first and yeah, and I took some swings and I was bruised but at the same time, I was able to retreat back to people who love me and I was religious at that time and I had that foundation. So, even though I had systems telling me I was not okay, I knew I was, and I really understood because of the struggle for emancipation of black folks, I understood the duality in the two halves, I understood.

PS: I love Frantz Fanon and those writings, was not always, at that time, in love with Martin Luther King Jr. But I respected him. I was more of a Kwame Ture person, at that time known as Stokely Carmichael, who had visited my home in Colorado Springs after graduation. I mean that's just how involved I was in that movement and again, I don't even know if folks on campus knew how connected I was to the struggle after I graduated. After graduation, I went into teaching and worked

in District 11 for a while, which was very, very interesting in many ways because we were all changing. Our society was changing. Our culture was changing. So, I was able to implement some ... We had our first black history event when I was teaching and I kind of spearheaded that and I never resented that.

PS: I was one of the few blacks but I always wanted to promote black activities and when I was getting my PhD, there were other blacks in different programs and they never wanted to be known as the black psychologists. They just wanted to be a psychologist who happened to be black. I wanted to be the black psychologist. Send me black people because I understand the struggle. I understand the experience and I wanted to help them through the experience just like I said earlier about the young South African woman. I was able to really help her gain a different perspective because I knew that struggle. I had been there and so many of the things that I hear from our students, I get it, and I've been able to support them and encourage them.

KW: Well, let's talk about kind of your path after CC and your path to becoming a Ph.D. George Washington University-

PS: Mm-hmm (affirmative), GW, mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, for my master's in education and then I got my PhD at Denver University, which was nice and hard but I don't feel ... All along the way I've had mentors, even at CC. I talk about Dick Wood, Professor Beidleman. I became a political science major, Fred Sondermann, Tim Fuller, I mean I had people that were really there for ... Jane Cauvel saved my life. I mean had it not been for her, I think I would have had a meltdown freshman year, but she was there for me, even if she was not a woman of color. She ... The empathy that she shared allowed me to regain perspective and do what I needed to do and when I got into my Ph.D. program, I also had mentors because it was a struggle from time to time because I wanted to write my paper, my dissertation on black folks. I wanted my dissertation about the black experience, and they're telling me, "Well, that's not a dissertation topic," but it was mine, and the model that I used, I'm an Afro-centric psychologist, so talking about Afrocentricity, even at the graduate level was just new to so many people, and they were even resistant to it but I had an advisor, Karen [Kushner 00:39:57], who's now dead, I pray for her often, was there for me.

PS: She didn't understand it either, but she was open enough to respect my research and my writing and the documentation around it. So, this was wonderful and one day I'm driving back from class at DU, and I see this marquee, and it says the Association of Black Psychologists meeting. Well, I turned right into the hotel, and I see there were lots of black psychologists like me, and I felt welcomed. I felt that this is where I belong, and I became very active in that organization for years on the national level and on the local level and that has always been refreshing for me even if it's not always respected and refreshing in the classroom, I had other people who understood this journey and were willing to support me during that. That

was a good time.

KW: Yeah, socially, going to George Washington big city, Denver University big city, how different was it being a student in those environments, on those campuses as compared to what it was like here at CC years before?

PS: Yeah, I drove my little Volkswagen to GW cross country. I was pretty adventuresome and had not even decided on where I would live but I knew I would find a place to live once I got there. I was feeling that optimistic and I knew I would and once I got into DC, the first stoplight that I hit, there's a guy, a couple of guys next to me stopped in a Jeep and I notice all around the car were confederate flags and I looked at it and there's a gun rack and the guy that was in the passenger seat flipped me off. It was my first ... I hadn't even found a place to live. I said oh, okay, it's going to be like that. And now I can kind of smile about it but even then I'm thinking that person's messed up. Not only do they know me but they're driving around with all that paraphernalia on their car. Little did I know that was the south. I would see those confederate flags everywhere and I acclimated.

PS: The beautiful part about DC is that there are so many beautiful black people in DC. So, again, I'm just like a kid in the candy store and wanting to meet this person and go here, and so it was just a real cultural experience for me that I just got to drink from this cup and it was just wonderful being with real professional, intellectual that weren't trying to be bougie and elitist but just real people who looked like me. That was wonderful and I did find a place to stay.

KW: How about Denver? When you returned to Denver, I mean I know that was-

PS: And then that became culture shock. We're going to school in DC where the garbage collector knows more about politics than ... Well, coming back to Colorado and to Denver, I asked somebody some question and I mean they didn't even know who the governor was, where people in DC, I mean it's just all about politics and the energy and it's absolutely beautiful and the history's all there and yeah, so ... And I realized, I don't know if I'm going to fit here anymore. So, it was a matter of coming back to Colorado Springs and making it my home.

KW: Because you came to Colorado Springs after finishing at DU.

PS: Yeah, yeah, yeah and after finishing at DU and after my experience at GW, yeah, so Colorado Springs is where I landed even though I knew there were obstacles, but it's a pleasant place to live. So, if I have to live around people who don't like me, I'm going to live some place that's beautiful.

KW: And you worked in CC's Counseling Center when you came back?

- PS: I worked in District 11, took up my job again at District 11.
- KW: Okay.
- PS: And because I had a Ph.D., the school situation, working in a school where the bells are ringing and you only had 60 minutes with this counseling, I needed more time, so I went into private practice. So, I had a private practice for a long time and that took me a little bit out of community. I didn't do a lot of community work at that time but I was working with people, young people and their families. I used that social work model where I don't mind going into your home and sitting down and talking to granny and I'm going to tell your momma, this is my technique and I enjoyed that work but it did not allow me to be as involved in the community as I wanted to be but this is where I needed to be and I had already learned Pam, there are different places that you need to be so stay in that lane. So, at that point, it was just working with my clients pretty much.
- PS: When I stopped doing the private practice and that's when I joined the Center for Creative Leadership, I got to be in the community again and some people thought I was new to the community because they had not seen me. It's awkward for people to see their psychologist at the party or even at the grocery store. They don't know how to interact with me and I respect their confidentiality. So, it became a situation where I just tended not to go certain places because I knew I was going to see some of my clients there because they had just told me they were going there. I wanted to but after I closed my practice and I was just all into the community and I still am. I continue to work on community projects and it's about building bridges and doing that community work has really afforded me an opportunity to build a lot of bridges.
- PS: My forte is around leadership, so I've been able to really help our community around their leadership issues and I really feel like I have made ... I have an imprint on some people and around even their leadership styles and I feel very, very proud of that and pleased.
- KW: I've seen you described as a cognitive behaviorist-
- PS: Mm-hmm (affirmative), cognitive, mm-hmm (affirmative).
- KW: Cognitive, can you just kind of describe what that means?
- PS: Yeah, because it's really easy too. I am a developmental psychologist too and I chose being a developmental psychologist, a counseling psychologist because we do look more at the development as a person and what stage are they in and most people, when they're young, they're in that identity, where do I fit? Where do I belong? They're in that stage. So, a cognitive therapist is someone who really works with a person's cognition, your thoughts.

PS: So, I spend my time in sessions helping folks reframe their problems and helping them to find ways, healthy ways, to solve their issues as I continue to focus on where they are in their development and sometimes folks get stuck and one of my goals is to help them get unstuck but I do that through a cognitive means and it's just in conversation. I do some technique stuff, EMDR, around trauma but basically it is to help reframe some of those negative thoughts and at least identify them so I know at the end of ... By the time a person terminates with me, by the end of that time together, they really have a different sense of awareness of who they are, and again, that pleases me that they are able to think about themselves differently or the situation differently, not that it's the final truth but it becomes part of their truth and their awareness because I've been able to go in there and help them change some of their behavior. Not who they are but how they behave and how they think about themselves.

KW: When you're working on campus, what are you seeing from students that is fairly timeless in terms of the issues they're struggling with and what are you seeing that's maybe new that you wouldn't have seen 20 or 30 years ago?

PS: Yeah, well the timelessness is around the identity development and here, I don't have friends, nobody likes me, nobody cares, and it feels so real to them because it is where they're at at that moment. That whole piece around individuating, becoming independent and the struggles around that and that's just timeless. Yeah, that's going to happen. The difference these days, that continues to happen, but we have overlaid it with kids becoming or seeing themselves as victims earlier in life. I see students that have been on medication since they were in middle school, where in the first round at the college, we were the first people to put them on medication, and they didn't have their first psychotic break until they were in college but seeing younger people with mental health issues. Now, I don't know if that's right to be putting young people on medication but that's how they're coming to us, already as an identified patient. That's very different, and it becomes really harder to break that cycle when it has started when they were 12, or they're a teen, but it's still possible, and I've seen some come out of that.

PS: The other piece that's really different ... Excuse me, when I first came, is around sexuality and ... Which is a part of that whole identification piece, am I even sexually attractive and who's going to love me and what am I going to take risk about. Well now, I see more of the sexual acting out that I didn't see that much 20 years ago because we were still doing more of that traditional role around gender but now that those lines are even being blurred and evolving, it becomes even more of a struggle because now I think students have more choices. Am I bi or am I really trans or am I ... And 20 years ago they didn't have all of those struggles, and it really is a struggle. So, it's nice to see that the college is addressing so much of that and at the Counseling Center, in the beginning, I think there were like three of us. Now, there's like six. There's a time when there were probably just two,

but we evolved to try to meet their needs, and we have to be a little more focused too about their expectations, but they're still depressed. They're still anxious. The block system may create a little more anxiety, but the block breaks allows them to just exhale a little bit too. There's some give and take even with that.

KW: How about in terms of race? How often are you talking with students who feel like they're other-

PS: Yeah, all the time. Yeah, that's another thing that hasn't changed. Only in the fact that there's more of them. When I was in school, I knew one African guy, whose name I can't even remember now but now there's more. We have all of our wonderful international students. We didn't have them. I was looking at some picture of CC from 1926 and they had like the Chinese club. There were six members. Well, we have a few more now. We didn't have the affinity groups 20 years ago that we have now, and I think that's great because that allows for some of that belonging to take place but their individual struggles still continue.

KW: Can you talk a little bit about how you've been involved in the work around the antiracism external review [crosstalk 00:55:10]

PS: Yeah, that's something that's different, and in the report ... Well, I had been trying to debrief with different divisions about the report to help them understand what it means and what it is that we need to do next and I find that there is an immediate overreaction to the report. When we talk about anti-racism, some people really have confused that with non-racist. So, CC is not going to be racist anymore. Well, I don't know if that's true but I know our policies and our procedures are going to address that where at one point, it was just about composition, in my day, I'm a product of affirmative action. Thank you, Mr. Wood. Yeah, I came in under that umbrella and there were times when I felt less than. Oh, she's just the affirmative action kid but I was the affirmative action kid where now yeah, I know that there're some kids that are not all on scholarship and they're not poor but they're being lumped into that category and that's a struggle and I think the words in the report really helps to address some of the disparities that we don't always recognize.

PS: As I was saying earlier, people with good hearts, they don't recognize the racism. They don't recognize the pain because that's something they wouldn't do and that's not where their heads are at. So, it's so nice when the college is willing to take the lead in saying these things are happening. So, I see it as more transparency, more openness and I know some people are shocked and hurt but we're going to have to figure it out and it's not a done deal. There are things in the Worthington Report that I'm going to question as we should always question these kind of reports but it's just one document. But I am so optimistic that the college is going in that direction and the president is just ... I just think she's fabulous and I've seen a lot of them. Some of them I would never say are fabulous but they did their job but I see her as doing more than her job and I so appreciate that.

PS: So, my work with the Worthington report has just opened my eyes as well and my heart to differences and it's been a delight. I've been proud that I've been able to do the work.

KW: I was just going to ask can you just kind of describe a little bit of the actual work that you've been doing related to it?

PS: Yeah. Well, it's embarrassing a little bit, Kurt, because everyone kind of thinks it may be more than what it is but what I'm doing is just helping people debrief the report. So, I've been just going in and talking about the items with folks, helping them to just understand what the report means. I have not operationalized anything, and I have not made a difference any way but I sure am willing to help them understand what it means and that has been the focus of my work. So much of the initial report was focused on the faculty which has made some of the other departments feel like well, this is not about us where it is about them and understanding how the faculty reflects who we are has been helpful for a lot of the divisions. It's been good, yeah.

KW: So, I've only got a couple more questions for you.

PS: Are we still just ... Do we have time?

KW: We do, yeah, if you do.

PS: I do.

KW: I want to start just by kind of resetting so that we're able to really give people a full sense of how involved you've been in college over the years because you've ... students and then you come back and [inaudible 00:59:45] talk about ... I'm going to say after your PhD, what your career path looked like and how you kind of intersected the CC [inaudible 00:59:53].

PS: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Living in Colorado Springs, I don't ever feel like I was disconnected from Colorado College and always proud of being a graduate of Colorado College even when I did not announce that I was a CC grad. I did not announce that I was a CC grad in some situations because I became stereotyped in those situations where I was seen as one of the privileged kids. Even though on campus, I had just been the affirmative action kid. So, in the community, I would feel like I would have to play small in order to be accepted. Oh, but I'm not one of those people whereas I was feeling like yeah, I'm one of those people too.

PS: So, I didn't always announce that, but I also didn't announce to people that I was a psychologist because that also changes the interactions they have with you. So, by the time I had finished my degree, I said oh, okay, I kind of understand that struggle of not always owning who you are. Even though internally I can say

I'm proud of it, but externally I wasn't expressing it, so that was creating some dissonance in my mind that I knew I'm going to have to resolve some of that stuff, but I had always felt connected to the college on some level. Coming to ... I mean CC has just some of the best speakers, the best activities.

PS: So, being exposed has been nice, and I always continue to do that, but I don't think coming back in the Counseling Center, I did not share with students, and I rarely do now that I'm a CC grad. I haven't put that out there. In certain situations I do, and it's not something ... It's just something that I feel is just not appropriate to share because the work is about them and not about me but when they're struggling with that sense of belonging, I have forever been able to say to them this is a college that was not designed for you. I said that 20-30 years ago, so I'm just ... I love seeing it in the Worthington Report for the whole world to see because when students start to feel like they are the misfits, and I remember feeling like I was a misfit, I had to learn, oh, this is a place that was not designed for someone like me, but we can still find our way. So that's where I've been with that.

PS: Of late, in working at the college has been such a real delight. I think it's one of the highlights of my life but again, being a counselor on this campus. I feel a little distance because I don't want to be intrusive in their lives either because I will see kids at lunch, and they don't want to give me eye contact. They don't want people to know, and I respect that whereas there are some, "Hey, Pam, what's up?" They don't even care. So maintaining that, I don't want to be intrusive in their lives. So that sometimes is awkward, but it's something that we have to work through. I am affiliated with several community groups that really respect Colorado College but even in those situations, I don't always say I'm a grad, but I understand some of the systems, and I'm not really that good with how to maneuver some of the systems, but I've been supportive of people, and the college has been supportive of me.

PS: Dean Edmonds, I just want to just kiss him every time I see him, but he wouldn't have that. He would not go for that, but he has just always been a cheerleader for me and you need cheerleaders in life. As I said, I've had those mentors that have been there for me so that allows me to be there for other people. I know how to do that because it's happened to me. People have given to me, so it's easier for me to give to others and yeah, so it has been a real full circle and now I'm here one day a week. It's not even a big deal, but I love it and I love the connection with the college. I enjoy the people of the college, even the ones with warts. Yeah, we're all evolving, and we're learning. So, I'm just so optimistic about our future and under the leadership of the current president, it just makes me even more optimistic and more hopeful.

PS: I think about that saying that has been attributed to Martin Luther King, but it's not one of his sayings, but it's about the universal arch of morality, it's long, but it always bends toward justice. He did not create that or was not the first person to speak that, but he has made it more popular as has our last president, President



Obama but I believe that, that it is an arch but in these 50 years, I'm seeing it really kind of bend towards justice for all and that feels good.

KW: Yeah?

PS: Yeah.

KW: Is there anything that we haven't talked about?

PS: Probably yeah, I'm 70 years old. There's a lot of stuff we haven't talked about. Is there anything else you want to know about?

KW: There are lots of things I want to know about but I want to be respectful to your time and-

PS: Yeah. I do want to share one more thing and it's about me personally having gone through some real physical trials. There have been a couple of times in my life that I've been in life threatening situations, surgical situations that clearly I've come out of but when you're going through those kind of life or death and the first one that I went through, they actually thought I had died and when I went back to my room, the nurses had cleaned out the room and my clothes were in little bags in another ... I mean because my heart stopped and I don't know what the communication lines were but I wasn't but I was in a coma and couldn't talk for a long time and that was a traumatic situation and maybe about 10 years ago, 15 years ago now, I ended up having another surgical procedure where I could've died and some people thought I would die and I didn't. I ended up having a lung transplant and that was during a time where the college was so supportive of me.

PS: The previous episode, I don't think I had been ... I had not been working here but with the transplant, yes, the college, I had so much support from the college so that felt good too. Going from a time of feeling like do I really fit, do I belong here to a place where ooh, these people really do like me, I am a part of this and I get to really see it, so I say so often to folks, not only is my cup full, I'm drinking from the saucer. I have been so blessed to be able to see so much of this come full circle in my life and I'm not done yet.

KW: That's really cool.

PS: Yeah, it is. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

KW: Well, thank you so much.

PS: Thank you. Yeah.