

Oral History of June Jeffries
Second Interview
November 30, 2018

This interview is being conducted on behalf of the Oral History Project of The Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewer is Will Weaver, and the interviewee is June Jeffries. The interview took place at the Alumni Relations Center in the Hotung Building at Georgetown Law School on Friday, November 30, 2018. This is the second interview.

MR. WEAVER: During our first session, we talked about where you come from, your parents, your family, and your childhood. We left off talking about how you ended up going to college at Wesleyan in Connecticut. You started in that school in the second ever co-educational class, if I remember correctly. What was that like?

MS. JEFFRIES: We were the second incoming co-ed class. They had gotten some transfer students. Actually, what that meant was when I got to Wesleyan, the proportion of men to women was decidedly larger, but when they brought in the classes, each class was probably around 50/50 so that each year, it was more and more women, and by the time I left, it was totally 50/50. For the university, for us women, I would say really the only problem was space like in the gym and the locker room, and they had to build to accommodate that. But they had done a number of things, hiring faculty and staff, to be supportive and to work with incoming women students and to help make the transition. There was one woman who was on staff, I can't remember her particular position, but her name was Sheila Tobias, and she was a very outspoken, very feminist-type woman, very supportive, not quiet, vocal. She was good to have on campus during that time. And other people. All in all, it went very well.

MR. WEAVER: Were there any challenges? It sounds like it was a very smooth transition.

MS. JEFFRIES: I think it was a pretty smooth transition. Like I said, since they had brought in some transfer students, it happened that in my dorm the RA was a senior. She had transferred to Wesleyan in her junior year. Bonnie Blair, who is a lawyer here in D.C. now. She then went on to Harvard Law School. That assisted us as well, even though we were the first incoming class, there were some upper-level women there. And Bonnie, I went to Harvard summer school the summer of 1974, and she was up there for the law school, so I met her at the law school, and she took me around. That was good having met her.

MR. WEAVER: That's exciting. Tell me what it was like when you left home to go to college for the first time. Did your mom drop you off?

MS. JEFFRIES: Yes. My parents, both of them, took me. I don't know if I said this, because I have to look at the transcript, that summer I went to a summer program in New York for six weeks, which was for pre-med minority freshmen from about ten colleges and universities, many of them ivy league schools, and I had at that time when I went to college, I wanted to get both a medical degree and a law degree, so I had done that program, flown to New York by myself, spent the six weeks there, which is a pretty exciting thing to do. I would point out on the very first day of that program, I met the guy who went on to become my first husband. But anyway. After prep was over, I went home, finished my preparations for Connecticut, and my mother, father, and I drove out there. I had not

visited Wesleyan before. I don't think it was uncommon that people didn't visit, and they certainly didn't do the grand tours that people do now. We didn't have the Internet, but I had a friend at Smith and knew some other people and talked about it. So going to Wesleyan for us was a good trip.

When I was born, it was always that I was going to go to college, so that had never been an iffy thing or a question. My mother used to talk about me going to Harvard or going places, so it wasn't out of the question I was going to Wesleyan. I think my father wanted me to be closer to home. He had been interested in Michigan or Michigan State, and I guess my mother told her at one point she could have put a stop to all of that, but she didn't. So they got me there to Connecticut, and I was so ready to be there. I was so ready to be there. I don't think I cried or anything when my parents left. I was happy. This is my time. So they left, and I started doing what I had to do. We had roommates. It was called a double, but we each had our own room with an adjoining door between us, and there was a balcony, so the door to the balcony was in Juliette's room. So to use the balcony, I had to go through her room. She was nice. She was from New York. She was from the Bronx. That was good too because I had just spent the summer in the Bronx. Juliette had a different kind of life from me because you know those New York people didn't live in houses. She lived in an apartment. They had seven kids in her family. I don't think her mother worked. Her father worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard,

which it seems to me that maybe the Navy Yard had closed some time recently and maybe he was out of a job, but he worked there. Her parents were really into education for their kids. Juliette's older brother had gone to Yale, and then he may have gone to Yale Law School. So her older brother was working as an associate at a law firm in Manhattan. I think she had a sister at Smith. Juliette was at Wesleyan. My recollection that I've always thought through these years, and I have to ask her if we communicate again, is that Geraldo Rivera had been her brother's roommate at law school or college.

So for me going to college was a good transition. Wesleyan was in Middletown, which is a smaller city. Back then maybe it was 35,000 people, so not as large as Detroit. The campus was beautiful. Being in New England in the fall, that was spectacular. I was meeting people. So many people were from the East Coast, but people were from around the country. Many of them had gone to private schools or top public schools. People traveled around the world. I had only been to Canada and Mexico City. People had different experiences. A lot of rich, rich-like people. It was good for me. It was expanding my world.

MR. WEAVER: For someone who grew up in the Midwest and spent a lot of time in the South, was New England kind of a culture shock, or had you already spent enough time there?

MS. JEFFRIES: My only time in New England had been when we went to Montreal and drove there, and I decided then that I wanted to go to school in

New England. I had seen movies and TV, and they talk about how you have these small towns in New England that would have these town council meetings once a year and they'd come in govern. If you see the movie with Doris Day and Jack Lemmon called *It Happened to Jane*, and they were up in New England, and that's what they did. They had this town council and this meeting. I thought that was very quaint. Whatever you had learned in American history and the revolution in school. So I wanted to be in New England. And the weather didn't bother me. I was in Detroit, so that wasn't an issue.

What I think about Wesleyan, which they sometimes call a little ivy is that certainly they have resources, they give you opportunities, there are people who you are interacting with who, whether you realize it or not then, you will be seeing or hearing about in the future as they go about their careers out into the world, and you have connections in that way. But also I think what those kinds of schools is people there have a sense of entitlement, many of the people who come, so if you were a person who didn't have a sense of entitlement, and you could say that would be true about me, you go there and learn to have a sense of entitlement. So people go to places, they expect to get the things that they want. That's their expectation, that's how they've been raised, that's what their parents do for them, that's what they do for their children. An example I would say is my mother, she came from a different kind of background, say we'd go out to eat sometimes and then she'd want something done a particular way

or whatever and she would ask the people if they could do this, if it's possible, and I didn't mean to do things in a rude kind of way or anything. I said you don't have to do all this kind of asking all tentative. Just tell the people what you want. You get what you want. It doesn't have to be an issue. So anyway this whole sense of entitlement. So that's one of the benefits of going. You learn the entitlement game because it's played all around. Well, let me say that entitlement was played all around me throughout my legal career.

MR. WEAVER: When you would go to college and pick up on that entitlement issue, when you would interact with your mother in a situation like that, did you notice it more after that? Is it something you talked about?

MS. JEFFRIES: Certainly as I aged and my different experiences, I was cognizant of that. I would tell my mother she's so authority bound because I think that's the way they indoctrinated you growing up as little sharecropper children in segregated Mississippi. We'd be driving down the street, or I'd be driving and she'd be sitting there and say there's the police, and I'd say I don't care about the police. You don't have to be announcing that to me. There were some differences because of our different experiences and attitudes. But good. It was good. I'm an extension of my mother. My mother was a very vocal person. She was no pushover. My mother was a very vocal person, very astute. But there were some differences. Being up there at Wesleyan, there was another big thing. When I went to Wesleyan, you could have pets in the dorm. So for 2 ½ years, I had a dog.

MR. WEAVER: What kind of dog?

MS. JEFFRIES: First I had some kind of little dog, a little mix that I had gotten over the summer of 1972, and I took that dog to Connecticut with me. That's when my father got sick and died, and I left the dog there because I had to go home. That little dog was named Jamaica, and Jamaica got hit by a car. So while I was home in Detroit after my father died, I got a cocker spaniel, Nicky, and Nicky went to college with me. Nicky was my very close friend. She lived in the dorm. People had a lot of dogs at Wesleyan. People had Irish Setters. There were two Newfoundlands, Alice and Thor, that stayed on the porch at Downey House. We had a lot of dogs. It kind of got out of hand. So I would take Nicky back and forth to Connecticut with me, and she became famous too.

MR. WEAVER: Your father passed away your sophomore year of college. What kind of impact did that have? Did you think about staying home for a while or did you go immediately back to college?

MS. JEFFRIES: Let me talk about that. My parents took me to school again sophomore year, and I moved into East College in the Law Avenue dorms, and they went back to Detroit and I'm doing my Wesleyan life. Wesleyan has a place, Foss Hill, I had lived on Foss Hill freshman year, and the football field is there and you can see the library and North College and those places. It was a beautiful day, on a Monday. It was a very beautiful September day, and I liked the weather so much I just sat on Foss Hill and enjoyed the weather. I was just sitting there enjoying the weather. So

when I finally went to my dorm, there was a note on my door from my faculty advisor. My roommates were saying my mother had been calling. It turned out my father had a stroke the night before. I went home to Detroit. He was kind of paralyzed on one side, and his speech was impacted, and I guess the doctors thought he could probably regain some of that. It's unclear to me. It seems like maybe I went back to school for a week or something, but I must not have. Probably at the end of the week, he had a second one, a cerebral hemorrhage. He was in a coma, and things were much worse. So I was staying in Detroit because you didn't know what would happen. It was very stressful. He was at Henry Ford Hospital. By now we're into mid-October, and it was getting colder, as it would do, and I was in Detroit, but my clothes were in Connecticut. So finally I told my mother I had to go back because I had to go back to get my clothes and do whatever. I decided I would go on a Thursday and come back on Saturday. So back then you could fly student standby. Those early years I could fly roundtrip to Detroit for \$64.00. So anyway, I came home. I got back to Connecticut on Thursday. At Wesleyan I was kind of excited because Ted Kennedy was going to be speaking on Friday afternoon or evening. So I'm there for a couple days, I can see my friends, get my clothes, go see Ted Kennedy. My mother was always a big Kennedy person. So I can go see Ted Kennedy. This was kind of some relief for me, and then I was going to fly back to Detroit. My mother called me on Friday and said things were really bad. They put a feeding

tube in my father after I left. For whatever reasons, the contents backed up, he aspirated the contents into his lung, and then he had pneumonia. So then it was really bad. He had a doctor, who was probably like a chief resident, and he was a very dour person. He had always said things were bad, you could hope for the best, expect the worse. I must have talked to him, and he said he's really bad. Anyway, my mother's calling me, and I'm like ma, I can't do anything, I'm here in Connecticut. And then he died. He died Friday afternoon. So I left, and I flew back home. So, of course, I didn't see Ted Kennedy.

I stayed home for that semester. It was very hard. That was hard, and it was hard going back to school because I probably said when I was a kid, my father worked midnight and he would come home and he was home during the day all the time I'm growing up with his work schedule, so I was used to having my father around the house. But then suddenly my mother's back at work and all day long it was just me. We had two dogs at home. All of my friends from Detroit were away at college. My college friends were in Connecticut, so I really didn't have anybody around. It was very quiet and still. I think you can feel, there's a difference in the feeling in your house or wherever you live, there's a difference in feeling when a person is dead as opposed to they just went to the store or work. When they go to the store or work, it doesn't feel empty, but when they die, you feel it. It's different.

And then Wesleyan would not start until around January 24, so when other people came home for Christmas, they went back earlier. That's the way the time period was. I wasn't really doing anything. And I don't know why I didn't get a temp job or do any volunteer work, but I didn't. So one day, I woke up, and I was there, my mother had gone to work, and I was dusting the furniture. That's not particularly exciting. And the dogs and I just got to thinking that I had like another six weeks before I went back to school, and this was so boring. It was another six weeks. So my mother called me when she was on her lunch. When she called me, and then I just became hysterical, crying. I was very upset. My mother came home from work and sat with me and talked with me. I guess I calmed down. She had me go stay with the neighbors while she went back to work. So the next day, I went to our family doctor, and Dr. Arrington gave me a prescription for valium. So the valium I think you take like every four hours. It didn't knock me out or anything, but it calmed me down. I was chill. I would do that. I took the valium probably every four hours the first few days, which was fine. Then I got to where maybe I'd take one in the morning and one at night, but I took them at night in particular because I think valium suppresses your dreaming, and when I didn't take them, then I had these bad nightmares. I had nightmares that my mother died and stuff. So even at 18, I heard about suburban housewives being addicted to pills and stuff, and I didn't want to be addicted to pills. I would take one at night, I might take one during the

day until I went back to school. So as soon as I got back to school, I went to student mental health and saw a psychologist. His name was Dr. Wolf. I go in and I see him, and he says to me, "Why are you here," and I said, "My father died, and I'm very upset." And that's the way I said it. He said you don't seem upset. I said believe me, this is upset. So he said our game plan was for me to stop taking the valium and then we would talk about things. I did that for three or four weeks, and we got through it, and so that ended me and the valium.

I need to back up and say this. When my father died and I'm there in Detroit, I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to go back to Wesleyan because of the money and stuff, so I was thinking I'd go to Michigan. I didn't do anything to try to go to Michigan, but that's what I was thinking, that this would be the case. But my mother never said anything about that. She never asked me to stay home or change my plans. It was always about me going back. Wesleyan was very good, and so I went back. I was afraid.

One of the issues for me in going back was really my mother because she was one of eleven children and whatever, and when she moved to Detroit, she had lived in a boarding house, a rooming house, with other people, and then when she married my father, she's living with him. They lived in a boarding house with other people, then they bought the house, and it was the three of us, but at some point my grandfather had lived there, daddy's daddy. My Uncle Richard lived with us until I was

six. So she had never lived alone. I felt for her, and that first day when I went back, I called her, and I think I cried. But it was okay. She never asked me to change my plans, never complained, and it was good. My mother's a working woman. All my life, and most of the women in my life were working women, and this is true even of my friends in Detroit whose fathers were doctors, their mothers were teachers or librarians or social workers or whatever. Most of my friends' mothers worked. Most of them. So by my mother having her own job when my father died, she was the one. We had Blue Cross. We were on her insurance, so she had her own pension and stuff. My mother had her own money as I was growing up, so she never had to ask my father if she wanted to get her hair done or buy a new purse or anything. She had a charge account or two in her name at stores where she shopped. So she did things. When my daddy died, Mrs. Ice, her daughter Patricia and I are very close friends, Mrs. Ice she didn't work, but she had been a teacher, and her husband was a surgeon, and she had stopped working at some point. She was helpful to my mother. She told my mother that she needed to get a charge card, like a MasterCard or a Visa or something. One of their friends, one of the Ice's friends, Mrs. Farmer, was a travel agent, so she turned my mother onto Mrs. Farmer. When I would want to come home, I'd call Mrs. Farmer and tell her I wanted a plane ticket or whatever. So anyway, things were good because I had my mother working. And then she could work overtime, or if you worked, especially back then, on Sundays, and

you're in the union and stuff, because stores and places used to not be open, so for places to be open on Sundays, that was a big deal years ago. You'd make double time. On holidays she'd work. She could make triple time. So she did all that when I was in school.

So I went back to Wesleyan, and I, of course, was happy to be back. But at some point, sophomore year, I had been taking organic chemistry, and the book was *Morrison & Boyd Organic Chemistry*. I'd be studying organic chemistry, and I'd have tears going down my face, so I decided to not continue with the desire to be a doctor. I was never going to be a science major. I was interested in government, urban studies. So I stopped taking those science classes and concentrated on my major.

MR. WEAVER: What was it about the experience of loss and grief that caused you to rethink what you were studying. Do you think it was the need for something new, or was there something intrinsic within the study of molecular biology versus taking a different path?

MS. JEFFRIES: I think anybody should take organic chemistry because organic chemistry is really where everything is, everything that happens. You've got those esters and all those things, detergents and soaps and all these things come from organic chemistry. Inorganic chemistry is not a very big subject at all. If people took organic chemistry, they'd understand all the politics of oil and stuff. But it was just like this was not working out for me. So I decided to let that go and go with the flow. Being a lawyer was okay. I didn't have to be both. Although now, I often sit around and really feel

like now I'd go to med school now. That would be no problem because I see myself, I could be a neurosurgeon now and doing brain surgeries.

That's what I think about a lot now. I think of other things too I could do, but I could see me being that right now. But I don't think the med schools would want to take me now at my age, plus I don't want to pay for it. But if they'd take me free, I'd go. And I'm a person who's a committed person. I haven't wanted to take another test since I put my pen down for the bar exam. But I could do that.

MR. WEAVER: Who were your closest friends in college?

MS. JEFFRIES: I should begin by saying I told you when I was in that program in New York in prep that's where I met my now ex-husband, who, his last name is Jeffries as well, spelled the same way as mine. So for 3 ½ years, I would spend a lot of time at Yale and in New Haven, but at Wesleyan, I had some women friends, Arlene and Ramona, Lynn, and Debbie, and we lived together often over those four years, or lived near. I became friends with Rick Blake. Rick was a senior when I was a freshman, and he went on to a three-year program at New York Medical School. I graduated on Sunday, June 1, and Rick graduated medical school on Tuesday, June 3, and on Saturday the 7th, he and my roommate, Ramona, got married, and I was in their wedding in Long Island. That union did not last. Rick was a doctor down here, and I've always been very close with him and his wife, Joann. Rick died last year on December 20. So Rick and I were good friends from Wesleyan. I have another friend Leslie Anderson. She was

from Norfolk, Virginia, and ultimately Leslie lives here in Silver Spring, so we used to live about ten minutes from each other. When I was working at the U.S. Attorney's Office, she worked at AARP, so we were only two blocks from each other. We were friends. I also worked at the library for 3 ½ years, a Work Study student. There were a couple girls there I worked with, Lisa and Nicky. Lisa Hernandez. She was from someplace in New York. Her father was Cuban, and her mother was Jewish. And Nicky, her parents were Greek. I don't know that her parents were born in Greece. Nicky and her siblings were born here. They lived in Stoughton, Massachusetts, outside of Boston. So that summer I spent at Harvard Law School, Nicky's mother was a good cook, and I'd go over there maybe once a week. And this was when things were really coming down on Nixon. I'd go over to Nicky's mom's house and her mother would cook. She'd cook leg of lamb with a lot of garlic on a rotisserie, and then she would take the pan juices and mix it in with a can of tomato sauce and orzo pasta, so really I had only had lamb once before and I'd never had orzo pasta before, and that lamb and pasta was so good. We'd be there talking because people knew Nixon was leaving and it was a countdown. People were taking bets on what day it was happening. So I'd go over there. Nicky and I were good friends. We're not in contact now, but Nicky got married, and Lisa did too. Both of them got married the summer we finished college. Nicky married Paul, who finished engineering at Northeastern University, and he got a job with U.S. Steel,

which then was building the largest taconite iron ore facility in the iron range of northern Minnesota. Lisa moved to Florida. So my first year of law school, Nicky was pregnant, spring break was coming up for me. She said why don't we go visit Lisa in Florida. So I went to Florida for a week, and that was my first trip to Florida, and I visited with them. Lisa's Aunt Bubby would come down from New York, like a lot of Jewish people do, and they had these apartment buildings. A lot of them were there in Miami. We went to Miami and visited her, and her aunt took us out to lunch, and then we're driving around Miami. This was 1976, spring of 1976. Carter was in office, and you know we were having oil problems and they wanted you to turn the heat down to like 65 and stuff. They did that. We were having some exam at Wesleyan and it was like 65 degrees and my hands were all cold. Anyway, there was an elevator in her apartment building because it was all elderly Jewish people, they had signs in the elevator that people should wear sweaters so we could end our dependence on the oil bastards. So we did that. That was in law school. And then Nicky and Paul lived in Minnesota, so I went up there for spring break. I must have gone to Florida my second year of law school. The first year, Nicky and Paul had moved to northern Minnesota. Nobody they knew was up there, so they sent me a plane ticket, and I went to northern Minnesota for spring break visiting my Wesleyan friend. Let me point this out. I went in March of 1976. The day before I left D.C., it was 83 degrees. I got up to Minneapolis, the snow at the airport was taller than

I am. We drove four hours north to the iron range and it's like 30 below at night and people were wearing all these thermal jumpsuits and plugging in their car batteries, which I'd never seen that happen before, and they're driving around on snowmobiles. And I can also tell you there are no Black people up there in the iron range. So I took my law books with me. Nicky and Paul would go to work during the day. I went to the store one day, and the lady at the store says to me, "Oh, you're not from around here." And I'm like really, how would you know? So the next day, Nicky and I go to the store together, then the woman sees Nicky with me, and she says you girls aren't from around here. Like really, how do you know? But here's what people do in the iron range in northern Minnesota because it's so cold. They have a lot of people up there, they call them Finlanders. I would call them Finnish; they call them Finlanders, and they make hot dishes, otherwise known as casseroles. So they make hot dishes, and people drink a lot of alcohol because there isn't much to do up there. And this year somewhere like I think in the *Washington Post* food section, one day somebody wrote an article about hot dishes because she was from up there. Well I knew all about that because of Wesleyan.

Here's a good thing about Wesleyan. Wesleyan was into ethnomusicology, and my junior year, they opened up the Center for the Arts, which is maybe fifteen buildings, so this is a Wesleyan thing. You learn these things from these people. They had this tract of land and they wanted to do an arts center, and they got these architects to submit

proposals, but the stipulation was that whatever they did, they could not tear down any of the existing trees. So they had to build around the trees. So literally there's one building that's built around a tree and has this center courtyard. So that's about aesthetics because people with money have time to pay attention to aesthetics that other people on the lower level might not necessarily have the time just to devote to aesthetics. So that's a Wesleyan thing. They wanted the proper aesthetics for that field. You've got instant landscaping as opposed to all these new little trees you've got to wait fifty years for them to grow. One of the buildings they did is the Gamelan building. The gamelan is an Indonesian, or maybe Malaysian, instrument, and at that time, Wesleyan was one of two places in the country to have a gamelan, and to play the gamelan, you have like 20 or 30 people play, so they had the Gamelan Hall. As an alum, my mother, Rudy, and I were up at Wesleyan, and we went to a gamelan concert. These concerts go on until around 2:00 in the morning and they start at 8:00, so you'd be sitting there, and they had staggered seating. It wasn't chairs. It was just like steps really. So you're there at the gamelan concert, and people lay out at the steps and listen. They may play a piece that's maybe like 30 minutes, and then that piece not everybody is playing, so those people might walk around and do stuff or lay down or whatever, and then they'd take a break. People may eat snacks or refreshments, and they'd start another one, and that would go on for hours. So that's like a Wesleyan thing. So you can tell a real person if they went to Wesleyan if

they know what a gamelan is. I did one of these tours of an embassy, and I went to the Indonesian embassy, and they had a gamelan there. I know the Kennedy Center or somebody was having a gamelan concert in the past year. I meant to go, but I didn't. So that was a really Wesleyan thing. But that whole aesthetic thing is important. In later years I was up there for something and I went to a meeting of the board of trustees and they were about to do this big renovation of all 80 classrooms, and one of the things that Peter said, the University treasurer was Peter Patton, they were redoing these rooms because they wanted them to have the proper ambiance, the proper lighting, all of this. So when you have money, all of that is important. If you haven't paid attention to those things beforehand, you learn to pay attention to them afterwards.

MR. WEAVER: Were there any professors at Wesleyan who had a major impact on you, either your choice to go to law school or anything else?

MS. JEFFRIES: My first faculty advisor was Dr. Seiss. He was a chemistry professor, and he was a nice man. But then I changed and became a government major. Wesleyan doesn't call it political science. I was interested in urban studies, and my advisor was Professor Russell Murphy. I feel I had good guidance from him. I was interested in urban studies. You could craft your own major. He told me I could be a government major and just take those classes and have the impact of being a government major as opposed to urban studies. And that was good. A book he had us read in the class I took by this guy Edward Banfield called *The Heavenly City*. I read that

book. I had a lot of disagreement with Banfield, his views as a white person writing about people in the cities. Subsequently, many years later, I think I read an update or I read some things about him. I know I remember when Banfield died. Reading that book was of interest to me with Professor Murphy. Another thing that happened at Wesleyan is junior and senior year, I got into take art classes. It was called Art History, and the book he used I still have it. I forget the name of it. Anyway, it was very interesting to me because when you take art history what they're really teaching you is white people's art through the years, and you might have a chapter where they give you three or four pages about while this was going on with da Vinci, people in China were doing this, or here's some African art or whatever. It was very dominated by their art. One of the things I'm into is how culturally how the dominant culture moves to dominate people and to minimize other people's cultures and talents. So Shakespeare is always played up in western education. I'm here to say I don't like Shakespeare. I have no moment for Shakespeare. I don't enjoy Shakespeare, reading him, I never do, I don't enjoy his plays. And I'm not willing to say he's great just because some other people have decided he's great and they want to push that on you. I don't think the Mona Lisa is great. I have no interest in why she has that look on her face. I have no interest in it. Just because people say it's great, I see nothing about it that's great. A painting of Edward Hopper just sold for \$90 million, which was the highest price for a piece of work by a living

artist. But the week before, somebody else's painting, who's dead, sold for \$91 million. I think people need to think about that philosophically. The Mona Lisa is probably the size of this folder as far as I know. There is no piece of canvas that is worth \$91 million. And it's only worth that because someone was willing to pay it. And other people were willing to anoint it. How can they say that that painting is worth \$91 million but my painting is not? So it's really much what you like. I don't like Shakespeare, so he's not important to me. I prefer a world where we can value all kinds of contributions. I have to qualify that, because when I was in high school, Mrs. Hamburger, the drama department chair, would have a trip to Canada. We'd go to the Stratford Festival and we'd see a Shakespeare play every year. Yes I did like doing that, and now I want to go back to the Stratford Festival. But it's not because I like Shakespeare. I did like the experience. So I'm not interested. And the older I get, I want things easier for my head. I'm not interested in working through the language. I want it written as I speak. I don't have time to work through this language. So when I took art, one of my classes. Okay, I wanted to get into drawing class because I can't draw, but I don't want to do realistic kinds of paintings. I'm more abstract. But be that as it may, it's a good skill to have, drawing, and to understand how to get these things on paper. But there are always more people who wanted to take the class than there were slots, and the guy had some kind of lottery or maybe he had you draw something and then he chose people, so I never got chosen. I tell the

Wesleyan people to this day that is my one disappointment with their university. I did not get into the class that I wanted. But I did some painting or did something, and one of my art people said, the professor said to me, that I had a primitive art style, somewhat like Grandma Moses. But he said there was a place for the primitive artist. Well that's very condescending. You think you all's art is better than my art. It's not. But I did do art.

So if I were going to be a lawyer again, and in college and stuff, I would be an art major and then just take classes to get into law school because when I wanted to do the urban studies stuff, Professor Murphy said to me I could do my urban studies and everything, but he said for law school, the important thing when they're looking at you, they wanted to see you took classes that demonstrated that you could read, that you could write, and you can analyze, and I always took those kind of classes as well. But you could do the art. And I will say from my college years, the most tangible things I had were those paintings that I did. I'm not a person to keep all my textbooks or papers or exams. I don't want those. But I had those pieces of art, and I liked them. But I haven't done anything with that since I left Wesleyan.

So I did get into art while I was there. I liked that. I wish I had done more things. I wish I had done things in the theatre department. Not that I act. When I was in high school, I did some costume crew work and stuff. I wish I had done that.

MR. WEAVER: In a minute I'm going to move on and ask some questions about how you started thinking about law school, taking the LSAT, and applying, but before we leave the college years, is there anything else, any other event or person that you came across in college that kind of had a big impact on you or your career?

MS. JEFFRIES: I'm not thinking of anybody at the moment, but I liked the whole Wesleyan experience. I liked what they had to offer. I liked the support that they gave to students. I liked their sensitivity. It was a good thing for me.

MR. WEAVER: When did you start applying to law school?

MS. JEFFRIES: Senior year. I wanted to be a lawyer since I was 5. *Perry Mason* was my mother's favorite TV show. We watched that. I guess maybe she said you should be a lawyer. So that was always something. I actually never had a conversation with a lawyer until I was in law school, and I did not really know what I would do with my legal career, but I wanted to go to law school. So I started doing that senior year, and I was interested in going to law schools I would say maybe in particular places. So say like Boston. I think I applied to BU. Now let me say this. *Paper Chase* came out while I was in law school. I told you I had visited Harvard Law School when I went to Harvard summer school. When my daddy died, I lost that semester and I wanted to graduate on time, so the following two summers, I went to summer school. In the summer of 1974, I went to Harvard summer school to get credits. So having seen *Paper Chase* and their

experiences at Harvard Law School, I did not think that was the place for me, so I did not apply. I did apply to Yale. I applied to Columbia. Of course I applied to Michigan, Northwestern, and for me, Washington, D.C. was a city I could be and I felt just based on whatever limited stuff I knew, that if I was going to go to law school in Washington, Georgetown was the place. So that's what I did. I got accepted to Georgetown. Okay, so my mother and I had to come here for me to get an apartment, and they said it was very expensive, and we came here. This campus was not like this when we came in August of 1975. This neighborhood was not like this when we came here. We saw it and I was like 'Oh my God.' I thought I wouldn't have a car. But we found a place that was a great apartment for me. I was here at the law school. Two of my Wesleyan classmates, Susan and Cliff, were classmates at Georgetown, and then a guy who graduated before us, Elmo, was also in our class. Anyway, Cliff was from here, and he walked up to me one day and told me if I was looking for a job, the Archives needed someone, and I got a job there. I subsequently worked at the Federal Trade Commission, and I was going to work there the summer after second year law school, and then that April, they called us all in, the law clerks, and said they were over budget. The new manager of the Department had looked at the budget and they had over-hired, so they were going to let almost all of us law students go. Which meant that I didn't have a summer job for second year law school, which is kind of a big deal. So you could say I was kind of irritated about that. But probably

within three weeks of losing that job, I got a letter in the mail from the District of Columbia. I qualified for unemployment. I never would have thought of that. So the summer of 1974, I got unemployment. I worked some temp jobs. I did a temp job for a man who I had never heard of before but have certainly heard of him since named Julius Chambers. He was a big civil rights lawyer from North Carolina, and they had a class action suit against the headquarters of the American Red Cross for racial discrimination, and we were doing discovery, going through their personnel files and copying them. We would sit there and go through the files. It was interesting to me. I learned something about Mr. Chambers, but I learned a lot about the Red Cross. I would have never known this. They have a lot of interesting jobs over there, and they're doing things all around the world. So that was pretty eye-opening. I did some other temp things. Some guy was researching something about the Tennessee Tom Bigby Waterway Dam. I'd have to research that. I had a job in law school with the Wyatt Company, which was an actuarial company, maybe the largest actuarial company in the world. Again, I had never heard of that before really. They had bought a company that did executive employee benefits consulting. So the project I did and this will relate back to Wesleyan, working for them was they bought a share of stock in each of the Fortune 500 companies, and with that, they got the annual reports or whatever, and the SEC required that for the top three employees, you had to report what the pension and compensation benefits were, so I would

read these to get that information to chart this because this is the area they had bought this company. Well, one of the companies, Kimberly Clark, the CEO, President, was a man named Roger Smith. Well I had actually gone to Wesleyan with his daughter, and we had been in the same dorm freshman year, and she was from Wisconsin. So she's this white girl from Wisconsin and from talking to her, I gathered they had money, but I didn't know what her folks did, but it was Wisconsin. So I thought maybe were rich dairy farmers. One day we were in my room, and I had a "Playboy" magazine, which I actually used to read because they had some interesting interviews. This is true. I read it. I didn't care about the pictures.

Anyway, John Wayne had been interviewed, and he's an awful person. I said John Wayne was an awful person, although I do like his movie, *The High and the Mighty*, and *Rio Bravo*, he still an awful person, anyway I read that interview, so she was in my room and we were talking and she says her father's company makes the paper that that's printed on. So I'm thinking what company is that. Somehow it was Kimberly Clark, which I didn't really know they made paper, per se. I know they made sanitary napkins, so I'm sitting there with her thinking this is what her father did. I know he wanted to buy her a car, but she didn't want to take it, and I was like if my parents wanted to buy me a car, I would take it. Why wouldn't you take it. So instead, she got an expensive stereo system. So anyway, that's what her father was. He was CEO of Kimberly Clark, so I read his compensation package when I was in law school.

Here's another Wesleyan thing. These experiences open your eyes. I took a weekly seminar junior year, Monday afternoons, and there was a guy named Stewart Jacobson in my class. He was from Texas. It was a small seminar, about eight people. So we're there one Monday before class starts, and I'm talking to him and ask what he did for the weekend. His response was my father and I had dinner with Senator Kennedy. I said, "I'm sorry, what did you say?" And he said it again. That is not what I was expecting. I thought maybe his father was some Texas cattleman or oil person. I didn't per se know that his father did. So here's the deal. My son was born in 1985, and that summer, we flew to Pittsburgh to visit my mother-in-law. There was a *People* magazine, and the cover story was on Rock Hudson because it had come out that he had AIDS and I wanted to read the story, but I didn't want to be a voyeur and go straight to the story, so I'm thumbing through the magazine, and there's an article and it had a picture of a guy at the beach and he's jumping up in the air, and it says something like Stewart Jacobson is jumping for joy over whatever. And I'm thinking I knew a guy named Stewart Jacobson. So I start looking at it. Well, this is Stewart who was in class with me, and it said after he'd gone to Wesleyan, he had done some modeling. He wore glasses in college, but he didn't have glasses on in this picture. He had done some modeling and different things, but his father was some big-time cardiologist in Dallas. Stewart got the idea of writing a book about gift-giving, and he tried to get a publishing company to back him, so Stewart

wrote letters to thirty family friends, or more, asking them to front him \$10,000 each because he wanted to do this book thing, so he raised \$300,000, and then he wrote famous people and asked them the question, what's the best gift you ever received, what's the best gift you ever gave, and then he met with many of these people and took pictures, and boom, gets this book published. It's a coffee table book, and one of their friends was Mary Kay. She bought 5,000 copies to give away to her Mary Kay people. I go to the china department over at Woody's and the book is there. Later on, my current husband and I went to the Virgin Islands, and we're in the Islands and went in some shop somewhere in St. Croix, and there was the book there. So this is how they can do it. He could ask family friends and raise money. My friends, we weren't able to do that kind of thing. Anyway, so that's a Wesleyan kind of experience.

MR. WEAVER: It's kind of special to be in the city and on the campus where you went to law school. Tell me a little more about when you came down here. D.C. was a city that you were familiar with but tell me about starting 1L year. How was the experience for you? 1L is, I think for a lot of people, kind of a grueling experience. It's not particularly fun. How was it for you?

MS. JEFFRIES: My apartment was in Southwest at 1245 Fourth Street Southwest, Apartment E608. I lived there for three years. You really could if you wanted to walk from there to here, but I drove. Georgetown was just this building right in front of us, and it didn't have that front addition. I came here, I had not visited the law school, like I hadn't visited colleges. When

I got here, number one, I certainly was surprised because Georgetown had more Black students than I expected. So for me, there was a good number. Maybe we were 10%. I must give all the credit to a person who's well known in D.C., Dave Wilmot. He was the Dean of Admissions then. A young Black man at the time, a lawyer, and he is very much responsible for there being as many Black alumni at Georgetown as there are. I didn't know Dave's story. He's gone on to be a businessman and do different things. I didn't know his story, but I listened to this podcast, a local man who's known in media, Andy Ockershausen, he used to be with WMAL, he does this podcast called *Our Town*, and he interviews people, and he interviewed Dave Wilmot, and I listened to that this year. Dave explained all of it, how he came to be at Georgetown, what he did, and all of that. So I was so happy to hear that. In fact, now that I'm thinking about that, I meant to write Dave a note. So anyway, I was here. I had people I could be friends with. I'm also friends with white people, but there were Black students here. People asked me about law school. Then and now, this is my response. I did not find law school to be a fun activity, and if people said to me oh I really loved law school or whatever, I'd find that to be a curious response. Law school to me was one, you're doing all this reading, you may read a 100-page case, what's the bottom line here, where are we going to this, but you're reading a 100-page case, you have these dissents, you have to do the analysis, the fact patterns, and then, of course, you're trying to do the best you can do first

year of law school because you're rewarded by going on law review. So what that means is you go to law school, you work really, really hard, and your reward is you're given another assignment where you have to work even harder and do all this stuff. I will say June did not make law review. But anyway, you have to get into that, the reading, writing, the analysis. Another thing about going to law school at Georgetown, and I was a day student. They had a night program. I think most of us got part-time jobs, which was a big experience that people could be here in the city working various places whether it was on the Hill, law firms, non-profits, or whatever. So at the same time you are in law school, you're doing that. So that's why I worked, as I said, at the Federal Trade Commission. I was on the investigation of the funeral home industry. Things are very slow at the Federal Trade Commission. So that was a very good thing to be here at Georgetown and have that opportunity.

I still was not particularly sure what I would do, and I graduated without having a job, and I went home to take the Michigan bar. So I enjoyed being at Georgetown, and I felt it was the right place for me and being there. At that time, a lot of students from Howard Law School would come and study at the Georgetown Library. I often didn't study at the library because I thought it became kind of a social place because so many people would hang out there. I considered Georgetown to have been a positive experience for me, and the little exposure to the Jesuits.

MR. WEAVER: Did you study in a study group, or did you study alone?

MS. JEFFRIES: I mainly studied alone, although there were a few times I did study groups. I took the notes. You do the outlines. I remember freshman year I went to some party that December, and there was a guy, a third-year student, who was there, and he was in a tizzy over his exam the next day. He was in a tizzy because there were no Gilberts, no nutshells for the course. So I asked what was the problem? The problem was he had never gone to the class until like the very last day and found out that it wasn't the class he thought it was so he didn't know. I learned something from that. You need to go to class.

I had some interesting professors at Georgetown. Professor Richard Allen Gordon for Contracts. He was quite a personality. He had been roommates or good friends with William Peter Blatty who wrote *The Exorcist*. I think Professor Gordon helped negotiate his contract when they sold it to the movies or whatever. I had Larry Richey for Criminal Law. I got called on to talk about *Miranda*. I remember that. I had two Black law professors, Patricia King. I had her for Commercial Law, and I had Jerome Schulman for Corporations. I want to say this very clearly. Those two professors were treated differently by my white classmates than the way those same classmates treated the white professors, and they challenged them all the time over things that they said. They did not do that with the white professors, and I want to say that very clearly.

MR. WEAVER: Did you take Criminal Law 1L year?

MS. JEFFRIES: Yes.

MR. WEAVER: Was that of particular interest to you then, or did you know that that was going to be an area that you wanted to go into?

MS. JEFFRIES: I did not know. And it's funny because I became a prosecutor and became a litigator, and you have to work in the courtroom. I think if you asked anyone who knew me back then, if you'd asked me, if you'd asked my ex-husband if I'd end up being a prosecutor, being a litigator like that, I think most people would have been surprised. I'm surprised. But as I said, I didn't really know. Maybe it was in my Tax class, but one of my professors would talk about ERISA a lot, which is the pension thing, and he said if you went into ERISA, you could make \$200 an hour, and I thought that was very interesting. I didn't pursue it, but I was exposed to things here at the law school that people were doing that I would not have known otherwise.

I graduated from Georgetown Law School, and I went home to take the Michigan bar, and I didn't have a job. So here's the deal. My mother was a grocery store cashier, and she knew a lot of people. And this is the way I got my first job. This is for real. I'm home, going to take the Michigan bar, I'm asleep one morning. My mother calls me from work and said that one of her customers worked at the courthouse and he knew a job I could get, and I needed to get up and go see him then because he was going on vacation the next day. So I did. And his name was Morgan Carroll. He was a courtroom clerk in Detroit Recorder's Court, which was then the Criminal Court for the City of Detroit. They had an

office called the Misdemeanor Defender's Office, which was a contract office, and this guy, Bob Gold, got the contract and then they would assign these misdemeanor cases. I went down there. Bob was on vacation, but this other guy, Sam, was running the office. I met Sam, and he says okay, you're hired. So that summer I started doing these misdemeanor cases. Bob comes back. He said if I passed the bar, he'd hire me as a staff attorney, and I said okay. So I'm studying for the bar, and I end up passing the bar, so I worked there for nine months doing misdemeanors in the City of Detroit. I probably have a lot to say about that experience and the way things worked. But anyway, that was good for me, and that exposed me to these criminal cases and stuff. Detroit, as I call it, a crime-free city. Hah hah. So there was a lot going on and a lot of trials you could go see and things in the news. I did that.

I talked earlier about my fifth grade teachers, Mrs. McQuarry and Mrs. McFadden. Mrs. McFadden had a son who is older than I am, and I had never met him, but I knew of him, and he had gone to Harvard Law School. I can't remember, but maybe my mother ran into him, anyway, somehow I got put in touch with him, and he was working at a small Black law firm in Detroit, and I meet him and through him, I ended up getting a job with them at this law firm, Patman and Young, which at most we had nine lawyers. This was a very interesting and good experience for me. It was, even though there were things about it that maybe weren't the best, but still positive in my life. Patman and Young did a lot of entertainment

work, although this was post-Motown. Motown had moved away, but they still did a lot of things. Patman and Young had been IRS agents and went to law school and night, so they did tax work. We also represented a lot of the Black professionals in their professional corporations, lawyers, doctors, dentists, business owners. A woman at the firm did domestic relations, and we did wills and estates. In the course of the corporate work, for instance, we did work for the Detroit Public Schools, which you could call essentially a Black client. So I did work there at Patman and Young for 2 1/2 years. I did wills, I did some entertainment things. The big thing was, when I started with them, if you know Motown, they had these songwriters and producers, Eddie and Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier, otherwise known Holland, Dozier, and Holland, and they wrote all these songs for the Supremes and the Temptations and others. When I started with Patman and Young, Eddie and Brian were suing Lamont and Lamont was suing them back, and they were about to go to federal trial so everyone's working on this, and then they settled. Eddie and Brian were our clients, and they were living in California. They would fly back to Detroit from time to time in their leisure suits, their jogging suits, complaining about the weather in Detroit because California is all warm and everything. Well we got their quarterly royalty statements, ASCAP and BMI, we'd get their royalty statements, and so June would read their royalty statements, and that was very interesting to me because they were making money off of music that had been recording fifteen and twenty

years earlier, and they were making good money. They did not have to work as they could just collect these royalties. We had some other interesting clients. So I worked there. It came to be the point where my boyfriend who I talked about was at Georgetown Medical School and maybe he graduated so anyway we decided what we were going to do, so I left Patman and Young and came here for three months to see what we would decide to do. We decided to get married, but he was married in the Navy. He had gotten a Navy scholarship, paid for him to go to med school, so he had to do a year of ship duty. I went back to Detroit while he was on the ship. I was picking up cases in court because my mother, she's the best career person. She's a cashier, she knew Judge Willis Ward. He was on probate. Well the probate judges give assignments, so he gave me some assignments. They would do the mental commitments, so I would represent respondents, or if they had people were petitioning to be conservators or guardians, and they appoint you as guardian ad litem, and I'd go out and do interviews and write reports and go to hearings. Once he started giving me some, other judges gave me some of those. I picked up some criminal cases. I had a criminal case where a judge, he was so hard on me. But anyway, then he calls me. I had applied to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Well he had hired the U.S. Attorney to work under him, so he called to put in a good word. There was a hiring freeze, but through that judge, he suggested I apply to the prosecutor's office, so that's when I went to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. I worked

there, but I knew I was going to leave because I was going to get married. I worked there for nine months, and when I told them I was leaving, they were willing to try to work something out with me so I could stay, but I said I had to go on and go to Washington.

I got my job here at the U.S. Attorney's Office. This is how that came about. I told you I had applied to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit, but then there was a hiring freeze, and Judge Henry Heady had called Lennie Gilman, who was then U.S. Attorney, and put in a good word for me. So I didn't get hired because there was a hiring freeze. Well Law Day was coming, and I went to the Law Day luncheon. I don't know if I talked about this already. Lenny Gilman was the speaker. The Temptations were coming to town, and they had in the paper that there was some complaint against Eddie Kendricks about taxes, so I went up to him and said all my life, the Temptations are my favorite. I want to see them, but will Eddie be in jail. He said he thought something would work out. I told him I would be moving to D.C., and I was interested in the U.S. Attorney's Office here. I asked him if he knew anyone in the U.S. Attorney's Office, so he wrote a man's name on a piece of paper, and told me when I was ready to apply, to let him know. I put the piece of paper in my checkbook, I come here, and after a month of being a housewife, I decided I should look for a job. Well the man on the piece of paper was Joe iGenova, who was then the principal assistant U.S. Attorney, and what everybody in town knew but I didn't know was that Joe was going to be

the next U.S. Attorney. Stanley Harris was the U.S. Attorney at the time. He had been a Superior Court judge, and they were really just waiting for a vacancy on the U.S. District Court, and Stanley Harris was going to go there, and Joe would be U.S. Attorney. So I sent in my application in October, and I will say that on January 1 of 1983 at 3:10 in the afternoon, Stanley Harris called me on the phone and said he wanted me to join them, except I didn't quite know what he meant, and I said you mean right now? Because I was having people over to my house. Was he inviting me to a New Year's Day party? [Laughter]

So then I started working in the U.S. Attorney's Office for 25 years, 7 months, and 3 days. At that time, we were in Superior Court, but probably in 1985 or 1986, we moved two blocks away on the other side of the freeway to that building, so I would tell people in my legal career, I had only moved two blocks, and that's where I was for the bulk of my career here in D.C.

MR. WEAVER: If we could, I want to put a pause on that because we are going to dig into more of that in our later session. I have a couple questions about things you mentioned about law school, and the first is you talked about noticing the sort of racism and the lack of difference that some of your white classmates had for your two Black professors.

MS. JEFFRIES: Definitely true. I want people to hear this.

MR. WEAVER: I was wondering, I know for instance in the 1980s at Harvard and others there was a lot of campus activism surrounding the hiring of Black

professors, and I was wondering if that was something that happened at Georgetown as well. Did you have a sense that there was a lack of Black professors, or was it mainly just the sort of racist dynamic that you saw within your class?

MS. JEFFRIES: If you're someone like me, or as I'm reading Michelle Obama's book, like her, we can spend much of our lives in situations where we are the only Black person or one of two or one of a handful, so to come here and they only had a couple of Black professors was not a surprising thing. It was more surprising to me as I said the way that my fellow students would show disrespect and challenge. But I do not recall that at that time that we had any concerted movement to get more or that there was anything that I'm aware of to get more staff in the faculty, certainly probably many of us wanted that, but like I said, the thing that did stand out was the number of Black students that we had at Georgetown because it was more than I had expected because I was used to expecting lower numbers.

MR. WEAVER: Were you involved in any law student organizations?

MS. JEFFRIES: No. I was not. I did join a legal fraternity back then, and the only law school organization I did is Georgetown has a Gilbert & Sullivan Society, I did costumes on that. In terms of my classes, I did not do a courtroom clinical thing. What I did was Street Law. And now I wish I had done one of the courtroom clinical things, but I was kind of shy and retiring, and I will tell this. I say to people Street Law was the single – I'll call it worse – experience of my life. It was extremely challenging for me. It

was extremely challenging. It was eye-opening, but it was a challenge, the environment.

MR. WEAVER: What was challenging about it?

MS. JEFFRIES: I taught Street Law at Spingarn High School, which is around 26th and Benning Road. In Street Law, we provided the books. I taught 7th period. I don't know, it wasn't five days a week, maybe three days a week, and I used the classroom, which was another teacher's classroom, and for whatever reasons they chose to do this, she and her 7th period class went to another room. My very first day at Spingarn, as I'm walking up, a girl came out and she was pregnant with a maternity top that said, "Baby" with an arrow pointing at her stomach. I went in the office and they had a trophy case with all these trophies, which I thought this must be like every trophy they've ever earned at this school, but I think they were only for recent years. At Spingarn, I taught on the third floor. Class ended at 3:00, and I'd be in the classroom say like 3:05 or something. They'd come on over the loudspeaker and say Room 305, are you okay? And I'd say yes. I never knew why they did this, but they did it. Midway through the year, they got a new principal. Something happened and they brought in a new principal and new security and they had locks on the doors, so when classes started, they would come over the loudspeaker and say you were to lock your doors because they were going to sweep the hallways, and that was to keep people from running in your rooms. One day when I got in class, some guy was in my class one time who wasn't a student, and he

said things to me I didn't even tell my boyfriend the things that the guy said.

The teacher whose room I used would often have the Blackboard completely filled, and she would ask me if I could not erase anything, and sometimes she'd ask me if her class could come in and sit in the back so they could copy what was on the board, and I'd say okay. It was her room, I didn't know why she was doing that. I got to school early one day in around February and I was in the teachers' lounge talking to her, and she said that she taught five classes and had one set of books which was shared between two classes. The other three classes did not have books, and that's why she wrote all the stuff on the Blackboard. She said that she used to type it all and mimeograph it. This is a long time ago. She said that just became too much. I was totally stunned to hear that these kids did not have textbooks, so I said to my students this teacher says that she only has one set of books for two classes and you don't have books, is this your experience? And they were like yes, and I said how can this be? I've been in this city, this is my third year, and I've never heard this, not in the newspaper, not on TV, I don't see your parents up here, I don't see you picketing, but we could look out the window and see the nation's capital. I said I bet those kids over at Wilson have books, and I don't understand why you all are accepting this. That was a tremendous shock for me. When I was in Detroit, before I went to high school, high school kids used to have to buy their textbooks, but someone or some group had sued, and

it went up to the Michigan Supreme Court before I started high school, and the Michigan Supreme Court said that part of providing a free education was the books, and not only did they have to give you books, but they had to give you basic school supplies. So in high school, I did not have to buy the books, and then at the beginning of every semester, they give you some lined paper and some pencils. You got that as well. Now if you took a class like I took sewing class or something, you had to buy your own materials and stuff like that. So these people didn't have books, and I said if I didn't have books, my parents would have bought me books, but I don't hear anything about this. That was so flabbergasting to me.

The idea that they'd have these security sweeps. I think they had a shooting and that's why that happened. And all these girls were pregnant. I'd never seen this before. I called one of my friends at home and said all these girls at school are pregnant or they have a kid or they're having another one, and they're showing me all these pictures of babies. I don't like knowing anything about this. She said that's because when we were in school, they didn't allow the girls to go to school if they were pregnant. I want the girls to get an education, but for me I don't think that's the best to have them at school like that because everybody was accepting of this and thinking it was the norm. I want you to educate the girls, I want care for the children, but I also want these girls to know you don't have to have babies when you're 15 years old. I think for many of them, and I encountered this in my job, I think if people say to them don't get

pregnant, you don't have to get pregnant. I just don't. And the kids just were not good students. My first exam was a basic civics thing. Anything on the exam we had talked about or it was in the book. I asked the question, "What's the name of the Mayor of Washington, D.C.?" That was not a hard question because the name was in the question. His name was Walter Washington. People didn't get that. I asked people to name three federal agencies, because I figured most people had folks working. Couldn't get that. So many of the kids wanted to do sports. They thought they'd be professional athletes. So I'd say what do you want to do in your adulthood. Oh, I'll play basketball. I said to them you know what, any Black guy I've ever gone out with plays basketball. Not only do they play, but they all think they're great, and they're not. I said and you know, only one Michael Jordan comes out a year or something. What happens if you go to college and the coach doesn't like you, you don't make the team, you break your leg. What if you get bent, what are you going to do. One boy, Rodney, was a swimmer. I said well you know what, swimming will not keep your head above water in all that you do. Another guy once said he was going in the Marines. I said I see those ads on TV. The Marines say they're looking for a few good men, not a bunch of clowns, fools, and buffoons. What are we doing here?

So Street Law, it was very hard for me because that was not an environment that I had been in. No. That was not an environment that I had been in, and I was trying to relate.

MR. WEAVER: Did you get close with any of your professors when you were in law school? Do you still keep in touch with any of them?

MS. JEFFRIES: Not with law school professors, I didn't get close with, although I have run into some. I've seen Patricia King and spoken to her. I've seen Professor Gordon. I called over and some issue came up in life. I called over and talked to Professor Gordon and someone else. But I didn't have those relationships, which I tell young people now. You need to cultivate relationships with them. That can be very beneficial. I knew some people on staff because I had a law school job and worked at the law school.

I want to say this though. I had good experiences with Georgetown, and one thing that happened after I graduated law school. They have the local alumni group, and I would go to some alumni activities. There were two Catholic women's colleges in Detroit, Mary Grove and Mercy, and I think Mary Grove got a new president and they were having the convocation to install the new president so they invited all these Catholic school presidents to come. The president of Georgetown had been invited and didn't come but they asked me if I would go and represent Georgetown. We all marched in. So Georgetown sent me the complete academic regalia, my robe, the purple thing, the beret and all. I did that representing Georgetown. I felt very honored to do that and to have that experience.

MR. WEAVER: Who were your close friends in law school? Did you develop a new group of friends?

MS. JEFFRIES: I was friends with Curtis Scott, and he didn't finish. Curtis was from Detroit, and somehow I knew Curtis in some kind of way casually. I had heard that he was going to be going to Georgetown Law School, so I probably connected with him before we started. Curtis was here, and he had gone to Brown, so we knew several people in common from college years. I became friends with a woman, Lee Adams. Lee and I are still friends. She was local from here, had gone to Mt. Holyoke, and her brother Gene had graduated from Wesleyan the year I started. Another woman, Faith Thomas, she was from Maryland. Faith and I are still friends. My friend Kim. Kim is from Queens. She'd gone to Cornell. I talked to Kim not long ago. She ultimately got a job with the ASPCA and had some interesting work. My job at the U.S. Attorney's Office, some of my classmates were there. I have a very good friend, Marva. Marva was older than us, about eight years older. She had worked as a social worker, had worked out in California, but she's from Greenville, Mississippi, and Marva and I became friends, and we are good friends now. She's up in Silver Spring. I see other people, Georgetown people. In participating in some Georgetown things, I've met other Georgetown alum. I met one woman, Beverley Perry, she graduated after I did, but she is older than I am, and she went on to become a vice president at PEPCO, and now I think she's chief of staff or deputy chief of staff to the Mayor. I had good experiences through my friendship with Beverley. She's a very generous person. And some other folks.

MR. WEAVER: Talk a little bit about the summer leading up to the bar exam. Did you take the bar exam in the fall?

MS. JEFFRIES: I took it in the summer, July of 1978.

MR. WEAVER: What was experience of studying for that like? Were you studying here, or were you back in Detroit?

MS. JEFFRIES: I was back in Detroit. I took the bar review class. It met down at Wayne State, and then I was working. The bar review is different now. We had the books and you went to the lectures, then they would have extra little classes and practice sessions you could pay for. I don't think I did. I maybe did one of those extras. I did a lot of studying myself or with some people I met, we would study together. For me, studying for the bar exam was an intense experience. What I said I would do is if the bar exam was Tuesday and Wednesday, I was going to stop studying Sunday at 5:00 p.m., because if I didn't know it by then, it was too late. Saturday evening, this guy called me and asked what I was doing. I said studying. He asked if I wanted to go out, and I said sure. So we went out, and I come in Saturday and like 2:00 a.m. or something and go to bed. Okay, 5:00 a.m. I wake up. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't study, so essentially the studying ended. At that point, I was hyped.

I did not want to not pass the bar exam for the failure of or the want of a number two pencil, so on Monday, I went down to Wayne's bookstore, and I bought twenty number two pencils. I went to the library or wherever they had an electric pencil sharpener, and I sharpened twenty

pencils and took them up to Lansing that day with me. Herein comes the single most morally challenging event of my life. Tuesday morning I'm there, and you're in those little student desks with the table that flips over, and I put my pencils there and I'm sitting there, and across the aisle, a guy asks if he could borrow a pencil. I have to say I'm totally stunned that anyone would ask me for a pencil. I mean like totally. You would call me like a nice person. Okay. But I couldn't believe he was asking me for a pencil. I looked at my pencils, and I looked at the ceiling, and I looked at my ceiling, and I'm like I can't believe it. So I gave him one pencil. Nobody else was going to get a pencil from me. I was really concerned. I didn't want it to be that something would happen and that 20th pencil would have made a difference.

So anyway, the bar exam was Tuesday and Wednesday. When it was over, I had used three pencils, but I had been a Girl Scout, and the Girl Scouts said be prepared, and I used three pencils. By the time I took the bar exam, I had lost 17 pounds studying for the bar exam and stuff. That Sunday I told you I woke up at 5:00 a.m. Really from that point on I couldn't eat. I had more like tea and toast or something like that. So Wednesday when we were finished, oh my goodness, I was starving. We came to Detroit and pigged out on Chinese food.

So then you had to wait. Bar results were coming out in October, and, of course, it's not like now. I think now you get them on computer. They'd come in the mail, and the word was they'd come on a Saturday in

October. I didn't want to be sitting around the house waiting for the mailman, so I would go take these long drives. I would go to Canada. I'm driving around the state of Michigan not to be home [laughter]. This is so true. I'm going to Canada, I'm doing stuff not to be home. Well the bar results came out and I didn't get mine, so then I'm in a tizzy. I get to work on Monday and trying to call up to the bar place was a nightmare. The phone was staying busy, I'm at work and people are talking. So one of the women, Pam, had a friend who worked in the same building in Lansing. She had her friend go down there and they gave her another number we could call in on. So when I called in, the woman said that I was one of fourteen people who they didn't have certification that we'd graduated from law school and they needed that and that they had told us that at the bar exam. I'm here to say no one at the bar exam had told me that because why would I have sat around in Detroit, why would I be driving to Canada and everything if I had known they needed that. She said the registrar's office could call it in, so we called the registrar's office, and I talked to them, gave them the number, and we gave them a chance to call in, then we called back, and I was on one phone, and Pam was on the extension. Pam Harwood. So the woman says June Jeffries, and I said, "Yes." And she said she passed. Whereupon I became giddy and I threw down the phone and everything, I'm so excited. I think my mother was at work so I couldn't talk to her, but when I got off work, I went home and nobody was around. I went across the street and told Mr. and Mrs. Tyson, I'm running

around all giddy and everything. But then I got nervous because then I'm thinking what if I misheard her. What if she said she didn't pass. But Pam was on the other end, so she heard it too. So then I kind of waited. But I did get them, and I was admitted on a Wednesday at the City County Building in the ceremony there, and then we went over to the Sixth Circuit, over to District Court and got admitted. I got admitted to the Sixth Circuit and to that then. That was good. 1978. I got admitted November 8 or 7, so that's 40 years ago this month.

MR. WEAVER: We are at I think a good closing point for today. I have one more question that I want to ask, and it's kind of a hard question, so if you want to, you can answer it now or you can think about it, and we can return to it next session. In our first interview, you told a really great story about how strangely enough part of the reason you ended up at Wesleyan was the experience of having apple pie served with cheddar cheese on it. I thought that was a really fascinating story. I've never had apple pie with any kind of cheese on it. It reminded me of sort of the weird contingencies that happen and the ways you kind of look back sometimes at your life and think based on this one strange thing that happened, like things could have gone differently. We talk a lot about that, and we talk about the stories of our lives, things could have turned out one way or another, but was there any event or person that you haven't talked about yet that you think about in that way, that you think about and think, huh, if it had gone a little bit

different way, my life could have turned out totally different. I know that's a broad question.

MS. JEFFRIES: I do think about that, but even just like I told you how we just happened to go over into Vermont. If we hadn't done that, New England wasn't on my mind in going to college, in going to Wesleyan. My mother talked about Harvard and stuff, so maybe I would have applied to Harvard or wherever, and I was getting those letters, but just going on that trip like that.

People that I've met and things might go a different way. There probably are people like that and some things I've been told. I'll think about that one. But I think about what if my parents had stayed on the east side. I'm not an east side person, and I'd gone to different schools and met different people. Because I would say my friends' parents for me were very influential, and I gained a lot from them because like I said, my parents had not gone to college, but some of my friends' parents were doctors or different things and very influential. I'll say this briefly, I was in Detroit last month, and I ended up going to a birthday party for a woman I went to junior high and high school with. She is a judge, but when we were kids in junior high school, back then, which is the 1960s, her mother was a judge on Detroit Recorder's Court. She was the only Black woman judge on Detroit Recorder's Court, so as kids, you always knew that. Debbie posted something on Facebook the other day about her mother, and I sa'id even though I didn't know your mother, I knew she

was your mother, and I knew she was a judge and to be a little girl and to see a Black woman being a judge like that was important and significant.

I should say this, I mentioned Judge Willis Ward, the probate judge. When Gerald Ford died and his funeral was going on, my mother and I were in the car and had it on the radio, and George W. was speaking at the funeral, and he actually mentioned Judge Ward. So I can talk about that later. I was like wow, okay.

MR. WEAVER: Great. Well thank you very much. We will pick this back up.