



# ROSA FRANKLIN

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A LIFE IN HEALTH CARE, PUBLIC SERVICE,  
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

*by Tamiko Nimura*



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AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



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## A NOTE ON NAMES

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Rosa Lee Gourdine Franklin was born the fifth of eleven siblings—five boys and six girls. She is known by her close relatives as “Rosa Lee.” In military nursing school, following military conventions, she went by her last name, “Gourdine” (pronounced “Gur-dyne”). Even in 2019 her husband calls her “Gourdine” when he wishes to be emphatic about something, she says; they met as she was finishing nursing school.

In Tacoma, in Washington State, and elsewhere she is known widely just as “Rosa.” Sometimes children mistakenly call her “Rosa Parks,” to which she replies, “No, Rosa Parks is dead, but I’m still here.” Some, like her longtime family friend Melannie Denise Cunningham, call her “Miss Rosa”; still others in Tacoma’s Asian Pacific Islander American community know her affectionately as “Aunty Rosa.”

In keeping with the audience for this book who will know her mainly as “Rosa,” and for the sake of consistency throughout the book, that’s the name I have chosen to use. In my mind, though, I will call her “Senator Franklin,” with deepest respect for her accomplishments.

—Tamiko Nimura



## PROLOGUE

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In the late 1950s, Rosa Franklin knew that she wanted to buy a home in Tacoma.

With Rosa's husband in the military, Rosa and her young family had traveled for years and they were ready for a permanent home of their own. As a young woman in South Carolina, she had traveled between her parents' house in Cordesville and her relatives' house fifty miles away in Georgetown every summer. With her career, she graduated from nursing school in South Carolina, and then worked at hospitals in New Jersey and New York. Due to her husband's military service, the family had also lived in Germany for several years. Over the previous years, they had moved to Tacoma for a couple of years, back to Germany again, then over to Colorado. She had driven cross-country with her family for visits to her husband's relatives in Florida, then from Florida to Tacoma for residential moves. By the late 1950s, the Franklins had arrived in Tacoma with two young children attending school.

Rosa's parents had taught her about the importance of having a home. She was the direct descendant of South Carolina slaves. For the first seven years of her life, she grew up in a 5-room house that her father had built with his own hands. "You must always plant your roots in order to have something to come back to," her family had told her.

From slavery through emancipation and onward, home ownership meant a great deal to African Americans. Though Rosa didn't know it at the time, Tacoma had racially restrictive covenants in place during the 1950s: these represented the less visible racism of the Northern United States. These rules explicitly prohibited people of color from buying a house in certain areas of Tacoma. The 1944 covenant of Northmoor was an example: "No part or parcel of land or improvement thereon shall be rented or leased to or used or occupied, in whole or in part, by

any person of African or Asiatic descent, nor by any person not of the white or Caucasian race, other than domestic servants domiciled with an owner or tenant and living in their home.”<sup>1</sup> African American home ownership was becoming a part of the national cultural conversation: in 1959, Lorraine Hansberry’s now-classic play “A Raisin in the Sun” dramatizing one family’s fraught journey with home ownership, would be produced in Chicago and on Broadway. Home ownership for Rosa Franklin meant stability.

In Tacoma, Rosa and her young family were renting a house on J Street. Her husband, an engineer in the military, had been reassigned to Germany and sent to another base to await shipment. His youngest sister Yvonne was living with them, going to high school and helping with child care. Rosa’s son Werner was able to walk to his school on Tacoma Avenue. Their daughter Kim took ballet lessons and performed in recitals near their house at McCarver Elementary. Rosa was working night shifts as a labor and delivery nurse at Madigan, arriving home in time to take the children to get them ready for school, then going to classes for her bachelor’s degree at the College of Puget Sound.

For her family, it was time to buy a house.

So Rosa had called a realtor in Tacoma. As he was pulling up in his car to meet her, she was waiting in the doorway to greet him. She was going to tell him about the areas where she was interested in looking for a home.

He opened the car door and saw that she was African American.

He then turned around and was about to get back in the car.

But Rosa was not about to let him leave. She called him back. “No, come on, come on in,” she said. “My husband is overseas protecting this country, living in foxholes, in potholes, in whatever. And we are looking to buy.”

The realtor began to tell her about properties on the Eastside of Tacoma, where Tacoma’s racially restrictive covenants had driven many people of color.

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1 “No part or parcel”—Anderson, Anderson, and White, “Covenants for the Narrowmoor Additions,” 1944

“I’m looking to buy a house where I want to go,” said Rosa, “not where you want to take me.”

The realtor was shocked and apologetic.

The Franklins bought their first house in Tacoma on South Prospect Street that year. After they returned to Tacoma in the 1960s, they bought their second house on Asotin Street, where they have lived ever since.

Forty years later, Rosa Franklin would carry this experience, and a wealth of others, to the Washington State Legislature. The hallmarks of her long political career are clear in that early encounter with the Tacoma realtor: inviting people to talk through and across differences, bringing people to the table, asking the hard questions, and solving a problem.

Rosa’s life is a testament to more than sixty years of advocacy for equity, inclusion, and social justice. After a forty-two year career in nursing across a wide variety of sectors, Rosa turned to work in the Legislature. For twenty years, she travelled from her house on Asotin Street in Tacoma to Olympia—first as State Representative, then as State Senator, and as President Pro Tempore. She served as just the fourth Black person to be elected to Washington’s House of Representatives. She served in the House from 1991-1993 as the third Black woman in that legislative body. While in the House, she would serve on many committees, including Housing, and work to pass the Washington State Housing Policy Act: a piece of legislation which still stands today to help protect Washingtonians from housing discrimination.

From the House, she moved to the State Senate. In 1993, upon recommendation from her district, the Pierce County Council appointed her to fill the unexpired term of long-term Senator A.L. “Slim” Rasmussen. She won in the special election for Rasmussen’s seat in 1994 and was sworn in as the first African American woman to be elected to the Washington State Senate. She served in several leadership positions in the Democratic caucus, including Majority and Minority Whip, keeping track of attendance and votes. Constituents from Tacoma’s 29th Legislative District continued to elect her for 20 years. In 2001, her Senate colleagues elected her Senate President Pro Tempore, or “President Pro Tem” for short: the presiding officer in charge of the Senate in the

Lieutenant Governor's absence. She held the President Pro Tem position again from 2005 until her retirement in 2010.

Rosa Franklin's lifelong commitment to social justice is an inspiration in a time when many have lost faith in government. "I know of no other country with a better or more orderly process for expressing displeasure with the process of government," she wrote in a 1980 letter to the *Tacoma News Tribune*<sup>2</sup>. "Many of our leaders have fought over the last century to gain voting rights that were denied to many of us for various discriminatory reasons." In a sentiment that may feel familiar to many Americans now, Rosa has remained steadfast. "I, too, must admit that I share apprehension about many of those who ascended to power," her letter continued, "but that is not reason enough to leave the country. I belong here and have a stake in America's future and will work to that end."

While Rosa travelled for many years of her life, she has remained devoted to her roots in South Carolina and Tacoma.

This is her remarkable story.

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2 "I know of no other country"—Franklin, Rosa, "Running away solves nothing," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 1980

## CHAPTER ONE: CHILDHOOD

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### **“Black love is Black wealth.”**

Nikki Giovanni, “Nikki-Rosa”

On April 4, 1927, Rosa Lee Gourdine was the fifth child born to Henrietta Bryant and James Edwin Gourdine. She was the first girl in the family, preceded by four boys, all delivered by midwives in their house. She would be the first of six daughters.

Rosa was born in a five room clapboard house built by her father: a corn farmer, Sunday school teacher, and Works Progress Administration (WPA) worker. Her mother was a full-time homemaker. The house was on land given to her father by his uncle, a former slave who became a freedman. The family lived in Cordesville, an unincorporated community in Berkeley County, South Carolina, historically known for Moncks Corner as well as the location of a Civil War battle.

Rosa’s earliest memories come from the time after the “Roaring Twenties,” “where the living and spending of money was lavish for those who had it,” she now says. It was the Great Depression, and everybody was poor. The family lived mainly through bartering with neighbors, family, and friends, as well as the products they raised and James’s modest WPA salary. Raised early in a barter system which used things like eggs and farm produce, “I didn’t know there was such a thing as money,” Rosa says now. Her father James kept his rifle



*Rosa Lee Gourdine at age 8, near Aunt Julia’s, shortly after her move to Georgetown. 1934*

right over the front door, in case any unwanted animals (that could be useful later as dinner) appeared. “If a squirrel showed up in the tree in our yard,” says Rosa, “he was a goner.” Everyone did whatever they could to care for the family. Her father would preserve some of their harvest in straw, making a big bank out of it and saving potatoes there for the winter. They also cured meat for storage.

Rosa grew up surrounded by a large extended family. Her father’s mother, the matriarch of the family, lived just down the street. Cousins and aunts and uncles were frequent visitors. “There was no phone, so you could just yell,” she laughs. The neighboring families would help each other out during harvest and slaughter seasons. Rosa laughs that she never learned to milk a cow, though she knew how to call out and feed the chickens. She also remembers threshing and harvest time.

The Gourdine house is just across the street from the family’s church, Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal, built by and for African Americans in Moncks Corner. (As of 2019, her early childhood house and church still stand, and one of her sisters lives in a larger house on an adjacent property.) The road was later renamed “Doctor Evans Road” for an African American doctor who lived and practiced in the area. The church serves as both spiritual worship and community center. Rosa’s father taught Sunday school, but also served as the church’s unofficial overseer, janitor, and scribe. “Neighbors referred to him as ‘Reverend’ Gourdine,” says Rosa, “although he was not a preacher.” Growing up across from her church, surrounded by family and faith, was clearly an important foundation.

“Times were hard,” says Rosa now, “but as a child I didn’t know it.”

Rosa walked with other children in the area to a wooden four -room elementary school. She can still quote “Baby Ray” books (“Baby Ray had a little duck,” Rosa remembers, “and the duck said, ‘quack, quack,’”). She learned the basics through rote learning (the 3 R’s of “reading, writing, ‘rithmetic”). “I was good at that,” says Rosa, “because I loved to read.” With schools segregated, she grew up with all-Black classrooms, and her teachers provided loving care for their students.

The Gourdine home was modest. They had a wood stove, a fireplace,

an outhouse, and kerosene lamps which the children were responsible for keeping clean. As she says, “there were no amenities.” There was a chair to sit on and shared beds to sleep in. In the humid South Carolina summers, family members sometimes slept on the floor. There was a spring with water nearby which ran continuously, which Rosa and her family used for drinking water and sometimes for cold storage. Rosa describes her home as “a roof over our heads with caring parents. We learned to share, get the work done, care for each other, and respect our elders.”

As the first girl in the family, Rosa says that she learned to speak up and “fight her way” with four older brothers. Her oldest brother Edward was “the boss.” Her third oldest brother was the “smooth talker.” Nathaniel, her fourth oldest brother, was closest to her (and in 2019 is still living). Gender roles, however, were sharply defined: “Boys did the harvesting, girls did the homemaking. Women did the gardening,” Rosa remembers. She ran around with her brothers, climbing up fences and walls. But she also recalls one incident when she and Nathaniel climbed up to the attic in their house to look at an opening in the church across the road. When they climbed back down Rosa accidentally tipped over the family china closet, causing it to fall over and break some dishes inside. She doesn’t remember any punishment but does remember that “it did not go well” with her mother. Rosa remembers feeling anxious, waiting under the table for her father to come home. “No girl [was supposed to] be climbing up fences, walls and getting into attics,” says Rosa.

Although the Gourdines were already a large family, Rosa says that “their basic needs were met.” More importantly, the family and com-



*James Gourdine, Rosa's father, ca. 1920s.*

munity were lavish in their love— as the famous Nikki Giovanni poem says, “Black love is Black wealth.” Rosa remembers dressing in her Sunday best each week and celebrating “Children’s Day” each year at her church. She was part of a spiritual community that treasured its youth.

When Rosa was 7 years old, her life changed dramatically, and she would move from Cordesville. Her Aunt Julia Mayhams spoke to her parents, or perhaps had been speaking to them for a while. Julia was her mother Henrietta’s oldest sister. She had five children of her own, but all of them were grown up. The youngest, Miriam, was 10 years older than Rosa and in nursing school already. Aunt Julia had always had children in her house, and she and her husband Norridge did not want an “empty nest.” Julia asked Henrietta and James if Rosa could come to live with her and her husband in Georgetown, South Carolina, about fifty miles away. Henrietta and James agreed.

It wasn’t until 2018 that Rosa would hear about the terms of the agreement from her cousin Dorothy. Rosa could live with her Aunt Julia and Uncle Norridge on several conditions. First, Rosa had to be allowed to visit her biological parents every summer, so that she would know them and the rest of her siblings. Second, Julia and Norridge had to promise that they would not try to adopt Rosa legally, and would not change her last name. And so each summer Julia and Norridge would place Rosa on a train under the eyes of a conductor, and she traveled by herself to her birth home. This happened for the next several years, until the passing of her mother Henrietta. Rosa’s two youngest sisters went to live with another aunt in Charleston, South Carolina. Rosa visited them there as well.

Moving from rural Berkeley County to the busy and diverse seaport town of Georgetown must have felt in some ways like a world away for Rosa. The close-knit nature of her extended family may have enabled her to process this living arrangement as an addition, rather than a separation. Rosa says that she had “everything that a child could want,” but she still missed her parents and brothers back home. She feels “so lucky,” she says, to have two sets of parents, that for her it was “over the rainbow.”

Coming from a family of six children in Cordesville, Rosa became

like a cherished only child in Georgetown. She had a bedroom and bed to herself, a bicycle and piano lessons. The house had a Frigidaire. Rosa's Georgetown family burned coal for heat instead of wood like her family in the country. Cooking was done in a stove that burned wood and coal. There was a garden with fruit trees; she remembers her aunt doing a lot of baking and canning of fruits and vegetables for the family. The baking would all have to be done before Sunday, though, to allow for Sunday School and church. Her uncle worked at the post office and Rosa remembers riding her bike downtown to see him at work. They listened to radio shows, including special church music and religious programs every Sunday. Living on Orange Street, in a house near the harbor, she also lived "within the sound of the school bell."



*Henrietta Bryant Gourdine, Rosa's mother.  
(Franklin family collection) ca. 1920s.*

Education was a high priority in both of her families. With the denial of educational opportunities for African Americans dating back to slavery, her education was a focus in Rosa's earlier years. "You [might have enslaved my body, but you] don't enslave my mind," Rosa remembers her family saying. Her elders cherished their young people, and also maintained high expectations of them. Her "marching orders," she says, were to learn to read and write and go to college. "Education was a pathway to a better life," she recalls, "and my parents wanted that for us."

Rosa remembers this time of her life as full of play. She recalls squeezing into a tire and getting rolled; she remembers shooting marbles, climbing trees and fences. No matter what she did during playtime, though, she was expected to come home before the street lights came on. She was expected to answer, "yes, ma'am" when her aunt called for her, and go straight home. But "my education was number one," says Rosa. "If I

didn't do [my homework] first, I couldn't play."

"Those were wonderful years," she says now.

Rosa's aunt kept a lot of books which delighted Rosa, who was already an avid reader. The family also kept up with current events by listening to the radio as well as reading mainstream and African American newspapers like *The Lighthouse and Informer*, published by journalist and civil rights advocate John Henry McCray. At Howard High School, she was bullied by classmates who mocked her country way of speaking and called her "Funny Weevil." She did not retaliate, she says, because "bullying was not me." She remembers reading and memorizing classic American poetry and studying French later in high school. But she also remembers reading the poetry of African Americans like Phillis Wheatley and Paul Laurence Dunbar, and studying important African American historical figures like education reformer Mary McLeod Bethune. "I travelled the world in books," Rosa says now. Though Rosa had grown up in a loving and extended network of family and community, segregation prevented her from using public libraries.

Perhaps most exciting to Rosa, though, were the big ships that came in to Georgetown. She and her family lived just a few blocks from the harbor on Orange Street. The big ships came in regularly, and with them, sailors and merchant seamen from all over the world. Her aunt and uncle opened their home to sailors who were not able to find lodging elsewhere. Regardless of their national origin, the sailors still experienced racial discrimination in the South. Many of the seamen knew the Mayhams family would welcome them and open their home to them, often performing music with or for them in the evenings. "Neighbors always said they knew when the ships came in because of our house," Rosa remembered in a 2019 interview, "because of the music."<sup>3</sup> Aunt Julia also did laundry for the sailors as a source of income.

Rosa's aunt and uncle—really, both sets of her parents, she says—were "people who cared about other people." They taught her to respect every person, regardless of the color of their skin. In Georgetown she remembers delivering dinners to people who could not afford them or

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3 "Neighbors always said"—"Success, Defined by 11 Lutes"

for those who were unable to cook for themselves. “Before we sat down to eat,” she says, the family’s job was to care for others in their community. Her aunt and uncle were very active in their church. From these parents, too, Rosa learned about what it means to be of service to others. They taught her to work hard, study hard and fight hard for what is right.

Both of her families had taught her about the power of community. Her country life had taught her about families pooling their limited resources to make their collective lives better. Her city life had taught her that the struggle for many continued, and that her extended family would always be there for her. Indeed, both of her childhood houses would always serve as powerful reminders of her roots, of where things all began.



*Rosa's cousin Miriam had just graduated from Meharry Medical School and was a big influence on Rosa's applying to nursing school.*

### **Chapter 1 Source Notes**

- Unless otherwise noted, details from this chapter come from my oral history interview with Senator Franklin on January 24, 2019.



## CHAPTER TWO: SEEING THE WORLD

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Rosa's roots grew deep in South Carolina, but her family's loving and firm expectations fed her eagerness to learn more, make friends, and see the world. Her cousin Sara, Aunt Julia and Uncle Norridge's oldest daughter, was responsible for ensuring that she enrolled in college. Continuing the family tradition of high expectations, Sara wrote in Rosa's high school autograph book<sup>4</sup>:

*Dear Rosa Lee,*

*Your real education, fitting yourself for life, has not found you out of place, but waiting; and that same real education is now about to begin. Remember, we are depending on you to fill well your place.*

*Yours Lovingly, Sara*

Rosa was in 9th grade when her mother Henrietta died. Her beloved “second mother,” her Aunt Julia, had died three years earlier. She says very little about this time, saying “I wondered how I was going to make it without those two great women”<sup>5</sup>. She later learned that her Aunt Julia had instructed her three daughters to take care of her. “[Rosa’s] education comes first—she’s going to college,” she told her daughters.

Rosa's high school, Howard High, was another segregated school, and Rosa remembers that the school received secondhand books from the White high schools, including nearby Winyah High. At times Howard High lacked sufficient space and classes had to meet in the nearby church. Nevertheless, Rosa's teachers provided leadership and inspiration through that same high school autograph book from 1944.

“Dear Rosa Lee,” wrote one teacher, Anna Daniels, “Real merit of any kind cannot long be concealed; it will be discovered, and nothing

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4 “Autographs,” Franklin, Rosa, 1944

5 “I wondered how”—Franklin, Rosa, First Annual WILLO Storytelling Festival



*Rosa's graduation portrait from  
Howard High School. 1944*

can depreciate it but a man exhibiting it himself. It may not always be rewarded as it ought; but it will always be known. May all of your lofty ambitions become realities.”

“Dear Student,” wrote Rosa’s math teacher, J.R. Burrage, “Do you remember these words—Veni, Vidi, Vici? They fell from the lips of one of the world’s greatest generals—Caesar. Three V’s—Vim, Vigor, Victory. I can picture you coming through with victory like Caesar did. You can do it.”

Rosa’s caring teachers more than made up for a lack of classroom materials and space. “They stressed the importance of education,” says Rosa now, “and encouraged students

to strive to do their best. Knowing [that] there were many barriers to face, never give up.”

Rosa knew that she had to continue her education. After graduating high school, Rosa wanted to leave South Carolina “as fast as she could,” she laughs now. With the encouragement of her cousin Miriam (her Aunt Julia’s daughter), who was already a nurse, she applied for the United States cadet nurses’ program. Miriam had graduated from the nursing program at an historically Black college or university (HBCU), Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee.

While waiting for acceptance to the cadet nurses’ program, Rosa spent the summer in Knoxville, Tennessee with a married cousin Miriam and her husband John. Due to segregation, career options were still fairly limited for African Americans in 1944. Rosa started work at a hotel as an elevator operator, but her relatives were concerned about what she might be “exposed to” there. Miriam’s brother in law also worked there, and “he said definitely NO, that I should not work there,” says Rosa.

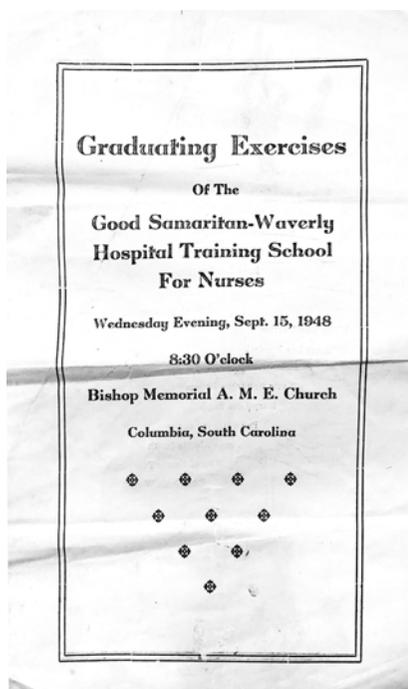
So Rosa applied to work at the hospital in Oak Ridge, not far from Knoxville. She began work in the housekeeping department, dusting and cleaning the clinics and the hospital bedroom floors. She was also able to scan through some of the medical books in the offices that she cleaned. She did not realize until much later that the town of Oak Ridge was involved in the war effort in a notorious way—as part of the Manhattan Project and its development of materials for the atomic bomb .

Later that summer Rosa’s Uncle Norridge died. Her cousins Dorothy and Sara (Julia and Norridge’s daughters) helped her to take her next steps. She returned to South Carolina to help care for her cousin Dorothy’s baby while waiting for acceptance to nursing school. Her cousin Sara had promised to help enroll her in classes and kept her promise for the spring semester at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg. In 1945 Rosa was accepted to the Good Samaritan Waverly Nursing School in Columbia, South Carolina. With the war ending, she was in the nation’s last class of cadet nurses. Good Samaritan Waverly was a wooden structure built in the 1920s by African Americans, for African Americans, as a way of meeting its own community health care needs: like her elementary and high schools, Good Samaritan was a clear example of her African American community’s response to segregation through resilience.

As Rosa remembered in a December 2006 letter to a researcher, she has “happy memories” of nursing school. Nursing in those days, she says, meant a lot more face time spent with patients, and a lot less technology than today. The students were a close-knit community who referred to each other affectionately using military conventions, by each other’s last names. (As of 2007, they were still holding reunions.) She



*Rosa graduating from nursing school in 1948, in her personal scrapbook — she wrote “My Desire” above the picture.*



*Program from Rosa Lee Gourdine's nursing school graduation. 1948*

cared for patients who had burns, and others who had cervical cancer. In her nursery assignment, she often prepared baby formula. She washed surgical sponges and autoclaved surgical supplies.

“Now that I think about it,” says Rosa, “it was kind of primitive.” The nursing students took classes in Good Samaritan Waverly’s building with a house next door for the nurses. They also took classes nearby at Columbia’s Benedict College, an historically Black liberal arts college operating on the site of a former plantation. To receive clinical training or experience in areas not offered by Good Samaritan, the students also spent their last semester in other nursing schools out of state. For this, Rosa went to Saint Philip, another African

American hospital, in Richmond, Virginia.

Rosa graduated as Class President in September 1948, presenting the school with a class gift (an electric clock), and reading a poem that she had written for the occasion. The class’s motto was “Honor, Fidelity, and Service.” The school had created yet another nurturing educational community for Rosa and provided yet another shining example of African American resilience. After integration, financial woes and an overload of Medicaid recipients forced the closure of Good Samaritan. The eventual demolition of Good Samaritan’s facilities is still a sore point for Rosa. “The long-standing hospital had met a need and should have survived,” she says, “however, embedded systemic inequality took its toll.” The school and hospital’s closure in 1973 served as important reminders for Rosa that integration could be a mixed blessing if it also meant the closure of historically African American facilities and resources.

Rosa knew about the requirements and demands of nursing, but she also knew how to have fun and laugh—a theme which would carry over into her time in the Washington State Legislature. Good Samaritan was within walking distance from the United Service Organizations (USO) club. On their days off, the nursing students would frequently go to the USO club and “dance the night away,” Rosa says, with the GI’s from Fort Jackson. She was also involved in a singing trio with some of her colleagues who sang at the USO, but, she says, “not that often.” Once, Rosa confesses, she and her friends did not make it back to their dormitory rooms in time for bed checks. They were “grounded,” meaning that their extended weekend and night hours in/out privileges were removed for a short time.

“It was dancing, it was singing because they were all going off to war, and there would be army songs, love songs, all kinds of songs about going away and ‘I’ll see you again,’” Rosa remembers. She remembers the popular song “The White Cliffs of Dover” from this time, with its hopes for peace “tomorrow, when the world is free.”<sup>6</sup>

At the USO, Rosa got to know her future husband James Franklin, a young African American soldier stationed at Fort Jackson. He was later assigned to Fort Dix/Camp Kilmer, New Jersey to await shipment to Germany. She remembers young Franklin (she calls him by his last name) as “a wild, handsome young soldier who ran around with a more settled, mature crowd.” She later learned from Franklin’s mother that he knew he was going to marry Rosa.

“Of course, he did not show it much,” Rosa says now.



*Rosa (center, rear) with friends from  
Good Samaritan Waverly  
Nursing School, ca. 1946.*

6 “Tomorrow, when the world is free”—Kent, Walter, “(There’ll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover,” 1942



*James Franklin, Rosa's husband, while stationed in Germany, ca. early 1950s.*

Rosa's family did not really want her to get married; she was young, her husband would be in the military and overseas, and she had her career to pursue. Nevertheless, Rosa graduated in September, they married at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey in November 1948, and then he left the next day for Germany. Franklin's junior military rank meant that he was not allowed to bring his family to live with him—so they did not see each other again for two years.

Today Rosa counts her marriage of seven decades strong as one of her greatest accomplishments.

Wherever Rosa went, she made new friends, became involved in the community, and stayed employed in her nursing profession. In the 1950s and early 1960s, she would expand her family and travel to learn about other cultures and people.

With Franklin stationed overseas in Germany, Rosa went to work. At this time, hospitals sent their recruitment materials to the nursing schools, so Rosa was looking at magazines, letters, and catalogs. She applied to the Morristown, New Jersey State Hospital system and was hired for a position at Greystone Park, a psychiatric hospital.

First open in 1877, Greystone Park was supposed to represent a significant development in its treatment of the mentally ill<sup>7</sup>. The plans followed the approach of Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, a Quaker physician who believed that mental health patients should experience the benefits of being outside in natural surroundings. The campus covered close to 800 acres, large enough to accommodate physicians and nurses to live onsite. Each ward was designed for 20 patients, each with its own exercise room, dining room, and parlor. Wool carpets ran along the halls. The

7 "First opened in 1877"—"Preserve Greystone history

facility once had its own post office, police and fire station, and a working farm. Since physical labor was thought to be beneficial for patients, treatments included industrial work and farm labor.

But by the time Rosa arrived at Greystone, treatment for the mentally ill included frontal lobotomies, hydrotherapy, and electroshock therapy. She remembers not the luxury of the facilities but the underground tunnels connecting the buildings. The facility struggled with overcrowding over its long history, including the time after World War II with a spike in population due to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “There were locked wards, catatonic patients standing in one spot for long periods of time,” Rosa remembers. “Nurses working through a window from a locked nurses station.”<sup>8</sup> She does not remember anyone being discharged to go home during her employment there. It was a challenging first position for a young nurse; Rosa had just turned 20. “At times it seemed you could hear the constant cry of patients,” she recalls now, “especially, it seemed, at the full moon.”<sup>9</sup>

At Greystone, Rosa worked mainly with mental health patients. While employed there, she lived on campus in Voorhees Cottage and worked the night shift, a pattern which would continue even into her days of parenthood and beyond. She spent her days off in New York City with her brothers, taking the train, biking in Central Park, going to see plays, eating at restaurants, and walking around downtown.

Rosa did not realize it then, but the experience at Greystone would be a formative one for her nursing career, setting some of the foundation



*Rosa (seated) with friends at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, ca. 1950.*

8 “There were locked wards”—Franklin, “Telling My Story”

9 “At times”—Franklin, Rosa, “Telling My Story”

for her later experience in Tacoma working with veterans and people with physical and mental disabilities. She saw firsthand how people with disabilities were treated and how they were underserved by the health care system. “Here again,” Rosa says today, “the suffering of helpless human beings impacted my life.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the challenging work environment, Rosa’s work schedule at Greystone was difficult. Nurses had one day off in a week, alternating with two days off the next week. Wanting a different schedule, she decided to apply to New York’s Bellevue Hospital and Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. In the summer of 1949, she was hired at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital and she moved to New York.

Rosa went to work in labor and delivery. Brooklyn Jewish was another hospital created by and for a community in the face of segregation. She made good friends with the other nurses and with the physicians, and she still has photos of the staff from her time there. She remembers monitoring her patients, who would sometimes speak to her “in a foreign language,” probably Hebrew. And she also remembers helping women in labor, doing fetal heart checks and staying with them through the birth process. She remembers the babies being born, and the bris rituals and parties that followed the birth of male babies. “The team of doctors and nurses that I worked [was] outstanding,” Rosa says.<sup>11</sup> In addition to her main job, she often worked several extra private nursing jobs, sometimes at Harlem Hospital.

The war overseas came home for Rosa in another sense. She still remembers seeing the tattooed numbers on her Jewish patients’ arms. Though she had not travelled to Europe yet, she would carry that memory with her into her future work for social justice. “I was reminded of the hostilities people have faced,” Rosa says now. “[It] took me back to how the slaves were treated simply because they were of a different color and race.”<sup>12</sup> Later in the 1950s, Rosa would visit Dachau, connecting the horror of the death camps with the arm tattoos of the Jewish women refugee patients she had nursed back at the hospital in Brooklyn.

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10 “Here again”—Franklin, Rosa, “Telling My Story”

11 “The team of doctors”—Franklin, Rosa “Telling My Story,” 10

12 “I was reminded”—Franklin, Rosa, “Telling My Story,” 10-11

For much of her life, Rosa has advocated travel as a way to broaden one's perspective: as a form of pursuing a broader education, a deeper view of life.

Rosa's first international trip was on the *Ile de France*, a transatlantic ship made famous in part by Jerome Kern's song "A Fine Romance" ("You're as hard to land as the *Ile de France*"). But the ship was more than a name in a song lyric to Rosa. She has told the story of her travel on that ocean liner a few times—that trip from September 1950 was clearly one of the highlights of her life. "I was seeing the world," Rosa says now.

The *Ile de France* was an international hallmark of steamship travel; its lavish furnishings, decorations and amenities were renowned.<sup>13</sup> It was the first transatlantic luxury liner to be decorated in what was considered "current" style—a lavish Art Deco style. The ship had its own indoor swimming pool, a shooting gallery, a garage for sixty cars, a bowling alley, a movie theater, and a merry-go-round.

Rosa, however, was traveling at the tourist level. Her third-class sleeping cabin did not have any portholes. And though she remembers her trip fondly, she was terribly seasick for most of the 9-day trip. The kitchens on the *Ile de France* were known to be serving some of the best cuisine on the Atlantic; Rosa still has one of the oversized parchment-printed full-color menus from the ship, listing items such as filet of sole with champagne grapes (*le Filet de Sole de Dieppe aux Raisins de Champagne*) and fois gras medallions jellied in Périgord truffles (*le Medallion de Fois gras en Gelée aux Truffles du Périgord*).<sup>14</sup>



*On Rosa's days off at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, she would travel to visit friends, or go biking in Central Park. 1950s*

13 "The *Ile de France*"—"S.S. *Ile de France*"

14 "Le Filet de sole"—*Ile de France*: Menu

The Ile de France meant adventure and seeing the world beyond the United States for the first time for Rosa. As she left the only country she'd ever known, she remembers standing on the deck of the Ile de France with the other passengers, looking back at the skyline of New York City, watching the Statue of Liberty disappear. She was traveling to Europe for the first time.

Rosa's education in high school French gave her some preparation. She remembers speaking some French to others, and then those people responding to her with very quick French after that. The primary purpose of the trip was to reunite with her husband, their first reunion in two years since their marriage in November 1948. Her first stop in Europe would be England, where she got to see its famous "white cliffs of Dover" ("those are supposed to be white?," she remembers), then Le Havre, and then taking a train to Paris, then to Gelnhausen, Germany, where Franklin was stationed.

Though Rosa didn't know it at the time, she was also going to see the aftermath of World War II in Europe, to see a continent rebuild itself. In Le Havre, the home port of the Ile de France, she saw for herself the physical toll of war on cities. Three-quarters of the buildings in Le Havre were destroyed during World War II, and in 1950, the city was still recovering from war.

However, in Paris, Rosa would revel in the "wonderful" energy of the city, the camaraderie among people of all colors, the beauty of the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Élysées. When she got off the ship, she remembers a Frenchman walking up to her, saying he had been to America. He helped her get to the next station to get to Germany. She felt different in Paris: free from a racial divide, from segregation. African-American veterans of the Second World War were treated differently in Paris and some of them would come home to rude awakenings.

In Germany, Rosa remembers farms and American forces that were helping rebuild them. She and Franklin stayed with the Moutons, a American family, but with her husband at work much of the time, she spent a lot of her time with other military families there. She remembers Germany, at this time, feeling "very militaristic, still recovering."

Having seen larger perspectives—first brought to Rosa through books, then through the international sailors at her aunt and uncle’s house in Georgetown—then to see some of the best and the worst of what people could do to each other, then to see the country, crisscrossing it several times—these may be some of the reasons why the Ile de France stands out so clearly for her. She would travel often with family or friends. As a child growing up in Georgetown, her travel was in books, she says now, but her time in Europe was an opportunity to see and enjoy “the real stuff.”



*Rosa Franklin in her  
cadet nurse uniform, ca. 1948.*

When Franklin’s first tour of duty was complete, Rosa thought that he was going to return to the United States. But he reenlisted in the army, and went back to Germany as a non-commissioned officer, this time going back to Darmstadt to help with the rebuilding efforts. “When he told me he had reenlisted and he was going back to Germany... I said, Okaaaaay,” she says.

When she returned from Europe, Rosa knew she was going to continue moving forward. She had been saving up and rented a first-floor apartment on St. Marks Avenue in Brooklyn, and bought her first car, a green Chevrolet. A neighbor taught her how to drive, and after a couple of attempts, she got her license.

“And what did I use it for? We would take the car... to leave town,” Rosa says, laughing.

“Back in those days, you followed the signs. You followed the road. You got a map,” she says. She drove to Washington, DC to visit friends. And soon she was driving across the country, following truckers because they were the safest people to follow. She liked to drive at night. Rosa once

drove an elderly woman to Virginia while on her way to South Carolina to visit her family. Rosa's family were concerned to see her with a car, driving by herself.

A couple of years later, Rosa returned to Germany. Franklin had been promoted and was finally able to have his family with him in Europe. In the early 1950s, the Franklins started their family with their son Werner and then their first daughter, Kim. She stayed home with the children for two years; with many people in that area looking for work, American civilian nurses were not often hired. So Rosa took her family all over Europe to travel and see the sights.

Rosa had seen the aftermath of war for herself. She saw whole city blocks that had been leveled. She had seen evidence of the worst divisions between humanity. As a result, she would dedicate the rest of her life to bring people together. She knew firsthand the importance of education, of seeing different perspectives, of bringing different people together, and of seeing her place in history.

"I had to expand my range!" she says now: widening her arms as if to embrace everything.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### TACOMA, TAKE ONE; EUROPE, TAKE TWO

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Home for Rosa Franklin has been her Tacoma house on Asotin Street for many years now. She’s loved Tacoma for decades. When she first arrived in 1954, however, it was a different story. “I thought it was the worst place [at first],” Rosa says now, laughing.

#### **Tacoma, Take One**

When Franklin completed his tour of duty in Germany, he was assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington. They returned from Germany, stopping first in New York to pick up their car at the Port. Then they drove to South Carolina to see her family, and then down to Florida to visit Franklin’s family. In Florida the couple picked up James’s sister, Yvonne. Since Rosa planned to go back to work, they knew that they would have to think about childcare. Yvonne was high school age by then, and she joined them in their move to help care for the children.

While driving towards Tacoma, the Franklins heard about the news of desegregation and the United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. “It was mid-century and time for all to know that ‘separate but equal’ was a longtime barrier in education for African Americans,” says Rosa now.<sup>15</sup> They were driving across the country on their way from the East Coast to the West Coast. Rosa had attended segregated schools in the South, and though she credits her teachers for their loving care, she also knew the disadvantages of such an education. She was ready to take up the fight against discrimination at home.

The Franklins stayed in Tacoma from 1954 to 1959. After staying at home for two years in Germany to be with her children, Rosa was able

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15 “It was mid century”—Franklin, Rosa “Telling My Story”

to work again, this time in the labor and delivery unit at the U.S. Army's Madigan General Hospital.

Franklin had heard Tacoma was a good place for military families, with good schools. But at first, Rosa wasn't really sure if it was a good fit. She had lived in New York City, and Tacoma did not seem to have the amenities of a big city. Their family stayed at a rented place in downtown Tacoma until they found housing at Fort Lewis. But once they arrived on base, the accommodations weren't much better; they stayed in the old World War II hospital at North Fort Lewis, off the main base. There was the notorious "Tacoma aroma" commonly attributed to the paper mills, the U.S. oil refinery, and the sediment and pollution in Commencement Bay. And, of course, it rained. She didn't like the weather.

Yet with all of these factors, the Franklins became "Washingtonians by choice," as Rosa is now quick to say. They grew to love the retail and theaters in downtown Tacoma, the beautiful mountains, snowy winters, and friendly surroundings. Tacoma's location between Portland and Seattle made for easy drives up or down Highway 99. "After five years of liquid sunshine and developing web feet," says Rosa, "I fell in love with the place."

"It was a different time," Rosa says about Tacoma in the 1950s. "People didn't lock their doors." And by this time, African Americans in Tacoma had developed a thriving community, with growth from the region's expansion of Fort Lewis-McChord and the shipyard activity during World War II. There were the women who built the Colored Women's Club, women who "were very much involved within the community," says Rosa. There were Black-owned businesses downtown. A young African American veteran named Harold Moss had just come from Detroit and would face housing discrimination himself. (He would later become the city's first African American City Council member in 1970 and then the city's first Black mayor in 1994.)

"There was a strong African American community working for desegregation, for social justice, back in that era," says Rosa now. "I had to fight [discrimination] at Madigan [Hospital]."

At Madigan, Rosa says, racial integration was not going smoothly.



*Left to right: Werner, James, Rosa, and Kim Franklin at the USO Club in Germany. 1950s*

There were a number of White patients and Black doctors. There was only one African American doctor in the Labor and Delivery department, and White patients who refused to be seen by that doctor. “And I said, that’s not going to happen,” says Rosa. “Even though desegregation of the military had taken place, there were people still with segregated minds.”

Rosa knew she had to speak up. She scheduled a meeting with the commander in charge. That day of the appointment there was snow on the ground, Rosa remembers. She bundled up her two young children in the car and took them with her to the meeting. Having heard many stories of negative repercussions, Rosa wanted to make sure that the visit did not end up reflecting poorly on her personnel record. So she brought a young lawyer to her meeting, one of the first African American lawyers in Tacoma, by the name of Jack Tanner.

Born in Tacoma, Jack Tanner was the son of a longshoreman and became a longshoreman himself.<sup>16</sup> Tanner served in a segregated unit in the military during World War II. After receiving his law degree at

16 “Born in Tacoma”—Benton, Monica, “Jack Tanner (1919-2006),” BlackPast.org

the University of Washington and successfully passing the bar, however, he was still working as a longshoreman. Prospects for a Black attorney in the 1950s were slim. But Rosa knew and consulted with Tanner, who specialized in civil rights. He and her husband played golf together in one of the African American country clubs in the Tacoma area. Rosa hired Tanner from his downtown office and brought him to her meeting. It's hard to say what effect Tanner's presence had in the meeting, but it probably helped.

“You know what [the commander] told me? ‘I’m not prejudiced, I have a Black chauffeur,’” says Rosa, shaking her head in disbelief. “A belief which was unacceptable to me.”

Rosa became even more determined to fight for social justice. The encounter with the commander did not prevent her from finding employment as a nurse, and she stayed in health care for another two decades. “Despite the limits placed on us by segregation,” as Rosa wrote later to a correspondent in a rare statement of her own accomplishment, “I have done relatively well in medicine.”<sup>17</sup>

Rosa also knew that she wanted to be able to be involved in her children's education. Parental involvement, she says now, meant that someone was always home for the kids when they got out of school. It also meant leading a Cub Scout troop for her son, and later a Girl Scout troop for her daughters. In the 1950s, she remembers packing the troop into her car and taking them on field trips to the Wonder Bread factory and to the ice cream factory. Rosa also remembers a downtown Tacoma filled with restaurants and movie theaters. She remembers that teachers and other community members who watched out for her kids. “Don't get into trouble,” she told her children, “because I will hear about it before you get home.” Kids walked to school, “and you would expect them back at a certain time .” Sometimes, Rosa remembers, Werner would stop and play with his friends after school.

Rosa had plans for her own education, too. Like other nursing graduates from her cohort, she wanted to continue her education. She enrolled in classes at the College (later University) of Puget Sound to work towards

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17 “Despite the limits”—Franklin, Rosa, letter to Marcia Wynn's Brown

a Bachelor's degree in nursing. However, she soon discovered that she would have to repeat much of the coursework she had taken at Good Samaritan Waverley. Upon the suggestion of her faculty advisor, she changed majors and pursued a double degree in Biology and English. She still has her college notebooks where she drew different species of birds for Zoology. She has fond memories of these years.

In the 1950s, though, Rosa would have to wait to graduate. Franklin was reassigned to Germany again. James' sister Yvonne had graduated from high school and gotten married by then, and Rosa's youngest sister Miriam was living with them at this point. Back across the country they drove again: down to Florida to see Franklin's family, back up to South Carolina to see her family, and drop her sister off.

After the Franklins' first stay in Tacoma, the next stage of Rosa's life would take her back to Europe, then to Colorado—and finally back to Tacoma again.

### **Europe, Take Two**

Before too long, Franklin was stationed in Germany once again. In Germany, Rosa was able to find work, this time as a “Gray Lady” Red Cross volunteer. Soon after, she was able to work in the Field Hospital in Munich. She returned to the night shifts, working with military and civilian nurses in the labor and delivery unit. Her two children Werner and Kim wanted a younger sister, and they got their wish: the Franklins' youngest child, Sara, was born in 1962. The family traveled a great deal while living in Europe: camping in the Riviera, sightseeing in Italy with the Leaning Tower of Pisa and other sights, and visiting castles in Holland and Denmark. There were American Express-sponsored tours, where several other military families would travel with them.

Due to safety concerns, Rosa was worried about traveling to Berlin, and did not do so until 1959. Rosa remembers being in Bavaria, hearing about President Kennedy's famous “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech in 1963. The Kennedy years felt like “a bright time” for Rosa: a time of progress in social justice, and a time where the country was moving forward from the war.

Munich was a cultural hub: full of American musicians, performers, expatriates. Rosa was awed at walking through historical sites she'd only read about in the newspapers. She was sobered to walk through places where Hitler had given speeches. She visited Dachau then. When President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Rosa was on duty at work. After that, she remembers “just coming home.”

Some fifty years later, in a 1991 *Seattle Times* interview, Rosa remembered the impact of those visits in Europe: “[They] reinforced my feeling to work for peaceful solutions, [that] this could not happen again—or, it could happen if you're not involved.”<sup>18</sup>

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18 “[They] reinforced my feeling”—Savalle, Jordan, *Seattle Times*, 1991

## CHAPTER FOUR: “CHANGE IS NEEDED”

*(Community Involvement, Nursing, and Local Government)*

“Change is needed,” said Rosa. “I am moving forward.”

In the late 1960s Rosa was beginning to talk about running for local office as one way to start making change happen, but she could have been talking about almost every aspect of her life in the 1960s through the 1980s.

The Franklins came back to the United States in 1964, first to Colorado Springs where they stayed for two years. Though Rosa worked in labor and delivery for a summer at Swedish Hospital in Seattle, where her sister Miriam lived, she decided to change directions in her nursing career and began working at a Norton Nursing Home in Colorado. After years in maternal health care, she says, “I needed a break.” Here we could say that she began her turn towards becoming a generalist, rather than a specialist, in health care. “I needed to see what was going on,” she would say, repeatedly.

Returning to Tacoma in 1966 felt “like coming home,” Rosa says. She loved the people she had met in Tacoma. She loved her church community in Tacoma. The women’s group at her church, known as “Women of the Chapel,” sponsored refugees from Vietnam and assisted these incoming families.



*Rosa’s campaign flyer for her 1973 City Council run. (Courtesy of Washington State Historical Society)*

These decades, the 1960s through the 1980s, are a bit of a blur for Rosa now. Considering that she was raising three children, working at least one full-time nursing job (as well as the occasional private job on the side) while earning a double Bachelor's degree and then a Master's degree. She graduated from the University of Puget Sound in 1968 with degrees in Biology and English. And she didn't stop there; while at Madigan, she enrolled at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), graduating in 1974 with a Master's in Social Science and Human Relations. She took continuing education classes at community colleges like Bates and Pierce in Tacoma, as well as a three-month certification in Seattle as a women's health specialist.

As she said in a 1995 interview with Elizabeth Walter, "Education is the tool by which you then rise, rise above."<sup>19</sup>

Add onto all of these activities her multiple forms of community involvement: political advocacy on the state, county and local levels; professional associations large and small; and social justice work.

People often ask her when she slept during this time. "Whenever I could," she laughs now.

For the sake of clarity, we can tease apart three major strands and themes: nursing, community involvement, and political advocacy. But the important thing to understand about her life here? As she says, "they were all really running together." They were intertwined; they were all about helping others in her community and making a difference.

To look for the models for Rosa's community engagement, it helps to look back to the foundations for community that she learned from her family. "They were people who tried to help, not just sit back and complain," she says. They had taught her to "become engaged with your community, wherever you are." She also cites the Black press in the segregated South and the NAACP as civil rights organizations whose inspiring work she remembers from the South, as well as her work with the Tacoma branch of the organization. Her family's expectations, combined with her own experience with injustice, propelled her towards action. She saw that change was needed.

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19 "Education is the tool..."—Walter, Elizabeth, 15

When asked about her activism, Rosa reframes the question gently as a question of advocacy, preferring that word to activism. It's a word that you should use when you want to advocate for your issues, things that deserve your support. Being an advocate means being involved. It means speaking up, to be out there and engaged, "not just to talk."

### **Community Engagement: Local Government**

Rosa focused on local government as a place where she felt she could work for change. The 1970s were a time of active Tacoma involvement for her.

At this time, Rosa was appointed to serve on several Tacoma governing committees, including the Citizen Budget Review, Land Use, Human Resources Task Force, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employee Substance Abuse Committee. Part of her work with the Pierce County Planning Commission focused on redistricting committees on the city and county levels.

Rosa also served on larger health-related committees and commissions including the Pierce County Health Council. Along with Lorraine Wojahn, who would also become a Washington State Senator, Rosa joined the all-volunteer board of the nonprofit Sound Health Association in 1973. Sound Health was patterned after Seattle's Group Health. Though nonprofit health care organizations had been around since the 1920s, Tacoma's Sound Health Association was the very first health maintenance organization to be granted federal funding from President Nixon's 1973 Health Maintenance Organization Act. As *Tacoma Daily News* reporter Howard Ferguson explained it, the "emphasis [was] on the word 'maintenance,'" with a focus on preventive health and bringing together a group of physicians under one larger insuring agent.

By 1981, the *News Tribune* was



Rosa's campaign flyer for her 1973 City Council run. (Courtesy of Washington State Historical Society)

calling Rosa a “civic leader,”<sup>20</sup> reporting on her joint request with Tom Dixon of the Tacoma Urban League to the City Council to add a minority candidate to the committee focused on Tacoma’s redistricting efforts. Along with other people of color, she was advocating for diversity of representation in Tacoma’s local government.

Under the federal Hatch Act of 1939, Rosa could not work as a federal employee and participate in political activity, such as volunteering for the Democratic Party, campaigning for candidates, or speaking at political events. Rosa decided to resign from Madigan and serve other populations in need of health care. She decided to leave civil service to accept a position that would not curtail her political involvement or community advocacy.

In response to social unrest, urban violence, and criticism of the “Urban Renewal” project, President Johnson authorized funding for the “Model Cities” initiative. The program was part of the President’s “War on Poverty,” aimed at reforming federal programs that provided social services. Tacoma’s Hilltop neighborhood, in particular, received part of this funding. In 1972, the program granted funds to the Hilltop Children’s Clinic and what was then known as the Center for Mentally Retarded Children—both organizations where Rosa would eventually work.

### **Nursing: Caring for Women and Children**

Nursing continued to be a part of Rosa Franklin’s life here. In contrast to her first time through Madigan, the veterans this time were coming back from the wars in Korea and Vietnam. In contrast to the treatments she saw at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, now she saw new pharmaceutical therapies (such as Thorazine) for mental health at American Lake Veterans Hospital in Lakewood. Dedicated in 1924, the facility was chartered solely for neuropsychiatric treatment<sup>21</sup>. Rosa’s night shifts at American Lake were familiar work, consisting of making beds, checking on patients and monitoring patient medications.

Rosa also partnered with other community members in Tacoma working to provide health care to low-income and uninsured communities of

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20 “a civic leader”, “Two black leaders seek minority redistricting input,” *The News Tribune*, 1981

21 “Dedicated in 1924”—“Our History, American Lake Division”

color. She remembers working with Dr. George Tanbara and his family at a volunteer-run medical clinic originally housed in the Lister Elementary School basement. Originally from California, Tanbara was a Japanese American physician who set up his own private practice in Tacoma because he could not find employment due to postwar racial animosity. Rosa was involved with the Links club, a national Black women's club. She was part of the Tacoma chapter who selected Tanbara to run the Charles Drew Sickle-Cell Anemia Clinic in 1972<sup>22</sup>.

Rosa was also involved in professional nursing associations, especially in efforts to integrate them. She was active in the Washington State Nurses Association, which largely served the White nursing community at the time. She became Legislative Chair of the Pierce County Nurses Association, coordinator of the 6th Congressional District and National Convention Delegate of the American Nurses Association. Along with Christine Miller and others, she also helped to establish the Tacoma Ebony Nurses Association in 1971. In addition, she supported the work of the Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization, an organization dedicated to providing "financial aid and scholarships to students of African heritage who pursue studies leading to careers in professional nursing."<sup>23</sup>

In 1970 Rosa responded to an advertisement for a program coordinator at the "Center for Mentally Retarded Children" which was located at property on Sixth Avenue and Grant St, donated by the Hilltop neighborhood's Trinity United Presbyterian Church. At this period, children with special needs, intellectual or physical, were not adequately served (if at all) in public school classrooms. "Teachers didn't know what to do with [these kids]," Rosa says. The



*Rosa Franklin with Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, Democratic Picnic at Spanaway Park, 1981.*

22 "She was part of"—Primomo and York, 6-7

23 "Financial aid and scholarships"—Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Organization

Center, with the support of parents, served these children who otherwise were not in any educational setting.

Rosa's job was to create educational programming for these children and their families, especially their mothers. To better learn about the needs of this population, she enrolled in classes at Bates Community College. The Center provided play time as well as courses on daily living, such as hand washing and basic learning skills. Older children came by after school to volunteer and help.

A highlight of Rosa's time at the Center was a specific program where the students performed and sang songs. Their parents cried, they were so moved and overjoyed to see what their children could do. With clinical experience, along with her volunteer experience with the Washington State Association for Mentally Retarded Children, Rosa was "placed into a larger movement," as UW Tacoma nursing Professor Janet Primomo says, to place these children in mainstream schools, rather than institutions.<sup>24</sup> In the two years that Rosa worked, she was given more impetus to work for change. This work reinforced her belief that everyone should be given the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Upon leaving the Center for Mentally Retarded Children, Rosa shifted her focus back to health care in Tacoma. Her fight for social justice continued, seeing yet again how health care for minority communities, especially African American communities, was intertwined with civil rights. Preventive health care was an unmet need for children in the Hilltop.

"Some hospitals were more amenable to seeing people of color; St. Joseph's was one; TG [Tacoma General] was not," she says now. "I had to raise Cain."

According to a 1970 *Tacoma Daily News* article, children living in the Hilltop lacked basic immunizations, experienced higher rates of illness, and had lower growth rates than children in higher economic groups.<sup>25</sup> As an outreach nurse at the Hilltop Children's Clinic, Rosa's job was primarily to "get kids in the door," and check on children of color in the neighborhood. In a 2014 interview, she talks about going

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24 "Placed into a larger movement"—Primomo, Janet, "Community Activist," 6

25 "According to a 1970 *Tacoma Daily News*"—"Hilltop Kids Healthier," *Tacoma Daily News*, 1970



*At a rally for Congressman Mike Lowry, Rosa Franklin and other Democratic Party members visit with presidential candidate Walter "Fritz" Mondale. 1983*

“from door to door within a defined area in order to get children into the clinic in order to get their screening and immunizations, eyes, ears [examined].”<sup>26</sup> Run by Dr. De Maurice Moses, the clinic based at the Tacoma Community House on 1311 South M Street, was open twice a month on Wednesday mornings. The same *Tacoma Daily News* article reported that the clinic served close to 1,000 children, most of them under 5 years old.

Somewhere between working multiple jobs, serving on community boards and serving the Pierce County Democratic Party, Rosa applied for the Gynecorps Training Program. Upon acceptance she underwent training as a Women’s Health Care Specialist.

The Gynecorps program was a federally funded program at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle. In July of 1974, Rosa began the 16 week course with a class of about 7-9 students. In a 1978 article for the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, the program’s faculty physicians and nursing staff described the program’s major objective: to “[deliver] preventive care in obstetrics and gynecology to populations of

26 “From door to door”—Walter, Elizabeth, “Small Town Activist,” 18

high-risk, low-income, and/or underserved women.”<sup>27</sup> They learned about anatomy, physiology, gynecology, obstetrics, and counseling, with the belief that students would return to their communities to deliver care.

With Rosa’s experience and Gynecorps training, she was well-prepared to work at Tacoma’s Alice Hamilton Clinic (named for a physician who worked in Chicago’s tenements at the turn of the century). In the wake of the 1970s feminist movement, women’s health became a focus for many in the health care field. With this focus came the creation of free women’s clinics. At the time, it wasn’t uncommon for women to be uncomfortable discussing health issues with their primary care physicians. The Alice Hamilton Clinic was part of Tacoma’s response to this need with an emphasis on preventive care. The clinic operated on a drop-in basis from 5-9PM on Thursdays in the basement of the Asbury United Methodist Church at 56th and South Puget Sound Avenue. Patients were charged on a sliding scale.

At Alice Hamilton, Rosa performed routine gynecological examinations including preventive care and Pap smears. And though the clinic had no prescriptive authority, they were able to offer medical counseling, outreach, and outside referral. They received a grant to conduct Pap smear tests from the National Cancer Screening Project .

At the time, “traditional” (read: white, male) physicians in a hospital setting were still the trusted medical authorities. But at the clinic, “women can ask questions that they are reluctant to discuss with their doctors. We are women talking to other women,” Rosa explained to a *Tacoma Daily News* reporter in 1975<sup>28</sup>. Judging from Rosa’s comments, it’s clear that the clinic had to overcome skepticism among potential patients, as well as the general community. “We don’t fool ourselves that we are meeting all women’s needs,” Rosa said later in a 1976 *Tacoma News Tribune and Sunday Ledger* article. “But we are striving to be a model within the community, to perhaps free the doctors from routine tasks and to acquaint people with preventive health.”<sup>29</sup>

From 1975 to 1984, Rosa was involved in her final stint in nursing

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27 “To deliver preventive care”—Briggs et al, “Education and Integration,” 1978

28 “Women can ask questions”—“Women’s Clinic Open In Tacoma,” *Tacoma Daily News*, 1975

29 “We don’t fool ourselves”—“Alice Hamilton Clinic is Well,” *Tacoma News Tribune*, 1976



*As secretary at the Democratic Party headquarters, Rosa Franklin helped residents to register to vote.  
Credit: Tacoma True Citizen, John Gladney, 1984.*

while working as the first nursing director at the Tacoma branch of Upjohn Healthcare Services. She supervised home health aides who would go into private homes to provide nursing services. When patients were discharged from hospitals, for example, Upjohn could assess them to see if they needed additional health care services in their homes.

By the 1980s Rosa's 40-year nursing career was multifocal and varied. It included women's health, children's health, mental health, children with disabilities, veterans, and senior citizens. She had worked in the public and the private sectors, from Tennessee to Virginia, from New York to New Jersey to Colorado from Munich to Tacoma. Though much of her advocacy focused on health care and local government, she was also working at the intersections of these professions. She participated in the very first "Nurses' Lobby Day" in 1983 with the Washington State Nurses Association; a picture in the WSNA newsletter (*The Washington Nurse*) shows a picture of her in Olympia meeting with Senator Lorraine Wojahn and other nurses from Tacoma. "Nursing was going through a lot of transitions at this time," Rosa said in a 2016 interview with her alma mater Pacific Lutheran University, "and I thought if nurses themselves

do not become involved or we as a community do not become involved with decision making, somebody else makes the laws and you are left out.”<sup>30</sup> Her passionate belief in advocacy, founded in her wide range of experience, was deeply inclusive.

### **From Advocacy to Politics**

Though Rosa would not begin her time as a legislator in Olympia until the early 1990s, it’s important to mark the beginning of her time in politics back to the late 1960s. By the time she reached Olympia in 1990, Rosa would have, as former Tacoma mayor Bill Baarsma says, “paid her Party dues.”<sup>31</sup> She had done so by laying a solid foundation of support from within the community.

“[Rosa] never saw it as a means to get ahead, to get involved in politics,” says former Tacoma mayor Bill Baarsma. “She saw it as her civic duty.” And in politics, the Democratic Party “wasn’t what it should be,” Rosa says now. “People of color were not engaged.”

Rosa worked on campaigns, rang doorbell after doorbell, helped get voters to the polls and participated in voter registration drives. Whether it was knocking on doors, putting up signs, or encouraging them to vote, Rosa loved meeting people. Up until this time she had not yet thought about running for state office. Rosa had a lot of friends in politics, though, and a lot of progressive friends had encouraged her to run.

Rosa and Franklin remained friends with Jack Tanner, the regional director of the NAACP from 1957-1965. Tanner eventually became a federal judge, the first African American to hold the position from the Pacific Northwest, but also the first African American to manage a Presidential campaign.<sup>32</sup> She remembers Democratic campaign events and picnics with Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson, also known by supporters as “Maggie” and “Scoop”; together the two were known as effective legislators, although Scoop was also criticized by left-leaning members of the Party for his support for the Vietnam War. During the 1984 elections, Rosa supported Jesse Jackson and his “Rain-

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30 “Nursing was going through”—Booth, Genny, “PLU alumna, first black woman,” 2016

31 “Paid her Party dues”—Baarsma, Bill, interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

32 “Tanner eventually became a federal judge.”—Benton, Monica, “Jack Tanner (1919-2006),” BlackPast

bow Coalition" in his unsuccessful Presidential bid, volunteering for his campaign and attending the Democratic National Convention as a Jackson delegate.

Rosa attended Democratic National Conventions a number of times: first as a delegate in 1976, as an observer in 1984, and again as a delegate in 1988. At the 1976 convention, she supported Jack Tanner in his 1976 bid for President, the first African American in Washington State to do so. Though Tanner's bid was unsuccessful, he garnered support from Magnuson and Jackson.

In the local Democratic Party, Rosa rose into leadership positions. She had been elected precinct captain, secretary, Regional Director and Political Action Chairperson of the Washington State Federation of Democratic Women, and Vice Chairperson of the Pierce County Democratic Party. She was friends with Karen Marchioro, who became the first woman to be elected Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party in 1981. At the time, most of these organizations were predominantly White. Rosa, therefore, was not only integrating her city and county government, but also her professional political associations within the party.

Seeing political involvement as a branch of her community involvement, Rosa remained steadfast in her commitment. With the League of Women Voters, Rosa says she learned about advocacy, "about issues, approaching people. If you are going to work for issues, try the League of Women Voters." Within the League she would eventually become a member of its speakers bureau. To this day, she remains committed to the League as a nonpartisan organization that uses research in determining its positions and support for candidates.

In Tacoma politics, she mentions her progressive friends in Tacoma's Democratic Party (Bill Baarsma, Ruth Fisher, Dennis Flanagan and his



*After graduating from the Gynecorps program in Seattle, Rosa served as director of the Alice Hamilton Clinic. 1970s*

wife Ilse) who were “out there fighting for change” as inspirations. She mentions Rosie Hargrove and Karen Marchioro, leaders in the Pierce County and Washington State Democratic Party, as sources of support for her political career. She also mentions other community members, including Dr. George Tanbara and her old friend Jack Tanner (who as a federal judge took on cases involving Native American treaty rights) as well as community organizations like the NAACP and the Colored Women’s Club who were active in fighting racial discrimination.

One of the most valuable lessons Rosa learned from this time was the impact that allies have while you are working for social change. “You didn’t have to be out there by yourself,” she says.

### **She Persisted**

In 1973, Rosa ran for Tacoma City Council using community health, broadly defined, as her platform. Her campaign mailer lists the range of her community involvement from the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to the Links Clinic to the Pierce County Health Council.<sup>33</sup> She knew by then that “healthy cities meant healthy people.” One *News Tribune* ad even lists her as running “For Your Health Council.” While some criticized her for what they saw as running on a single issue, Rosa knew differently: her platform was the intersection of many causes for a common good. She says now, “that the economy, the physical, the mental health, and environmental health—which dealt with clean air, clean water, all came together in order to make things better and really have a better world.”<sup>34</sup>

*News Tribune* campaign advertisements in 1973 show head shots of Rosa Franklin above a brief statement about her platform. “I care about the health problems of my city,” she said in one ad<sup>35</sup>. “Health problems affect all people.”

The 1973 *News Tribune* article about the Council race focused largely on gender issues, since three women were running for one position. Rosa was the only candidate of color, but the reporter asked her about gender equality. She responded accordingly, speaking from her experience as a

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33 “Her campaign mailer”—“Vote Rosa Franklin,” 1973

34 “The economy, the physical...”—Primomo, Janet, Oral history interview

35 “I care about the health problems”—Starling, Ebbie,  
“Rosa Franklin Will Make A Difference,” *The News Tribune*, 1973

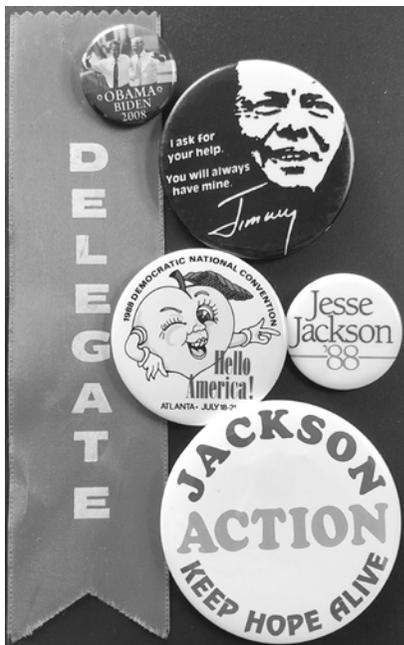
working mother: "Women should be given the choice to remain at home or be active in the community. [And they] can do both effectively."<sup>36</sup> She lost the race.

In 1979, Rosa ran for a freeholder position in Pierce County. The freeholder position was one of four positions created to write a charter form of county government. Her support included labor unions and a "very good" ranking from the Municipal League. In the primary, she and her opponent Tim O'Grady were separated by a margin of just 57 votes. However, in the general election she lost.

In 1987 Rosa ran yet again for City Council. By then the political field had widened, with African Americans making up 4 of the 8 finalists for the post.<sup>37</sup> The other African American candidates included former NAACP chapter president Delores Silas and future Tacoma mayor Harold Moss. After the appointments committee had pared down its list of 18 applicants to 7, the full City Council added Rosa's name as an 8th candidate. The *News Tribune* noted her service as a delegate for the 1976 Democratic National Convention.

Rosa Franklin lost all three of these races: two for City Council, one freeholder position. Nevertheless, as the popular 2018 saying goes, she persisted.

Bill Baarsma says that this persistence is a rare quality, especially in politics. Many people run for office, he said: they run, lose, and then



*A partial collection of Rosa's political buttons from campaigns and events. 1970s-90s*

36 "Women should be given the choice"—Anderson, Barbara, "For City Council," *The News Tribune*, 1973

37 "By then the field had widened"—Turner, Joseph, "Four Blacks Among Eight Finalists For City Council," *The News Tribune*, 1987

disappear. Losing, he said, is “a blow to the ego, to say the least.”<sup>38</sup>

Rosa kept running.

“I was still out there. I was showing my face,” says Rosa now. She continued to serve her community: Pierce County Planning Commission, City of Tacoma Redistricting Committee, Safe Streets. To the candidates who won she thought, simply, “I’m keeping check on you.”

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38 “A blow to the ego”—Baarsma, Bill, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

## CHAPTER FIVE: ELECTION AND LEGISLATURE

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As former Tacoma mayor and longtime Democratic Party member Dr. Bill Baarsma remembers it, Rosa's 1990 election to the House of Representatives was a long shot by many counts.

"The Republicans figured it was a conservative district," recalls Baarsma now.<sup>39</sup> "They saw an opportunity to score an upset. But [in the primary] Rosa had worked in the Party like [her opponent Gordon Mandt] hadn't. She got PJ Gallagher's endorsement, and the State Labor Council. [Mandt] was a person whose profile fit the District: small business owner, White, friendly, conservative. If you could pick an ideal candidate for the 29th district, it would be Gordon Mandt."

"On [the night of the general] election eve," Baarsma continues, "Art Wang and I were at the City Building when the votes started coming in. He was able to go into the back offices; I followed him. I don't know if he'll remember this. But Art said, 'I love Rosa, and I'm hoping for the best. But I don't think she has the profile. I don't think she's going to make it.'"

"I don't remember saying that,"<sup>40</sup> counters Art Wang now, one of the powerful "Pierce County Mafia" Democratic legislators who was already in Olympia. He was representing the 27th District at the time, the neighboring district just north of Rosa's 29th. "But memory is a selective thing," he laughs. "Baarsma's stories can change over time, too."

### Campaign Stories

"One day I got this call from Rosie Hargrove, 29th District Chair,"<sup>41</sup> Rosa remembers, "who informed me that P.J. Gallagher would not be seeking reelection and asked me to run. My answer was no. Rosie kept after me until I said yes. [She told me] that she would call my husband."

40 "I don't remember saying that"—Wang, Art, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

41 "One day I got this call"—Franklin, Rosa, "Telling My Story," 2019

“My reply to her,” Rosa continues, “was, ‘He doesn’t tell me what to do.’ [But Rosie] would not take no for an answer.”

By the time she ran for the House, Rosa had already received support from important people in the Washington State Democratic Party such as former Pierce County Executive Booth Gardner and 15-term Democratic State Representative P.J. Gallagher. Given her long history of community and political involvement, the decision surprised few but herself. She was running for State Representative of the 29th District, a district which included South End Tacoma and McKinley Hill. It was a district which was known then as “conservative blue collar” but which Rosa called “a cross section of the middle class, with a diverse constituency.”

Rosa knew she was facing an uphill battle. “Getting [these] voters fired up [to cast] their votes require full blown effort,”<sup>42</sup> she says now.

Rosa ran a grassroots campaign from the start. Reporting for *The Seattle Times* in 1991, Jon Savelle described Rosa’s campaign finances aptly: “She received mostly small donations, with the largest ones—about \$1,500 each—coming from political-action committees for the Washington Federation of State Employees and the Washington Medical Association.”<sup>43</sup> Her living room on Asotin Street served as the campaign office and work room for the Committee to Elect Rosa Franklin. “The goal,” Rosa says now, “was to outreach and bring in volunteers who had never been involved and to have a diverse group of supporters.”

Instead of going with more known or “usual suspects” for her campaign team, Rosa decided to bring in new people. “I had volunteered and I had worked and I knew the district,” she said later, “and so I said ‘well I am going to bring in people who were never involved so they can learn.’”<sup>44</sup> She used her campaign as a teaching opportunity for all involved.

Rosa worked hard on her campaign “morning and evening,” including putting up her own signs and monitoring them once they were up. “Many times signs would get knocked over,” says Rosa now, “and I did

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42 “Getting these voters”—Franklin, Rosa, “Telling My Story,” 2019

43 “She received mostly small donations”—Savelle, Jon, “Years of Politics Paid Off for Legislator,” *Seattle Times*, 1991

44 “I had volunteered”—Boots, Genny, “PLU Alumna, First Black Woman,” 2016



*Representative Rosa Franklin and Senator A.L. "Slim" Rasmussen. 1992*

not want that happening to mine.”<sup>45</sup>

“She enjoyed campaigning, meeting people,” says her longtime assistant Annette Swillie, who worked with Rosa in the Senate from 2000-2010. “I remember seeing her on a corner, putting out her own yard sign. She would sit down and talk with you. [Her attitude was,] ‘I’m not tooting my own horn, but I will talk with you.’”<sup>46</sup>

In that first campaign, Rosa apparently faced some canine opposition. The *Tacoma Morning News Tribune* reported this mishap: “The Democratic candidate from the 29th Legislative District was doorbelling Thursday when she confronted a dog that apparently didn’t care for her candidacy. While running away from a potential attack, Franklin fell and suffered facial cuts and some broken teeth. She also broke her glasses. But the Tacoma nurse somehow recovered enough of her composure to attend a Thursday evening fundraiser in her honor.”<sup>47</sup> Her persistence and her resilience served her well yet again.

45 “Many times signs”—Franklin, Rosa, “Telling My Story,” 2019

46 “She enjoyed campaigning;”—Swillie, Annette, interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

47 “The Democratic candidate”—“House candidate Shera lagging behind,”  
*The Morning News Tribune*, 1990

About Gordon Mandt, Rosa's opponent in the Democratic primary election, Rosa says "we really were friends." Mandt owned the gas station in the District where she filled up her car. "He did not do that much campaigning. The undercurrent [in that campaign] was that the 29th District was not ready for an African American woman." Flyers for the Mandt campaign displayed Mandt as the "natural" successor to Gallagher with direct parallels to Gallagher's positions, and Rosa Franklin as the polar opposite.

It was the evening of the General Election in Tacoma, November 1990. Huddled in a motel room near the Tacoma Mall next to Interstate 5, Rosa, her campaign team, and supporters waited for the election results. The mood at the watch party was "shared excitement," she says. She defeated her Republican opponent, David R. Figuración, with nearly twice the number of his votes: 8,030 to his 3,535. Was she surprised?

"Well," she says now, "I was always in it to win it."<sup>48</sup>

It was a joyful night.

### **Life in the House**

Having lobbied Olympia for years as a nurse, Rosa wasn't new to the Capitol. Her background with Pierce County Democrats continued to serve her well here: it was 29th District Representative Brian Ebersole, (who eventually became Speaker of the House and then Tacoma mayor) who showed her around campus and introduced her to staff.

"The architecture [of the Capitol] is very awesome,"<sup>49</sup> Rosa says, "in order to know that you are here in a historical place. It's really a seat of government, that you have a real heavy responsibility for whatever you do is going to affect a lot of people."

"And so it's not something that you take lightly."

Two things became apparent to Rosa Franklin shortly after arriving in Olympia as a Representative.

First, she realized that she could not serve as an elected representative and continue to work, even part-time, as a nurse. She resigned her

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48 "Well,"—Franklin, Rosa, interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2018

49 "The architecture [of the Capitol]"—Franklin, Rosa, "Telling My Story," 2019

nursing duties. “I don’t know how people do it, like [Representative] Laurie [Jinkins],” she says now. (As of 2019, in addition to her legislative duties, Jinkins works as Director of Organizational and Health Initiatives at the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. She was also recently named Speaker-designate of the House, another first for a woman in Washington State history.) Rosa’s children were grown by now, and her time was more flexible. The way Rosa wanted to do her job demanded a full-time commitment to Olympia. Rather than commute the 30 miles from Tacoma during session, Rosa rented a hotel. She would be one of the first to arrive on campus around 7:30 in the morning and one of the very last to leave the building, sometimes close to 10PM.

“If I really wanted to do the best job that I knew how,” Rosa said in a 2014 interview, “I had to spend my time with the legislature and the camaraderie and being able to cross the aisle and compromise and get things done.”<sup>50</sup> For her, the job was about building relationships, and from those relationships then building a community.

“People think that the legislature is part time, but they work year-round,” says Annette Swillie. Swillie was a longtime staff member of Senate Committee Services, the Senate’s non-partisan policy and legal research department, before working as Senator Franklin’s assistant for ten years. “People contact them year-round. And Rosa was in leadership, which meets more often than just your normal elected official. But she was very active and knowledgeable on all of her committees, not just her own [on which she served]. People were always requesting her time, not just in the Legislature.”<sup>51</sup> She would receive invitations to attend or to speak at conferences, community meetings, across the state as well as across the nation. The stack of invitations was consistently piling up.

“I didn’t make all of these events,” Rosa says now. “But I sure tried.”

The second thing Rosa realized was that she didn’t want to sponsor any legislation at all in her first session. First, she studied and learned the ropes while seeing who the key players were. She was awed by all of the procedures and rules, not to mention the feeling of being in such

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50 “If I really wanted to do the best job”—Primomo, Janet and Sally York, “Interview with Senator Franklin transcript,” 2014

51 “People think”—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

a historic place. However, the Majority Leader was from her District, so she felt a bit more at ease. Her party leadership gave her some “easier” bills to carry involving issues which were less controversial.

“I knew what I wanted to do,” Rosa says now, “but did not yet know how to go about getting it done.”<sup>52</sup>

For Rosa’s first floor speech in April 1991, they planned something special; according to former Representative Art Wang, the House was more prone than the Senate to playful pranks, especially for freshmen. Rosa prepared her remarks for House Bill 1084 (“Modifying provisions related to minors on liquor establishments”). She was assured that she’d be fine, but she was still nervous. “I could just see myself making the biggest boo-boo there in front of the whole world,” she told a *Tacoma News Tribune* reporter, remembering the incident.<sup>53</sup> She delivered her speech to her 97 House colleagues, and looked expectantly at the electronic tally board to see the bill’s fate.

All of the lights were red. The bill had apparently failed. She was astounded and stunned.

She looked up again. The lights had all turned green. Her colleagues laughed and congratulated her for passing her first bill. Rosa still laughs, recalling that as one of “the most memorable days” of her first session.

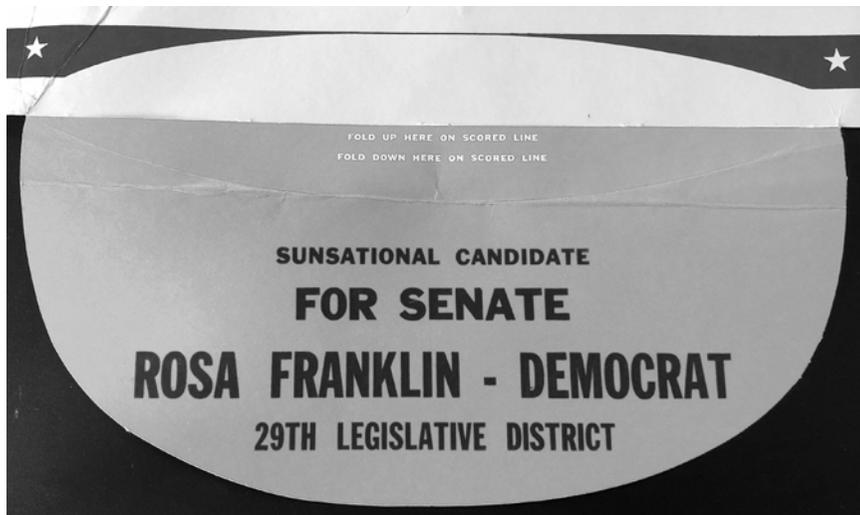
### **“It’s like playing baseball”**

During session, the legislative buildings are filled with multiple layers of conversation. There are the most public conversations — the formal conversations that take place on the Senate and the House floors, amidst Romanesque columns, brass railings, and heavy drapery. The Senate chamber walls have gray German Formosa marble, while the House walls have pink French Escalate marble. In these spaces, bills are read out loud in batches, voted on, then sent on to Committees and officials for signature. Then there are many committee hearings which have their own rules and procedures. When bills are in committee, members of the public can sign in to testify for or against a bill, as well as listen to

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52 “I knew what I wanted to do”—Franklin, “Telling My Story”

53 “I could just see myself”—Savelle, Jordan, “Years Of Politics Paid Off For Legislator,” *Seattle Times*, 1991



*Campaign materials for Rosa's elections in the 1990s.*

proceedings. In addition to these sessions being open to the public, they are also televised through Washington State's version of C-SPAN, TVW.

But there are also the conversations that fewer members of the public can access, if at all. There are the side conversations between members of the same caucus that take place before votes during the committee hearings. In the Senate, caucus meetings are held in rooms around a square of tables so that no one member sits above the rest.

There are the conversations in "the wings," the attached hallways that run along the chambers. These conversations are hushed and protected by the security personnel who guard the entrances to these halls. Members often take short meetings in the wings with constituent groups, lobbyists, or with other legislators.

Rosa almost never took meetings in the wings. "When they were on the floor, she was on the floor, paying attention," says Annette Swillie. "Only if something came up last minute, I would write notes or send her notes, she only took notes from me. So if you wanted something, I was the one who would vet the info before it went out, if it was worthy. She took her job very seriously."<sup>54</sup>

54 "When they were on the floor"—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

Rosa frames her concentration during floor action a little differently. “It’s like playing baseball,” she says. “You take your eye off the ball, you’ll miss.”

### **An Unexpected Move to the Senate**

In early January of 1993, Rosa’s Senator from her District, A.L. “Slim” Rasmussen, died unexpectedly from leukemia at the age of 82. He had served eight terms in the House and close to thirty years in the Senate. During a tumultuous time in Tacoma politics, he had also served as Tacoma’s mayor from 1967-1971.

Rosa had just been elected to her second term in the House of Representatives and learned policymaking on the committees on which she served. She was asked to fill the vacancy left by Rasmussen’s death. After a nomination from the Pierce County Democratic Party and approval by the Pierce County Council, Rosa was sworn in as Senator for the 29th District on January 26, 1993. “I did not plan it this way,” she told *Seattle Times* reporter Jill Leovy that year.<sup>55</sup> But, she continued, she hoped that her appointment would help “other young women to see that it can be done.” She agreed to fill the vacancy only if she could serve on the Health Committee, and the leadership agreed. Ultimately, she would have to campaign four times in those first four years—first for her campaign as Representative in 1990, for reelection to the House in 1992, to retain her Senate appointment as Rasmussen’s replacement in the fall of 1993, and then for reelection to the Senate in 1994 when Rasmussen’s term would have concluded.

But she was successful each time.

According to the Associated Press, Slim Rasmussen was known at his death in some corners as “a rascal, but a rascal that you loved” (Senator Marcus Gaspard, D-Puyallup); in the same article, Governor Booth Gardner remembered Rasmussen as “a tenacious and irascible defender of his beliefs.”<sup>56</sup> Rasmussen was certainly controversial; in the quagmire that was Tacoma city politics in the 1960s and 1970s,

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55 “I did not plan it this way”—Leovy, Jill, “Franklin To Be First Black Woman State Senate” *Seattle Times*, 1993

56 “A rascal, but a rascal that you loved”—Ammons (Associated Press), David, *Lewiston Tribune*, 1993

including a near-full recall of the City Council, he was gerrymandered out of his constituency by his own party in 1966.

Behind the scenes, Bill Baarsma provides more insight into what Rosa Franklin's Senate appointment and eventual Senate election meant for Tacoma politics. He has his own analysis and minces no words: Rasmussen was "a proud racist, proud sexist, proud misogynist—he had that base of support."<sup>57</sup>

"For Rosa to win, as someone who was a public supporter of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition," Baarsma adds, "[for her to] take [Rasmussen's] seat as a woman of color was one of the most significant events, in my opinion, in Tacoma politics. From that point on, things changed."

"People point to Marilyn Strickland's [mayoral] campaign as a landmark," he continued, "but Senator Franklin won her [Senate] election primarily by votes from South Tacoma. Harold Moss in 1969 ran for City Council but could not break that barrier. That she was able to win that election the way that she did—people knew her, [she was] well informed, well-liked."

"It was a transformative moment in Tacoma politics."

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57 "A proud racist, proud sexist"—Baarsma, Bill, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019



## CHAPTER SIX:

### “BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AND MUD PUDDLES”

*(LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS)*

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Twenty years in the Legislature means facing hundreds, if not thousands, of bills. As Senator, Rosa Franklin prime sponsored bills each session which made it to the Senate floor (not all ideas make it to the floor for a vote, given the lengthy and complicated legislative process) as well as others with co-sponsorship. She sponsored bills which involved health care reform, bicycle helmet safety, prescription drugs, weapons in courthouses, benefits for veterans, long term care for senior citizens, genetic testing, medical malpractice, longshoremen and harbor workers, and many more issues.

“Being an effective legislator means that I can’t do it by myself,” she says. Ever humble, Rosa doesn’t really like to talk very much about her accomplishments.

Rosa Franklin’s approach, says her Senate legislative assistant Annette Swillie, was always that of a teacher’s. “Her big theme [in our office] was education,”<sup>58</sup> says Swillie, “educating the constituents, give them the information so they know, not just ‘here’s how I feel about the issue, here’s my position on the issue, so they can make an informed stance on an issue, and they can understand it.” It might be said that the same went for her approach with other legislators.

Rosa was always aware of how the general public mistrusted the Legislature. But she retained her core beliefs in education, information, and participation. “The people that [policy] is supposed to help are not really receiving the service because it’s somebody else telling them what to do,” she says, “and they’re not being included in helping to make those

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58 “Her big theme”—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

decisions that affect them.” She adds an important note of collective accountability here, adding that “when you are angry with government, you’re angry with yourself. So we need to also be, to be recognizing of that and become civically engaged.”

Rosa’s inclusive, collaborative approach came in part from her work in health care: in her long career as a nurse, she was “working with people across the spectrum... in the private sector and the public sector... with all categories of people. [In] order to get things done, you can’t play it close to the vest and you have to respect other people’s opinion.” Her work in health care combined with her community organizing had given her people skills to connect across many forms of difference, while maintaining a level of respect for others’ humanity.

“Oh yeah, there’s a lot of crossover between nursing and politics,” Representative Eileen Cody (D-West Seattle) says. As a rehab nurse herself, she says that she’s “used to taking progress one day at a time. So as long as you move forward, you’re moving in the right direction.” She added that “when you’re a nurse you have to persuade the patient in the right direction.”

Adding to those insights, there is of course the nurse’s skill of intensive, responsive listening—a skill that Rosa Franklin would practice, and ask others to practice, repeatedly throughout her multiple careers and communities.

Twenty years as a legislator means a number of “high points and low points.” Rosa Franklin often called these low points “disappointments” or “challenges” in her newsletter greetings to her constituents. However, the high points were indeed high, with lasting impact for decades. She set her legislative priorities based on her campaign platform: health care, housing, education, and social justice.

Any lawmaker will face disappointments and challenges, especially over twenty years. “How do you move on? Well, you move on and you do something else. There’s always something that you can work on,” Rosa says now.

Behind every high and low point, every bill, there’s a story. In Rosa’s letter of resignation to her colleagues, she called the high points “beauti-



*Senator Rosa Franklin and members of the Senate celebrate Red Hat and Purple Day. 2003*

ful scenery” and the low points “mud puddles.”<sup>59</sup> Here are the stories behind just a few of those bills, both high and low: a few of those which have stayed with Rosa for a decade after leaving the Legislature.

### **1994: Housing Policy Act (SB 5584)**

As a candidate, Rosa had campaigned on issues of affordable housing. She saw what had happened to downtown Tacoma during its “urban renewal” project (which gutted the downtown retail core for decades), the development of the Tacoma Mall, and the residential areas surrounding that shopping center. From her constituents she had heard that there was a shortage of affordable housing, and a lack of definition around the word “affordable.” As a legislator, she began with one of the most basic of human needs: a place to live.

“I knew that our state had put a lot of money into housing, but it seemed to have been not sort of a coordinated effort,” Rosa says now. “Seemed like everybody was doing something different.”

As a member of the House, she served on the Housing Committee, and she had begun work during the interim between sessions to craft a piece of legislation on housing policy. When Rosa was appointed to Slim Rasmussen’s seat in the Senate, she remained committed to this issue. “Once you get a bill, you have sponsors on both sides, from the House and Senate” she explains now, “and I said, I want the bill to come over, to follow me.” The party leadership agreed.

<sup>59</sup> “Beautiful scenery”—Schrader, Jordan,  
“Franklin retiring from Legislature,” *The News Tribune*, 2010

On December 3, 1991, Rosa gave a speech to the Pierce County Chamber of Commerce as a Representative, outlining the design behind the Act. “I know we like to think of public housing as an old American tradition,”<sup>60</sup> she said in her remarks, “but the fact is the first low-cost public housing project in United States history was dedicated on this day in 1935—that’s 56 years ago. Housing had been a problem for many years before the federal government saw fit to get involved.” A long tradition, but not long enough for many who still needed affordable housing.

Rosa’s legislative approach to affordable housing involved—as it often would—building bridges so that people of diverse constituencies could meet in order to solve problems. With a goal of “providing a decent home in a healthy, safe environment for every resident in the state,”<sup>61</sup> the Housing Policy Act was intended to “[encourage] the cooperation of public and private sectors,” to establish a committee called the Affordable Housing Advisory Board (AHAB), and “to prohibit regulations detrimental to housing for handicapped persons.”

The Washington Housing Policy Act (Senate Bill 5584) passed in 1993<sup>62</sup>, Rosa’s first year in the Senate. As of 2019, AHAB is still meeting. Diane Klontz, Assistant Director for the Community Services and Housing Division in the Department of Commerce, writes that the values and objectives in the Housing Act “continue to drive housing policy, both within and outside the legislature. A key value in the Act is collaboration.”<sup>63</sup> She adds that the AHAB provides a yearly legislative “update on affordable housing” as well as special reports, including the 2015 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment and the 2017 Housing Affordable Response Team to Governor Jay Inslee. She praises the Board’s “diverse membership and collaborative spirit,” which in turn delivers “comprehensive, multi-disciplinary recommendations” for policy development.

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60 “I know we like to think”—Franklin, Rosa, “Remarks to Affordable Housing, Pierce County Chamber of Commerce,” 1991

61 “Providing a decent home”—Franklin, Rosa, “House Bill Report HB 1056: Creating the Washington housing policy act,” 1993-94

62 “Passed in 1993”—Washington State Legislature Bill Information, Senate Bill 5584, 1993

63 “Continue to drive housing policy,” Klontz, Diane, “Comments from Diane Klontz,” 2019

### **1996: Trauma Care Center (SB 6251)**

Imagine a person with a life-threatening injury affecting than one major system in their body. The victim may have been hurt by a car wreck, an industrial accident, or an act of gang-related violence. Imagine close to 500 such victims per year. Imagine many of these victims being of low-income without health insurance, unable to pay for these expensive services. Imagine surgeons who are frustrated with an underfunded trauma care system and services which are not available when patients arrive.

Now imagine a city of close to 180,000 people with a high violent crime rate, without a trauma care center: a designated hospital which will treat these victims.

This was the situation that Rosa found herself confronting in 1995. In September, eighteen surgeons at St. Joseph Medical Center decided to stop treating victims of major trauma. Tacoma General Hospital had already cut back its trauma services in June of that year. Madigan Army Medical Center, Rosa knew, would not be able to accommodate the number of civilian trauma victims, particularly during wartime. Harborview Medical Center, the fourth option, was in Seattle. Emergency vehicles headed to Harborview could be snarled in traffic. And airlifting patients was not an ideal option in these medical situations where every minute counts.

As a longtime nurse, as a Tacoma resident who knew the issues in her city, and as a lawmaker, Rosa knew something had to be done. Reporters contacted her, asking her for comment. "Well, this [decision] really sends shock waves through the community,"<sup>64</sup> she said to Associated Press reporter Elaine Porterfield. "I'm not going to let that deter me from working on this issue. We certainly cannot stand by and accept what's happening."

In response, Rosa brought a diverse group of people together by arranging for hearings and town hall discussions throughout Pierce County. According to the *Tacoma News Tribune*, one such meeting in August brought "fire department leaders and personnel, politicians, hospital administrators, doctors and members of the public."<sup>65</sup> One meeting was

64 "This [decision] sends shock waves"—Porterfield, Elaine, "Latest Casualty," *The News Tribune*, 1995

65 "Fire department leaders"—Porterfield, Elaine, "Lawmaker optimistic," *The News Tribune*, 1995

at the Tacoma Public Library, another at the Public Utilities Building. Rosa was kind, but firm about the direction of these stakeholder meetings. “I said to them... they would really need to leave their baggage on the outside,” she remembers now. “We really [needed] to find out what the issues were and what they had already agreed upon and what was really the problem.”

Based on input from community forums and existing plans in other Washington cities like Spokane, Rosa proposed a shared trauma center for St. Joseph and Tacoma General, the two major Tacoma hospitals. Skeptics like Tacoma surgeon James Rifenberry were unsure if the plan would improve matters, arguing that quality of care would slip. Nevertheless, the plan drew support.

Rosa had allies in the Legislature, as well. She continued to work on funding sources. During the 1995-96 session in a supplemental budget proposal, her fellow Senators agreed in a 46-3 vote (with a party balance of 26 Democrats, 23 Republicans) to spend nearly \$5 million as a temporary fix for the state’s trauma care system.

The following session, in 1997, Senator Lorraine Wojahn (D-Tacoma) sponsored a bill (Senate Bill 5127) providing more permanent funding sources, including a tax on car tabs which was projected to raise \$11 million annually.

In 2010, the Tacoma *News Tribune* reported on the success of the Tacoma Trauma Care Center: a plan which rotates trauma-care duty between St. Joseph and Tacoma General, with Madigan continuing to provide care for military personnel first and when possible for injured civilians. According to this article, the Tacoma trauma program had treated close to 14,000 patients and remained “the only such shared program in the country.”<sup>66</sup> And in 2019, the official website of the Tacoma Trauma Trust proudly reports that “[this] collaboration of civilian and military hospitals has provided uninterrupted Level II trauma care for the South Sound since June 21, 2000.”<sup>67</sup>

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66 “The only such shared program”—Carson, Rob, “Tacoma does ER two-step,” *The News Tribune*, 2010

67 “[this] collaboration”—Multicare, “A partnership in care,” 2019



*Senator Rosa Franklin smiles in appreciation of 80 roses delivered for her 80th birthday.*

### **1993-5 Environmental Equity Act (SB 6401)**

As Rosa spent more time as a legislator in Olympia, her sense of public health and environmental justice grew more expansive. President Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party had begun to develop policy to take into consideration sites that either created pollution or were a problem as a result of pollutants. This included locations such as landfills and toxic waste dumps: where were they located? Whom did they affect the most?

As a Tacoma resident, Rosa was no stranger to the idea of environmental justice: the idea that low-income and communities of color deserve to have an equal voice in environmental policy and to live in healthy environments. In Tacoma, the ASARCO copper smelter operated for close to a hundred years—and during that time, it created plumes of toxic smoke and fallout that spread throughout 1,000 square miles of its vicinity. “People had jobs,” says Rosa now, “but they were getting sick.” Another example of a large site of industry, which involved large amounts of diesel and air pollution, is the Port of Tacoma. The pollutants released from the activities there also affects the health of people who live nearby.

There are large health disparities between those residents who live close to these sites—often low-income, communities of color—and those who do not. As Rosa told a *News Tribune* reporter in 1995, these residents are “less likely to be politically involved and powerful... [they’re] less able to block hazardous projects or agitate for quick cleanups.”<sup>68</sup>

President Clinton appointed Rosa Franklin to serve on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, created in 1993. For Rosa, these meetings included site visits to places that had been affected by environmental racism: North Carolina, where the predominantly low-income and African American population in Warren County was fighting to prevent the construction of a toxic waste landfill; and South Carolina, her home state, where similar populations were suffering due to air pollution and toxic agricultural practices. Similar situations were found in Massachusetts and Louisiana. “This is why you travel,” Rosa says now, “to see what’s going on in other places, with other people.” Back at home, Rosa also attended Seattle-area environmental justice meetings; the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, for example, had just begun to meet in the early 1990s.

In 1994, Rosa Franklin proposed an environmental equity bill: Senate Bill 6401. In keeping with her methodical approach to lawmaking, she wanted a group of experts and stakeholders to do research and present data first.

Rosa fought hard for the bill’s passage in the Senate, where it passed the Senate with a 26-18 vote. Opponents were concerned about fiscal impact, as well as the idea that environmental justice was a more “narrow” concern that didn’t affect broader populations in the state. She told reporter Maya Valverde at *The Skanner*, an African American Pacific Northwest newspaper, that she had to “[work] with the Department of Health and Ecology to pare the language down and reduce the financial impact.”<sup>69</sup>

According to *Seattle Times* reporter Eric Pryne, Rosa Franklin’s prime-sponsored Senate Bill 6401 was Washington State’s very first

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68 “Less likely to be politically involved”—Doughton, Sandi, “Low-Income Areas Linked to Toxic Cleanups,” *The News Tribune*, 1995

69 “[work] with the Department of Health”—Valverde, Maya, “Ms. Franklin Goes to Olympia,” *The Skanner*, 1994

environmental justice bill.<sup>70</sup> Although the bill passed the Senate, it did not pass the House. All was not lost, however. Rosa was able to strike a deal with leadership and pass the language of SB 6401 inside a different legislative vehicle. In a commonly used tactic, she agreed to support the budget if it included language allocating funds towards the environmental equity study. And at the end of the 1994 session, language mirroring the language in SB 6401 was included in the 1994 supplemental budget bill. The Legislature allocated \$29,000 for the state’s Department of Ecology to work with the Department of Health on the environmental equity study.

A year later, the study confirmed that low-income and minority communities were disproportionately affected by toxic sites. Rosa continued to work for follow-up studies and research, and in the years to come, these issues led naturally into her policymaking on health disparities and health equity in Washington.

Some twenty-five years later, the struggle for environmental justice in Washington State continues, but retains the connections across communities and stakeholders which Rosa Franklin helped to initiate. In December 2018, the coalition Front and Centered (formerly Communities of Color for Environmental Justice) unveiled the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map, a collaborative project which is meant to brief Washington State policy makers and community members about environmental health factors, including the impact of pollution and proximity to hazardous waste sites.<sup>71</sup>

### **1999-2000, 2001-02: Racial Profiling (SB 5852 and SB 6683)**

At Seattle’s World Trade Organization conference in 1999, police stopped Seattle City Councilman Richard McIver twice, pulling him over and removing him from his car. McIver reported that police nearly arrested him, despite his showing them his WTO credentials and business card. He was the Council’s only black member.

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70 “The state’s first environmental justice bill”—Pryne, Eric, “Bill to Study Waste Hazard,” *Seattle Times*, 1994

71 “Hazardous waste sites”—Front and Centered, 2019

This local, public example of racial profiling was circulating widely in the news, thanks in part to the ACLU. According to the Seattle edition of *The Skanner*, the ACLU was “spearheading a statewide effort to get public agencies to gather the information requested in the bill.”<sup>72</sup> “The bill” was Senate Bill 6683 (2000) sponsored by Rosa Franklin, requiring law enforcement agencies to make annual reports about the demographics of people stopped or searched by the police. The resulting data showed a disparity between White and non-white persons when it came to enforcement and searches. It was signed into law in 2000.

During the following session, Senate Bill 5852 (2002) built on Rosa Franklin’s previous work on policy and racial profiling. It required local law enforcement agencies to comply with recommendations from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. Together with Representative Velma Veloria (D-Seattle) in the House, Senator Rosa Franklin introduced concurrent bills that would require police to track and report the race, gender, and age of the people they stopped, as well as the creation of training and education programs. The bills also created a citizen complaint review process to address these issues. Skeptics argued that smaller law enforcement agencies would not have the funding to meet the new requirement.

Several agencies testified for the bill, including members of the Seattle Human Rights Commission, the Criminal Justice Training Commission, the Washington State African American Commission, and the Washington State Commission of Hispanic Affairs. “Racial profiling creates mistrust of the police for all citizens, regardless of race or ethnicity,” read the digest of testimony in favor the bill. No one testified against it.

Senate Bill 5852 passed the Senate in 2002 and was signed into law on March 12th. However, according to reporter Rachel Alexander of the *Spokesman Review* in Spokane, enforcement as of 2016 is still uneven<sup>73</sup>.

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72 “Spearheading a statewide effort”—Sanders, Al, “ACLU Fights Racial Profiling,” *The Skanner*, 2000

73 “Enforcement as of 2016”—Alexander, Rachel, “Study of racial profiling by police in Spokane,” *The Spokesman Review*, 2016



*On Rosa Franklin's 80th birthday, she was surprised by a birthday party at the Governor's Mansion. Governor Christine Gregoire (left) presents her with a cake. 2007*

### **2003: The Red Hat Society**

Although many of the issues that Rosa faced as a legislator were serious, and she took her job very seriously, that didn't mean that she didn't want to have a good time.

Unlike the House, which was known for its pranks on freshman representatives, the Senate was known for its decorum. “I thought the Senate was too stoic,” Rosa says now, laughing. “Let us really have ourselves a bit of fun.”

The 2003 session had been particularly contentious. As a career nurse, she was trained to relieve tension. “[Life in the Legislature] becomes really stressful,” she says. “You need to have some type of break.” Added to the typical stress of a session, the Nisqually earthquake had temporarily evicted the Democratic members of the Senate into different offices in the Cherberg building. They were in “cramped places,” Rosa says, sharing offices with other members. For a time, Rosa Franklin and her staff shared office space with then-Senator Dow Constantine, who would go on to become King County Executive in 2009.

And yet in 2003 there were also reasons to celebrate. The 1990s were important years for gender equity in Washington State legislative history with more women being elected. In 1999, with sixty women being elected to the legislature, Governor Gary Locke announced that the state was the first in the United States to reach 40% gender parity.

Rosa had heard of the Red Hat Society, an international organization celebrating older women and nonconformity, using English poet Jenny Joseph's poem "Warning" as its inspiration. (The poem is more popularly known by its first line, "*When I am an old woman I shall wear purple.*") She decided to start a Red Hat Society celebration in the Senate. On the Senate floor, Rosa called for a "point of personal privilege," or the opportunity to speak about something aside from the legislative business at hand.

"Well, this is our one hundred and first day in the Legislature,"<sup>74</sup> she began, "and as we have gone about doing the people's business during the session, there have been moments and times that our patience has been short. We might have said some words that we probably didn't mean. This has been a particularly difficult session, but you know when you stop having fun, then it is time to leave. We are not ready to leave, so we would like to have a little bit of fun."

"With your permission, Mr. President," she continued, "and the permission of the Senate, I have a poem I would like to read."

And she began to read Jenny Joseph's poem in full, beginning with its first line: "When I am an old woman, I shall wear purple with a red hat which doesn't go and doesn't suit me."

"Mr. President," Rosa added, "and members of the Senate, you see that the women are dressed in purple today. It is red hats and purple day, so with your permission, they shall don their red hats."

"That is a dandy, Senator," replied Senate President Brad Owen.

The Senate women placed their hats on their heads, and Senator Bob McCaslin added, "Mr. President, I would like to nominate Senator Franklin as Poet Laureate of the State Senate."

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74 "Well this is our hundred and first day"—Franklin, Rosa, *Journal of the Senate*, April 23, 2003

Over time, the tradition evolved; the men of the Senate began wearing red ties and “Cow Hats” as a counterpart to the Red Hats. Rosa still has one of those cowboy hats in her closet.

On the 10th anniversary of Red Hat Day, the Senate called Rosa Franklin back out of retirement in 2013 to speak about its origin in the Legislature. Though she insisted she would have been fine in the gallery, they seated her at the rostrum. “It is so good to see each and every one of you,”<sup>75</sup> she said, happily greeting many of her former Senate colleagues. “Have fun, don’t get too serious.”

### **2004-2006: Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities (SCR 8419, SB 6197)**

Throughout her long professional career, Rosa had seen that minority communities had less access to health care, including preventive and emergency care. She had also seen—and research had shown—higher rates of health disparities between women and people of color versus men and the general population. In the 2004 session, she worked with her staff to craft Senate Concurrent Resolution 8419, “Creating a joint select committee on health disparities,” co-sponsored with Senator Alex Deccio, who was Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee<sup>76</sup>.

SCR 8419 passed unanimously (49-0) in the Senate, adopted (as amended) by the House, and passed the Senate again (47-0). The following session Rosa Franklin sponsored Senate Bill 6197, “Creating the governor’s interagency council on health disparities.”

The *Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Black and Minority Health*, otherwise known as the Heckler Report, was released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mary Margaret Heckler in 1986. In 2016, Rosa cited the 1986 Heckler Report as one source of inspiration for the Council<sup>77</sup>; the following year, the federal Office of Minority Health was created. It was one of the first reports to show health

75 “It is so good”—*Journal of the Senate*, April 25, 2013, 2

76 Deccio’s swift co-sponsorship may have surprised some, as a Republican who saw things “from a different lens,” as Rosa puts it now. But she says now that an incident involving the two of them (discussed in Chapter 6) may well have provided the impetus for his support of the resolution.

77 “The 1986 Heckler Report as one source of inspiration”—Governor’s Interagency Council, “June 2016 Update,” 2016, 2

disparities and factors contributing to higher mortality and morbidity rates among minority communities. The Heckler Report described many interconnecting factors contributing to these rates, including the educational opportunity gap, language barriers, environmental racism, and unaffordable or unsafe housing.

In creating the Council Rosa knew she needed to bring people together, to share information, to identify problems, and solve issues. SB 6197, along with a slate of four other bills, the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities was a large part of the solution to a now nationally recognized problem. Representatives from Commissions on African American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, and American Indian Health Affairs were brought together, as well as governmental representatives from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Early Learning, Ecology, Health, and Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Workforce Training Board. Two positions on the council are also open to members of the general public as a way to represent consumers.

After an extended stint through the committees for Ways and Means, Rules, Health Care, and Appropriations, Second Substitute Senate Bill 6197 passed the Senate with a vote of 38-10. Governor Christine Gregoire signed it into law in 2006.

As of 2019, the Council is still meeting, and provides updates to the Governor and the Legislature. Rosa's youngest daughter, Sara, has served on the Council representing the Commission on African American Affairs.

### **2009-2010: "Kids At Hope"**

How you see yourself—and how others see you—will have a lasting impact on your future. With that in mind, what does it mean if you are labeled a child “at risk”? How does that affect your self-perception? For example, “kids would not even go to their [free] lunches because they got labels,”<sup>78</sup> Rosa Franklin said in a 2014 interview with nurses and educators Janet Primomo and Sally York. The term “at risk” had emerged among youth development practitioners. It had become code for children

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78 “Kids would not even”—Primomo, Janet and Sally York. “Interview with Rosa Franklin, 2014,” 2

who are low-income, often children of color. And it almost always carried a negative association.

“We, as a society, we tend to put people in different boxes,” says Rosa now. “Everybody, every one of us who are born on this earth, have come with some kind of risk factor.”

Rosa had visited one of the Boys and Girls Clubs in Tacoma, part of a national organization dedicated to providing before-and after-school care and development programs. Rick Miller, its executive director, had left the Tacoma association to found a new organization called “Kids At Hope.” According to the program’s website, the organization was rooted in the belief that “all children are capable of success, No Exceptions.”<sup>79</sup> Since it started, it has created programs, research and support to amplify this belief.

Kids At Hope inspired and impressed Rosa. As a lifelong learner and respecter of research, she was impressed with the work Kids At Hope had done to create their program. “They had the data,” she remembers now. “They had everything about kids’ support and what they could do with someone... who would be able to inspire them. To give them hope instead of locking them down.” In Washington State, Marietta Nelson of the *Kitsap Sun* noted that there were already schools in Bremerton and South Kitsap County who had adapted principles from the “kids at hope” philosophy<sup>80</sup>.

Rosa decided to work on policy addressing this issue. In the interim



*One of the committees Rosa Franklin served on was Veterans Affairs. “Senator Rosa Franklin is given a certificate of appreciation by Major Luther Johnson for her support of the Arrowhead 3rd Stryker Brigade which recently returned to Fort Lewis following deployment to Iraq.” 2008*

79 “All children are capable of success”—“History—Kids At Hope,” KidsAtHope.org, 2019

80 “Marietta Nelson of the Kitsap Sun”—Nelson, Marietta, “‘Kids at hope’ roundly criticized,” *The Kitsap Sun*, 2010

between legislative sessions, she went to the state Department of Education and talked with other stakeholders. As she remembers it, the Secretary of Education said “as long as it didn’t interfere with the funding [of the Department] to remove [the term ‘at risk’]”, they could support it.

Critics of the bill, including *Tacoma News Tribune* columnist Patrick O’Callahan, derided it for “political correctness”; Republican State Representative Glenn Anderson believed that it cost too much (\$3500)<sup>81</sup>. Perhaps because of its misguided attachment to the language that “political correctness” receives, the bill received national media attention and even international attention, extending into Canadian news coverage.

But language has its own power, as Rosa and her staff knew. “[At Senator Franklin’s office] we would get calls that said, ‘kids at risk are kids of color, and they don’t have hope,’”<sup>82</sup> Annette Swillie remembers. The memory is still a painful one for her.

Senate Bill 6249, “concerning kids at hope,” had its first reading in the 2010 regular session. It was referred to the Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, but never made it out of committee. Although the bill was unsuccessful, in 2010 Rosa Franklin was able to create Senate Resolution 1999-8647<sup>83</sup>, commending the work of Washington State and Pierce County’s “Kids at Hope” work already in place.

Rosa still believes that the idea has merit.

### **1993-2010, State Income Tax**

For seven years, Rosa Franklin pushed for legislative reform in Washington State with a word everyone dreads: taxes. As always, her position was based in research; in this case it was supported with data from a bipartisan study as well as the backing of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters. She wanted to reform Washington State’s system of income taxation. Deemed unconstitutional by the State’s Supreme Court in 1933, a state income tax has remained an unpopular but persistent issue in a state which struggles with long-term economic stability.

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81 “Representative Glenn Anderson”—Blankenship, Donna Gordon, “Franklin bill changes term for poor children,” *The Olympian*, 2010

82 “Kids at risk are kids of color”—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

83 “Senate Resolution 1999-8647”—Franklin, Rosa, “Senate Resolution 8647,” 2000



*Senator Rosa Franklin talks with seniors at the Lighthouse Senior Center, 2005.*

“Nobody wants more taxes,” Rosa says now, “but everyone wants services.”

Sales taxes “nickel and dime our residents to death,” Rosa says now. “And so now we are among the highest when it comes to sales tax rate and it hits the poorest of the poor.” Washington State’s budget is highly dependent on its sales tax structure, which makes its source of revenue unpredictable. In 2007, Rosa Franklin’s plan was to reduce the state’s sales tax and phase out the property tax revenue that the state would receive. According to *The Olympian*, the proposal received a “courtesy hearing”<sup>84</sup> that year. Her 2010 version of the plan was to reduce taxes on businesses and the sales tax, and to replace it with a progressive state income tax that would reduce the burden of taxation on low-income residents.

Having a state income tax “brings some stability within your structure and then it brings some equity,” says Rosa. She had seen the Legislature go through “feast or famine” in the balancing of its budget—economic downturns caused by the 2001 terrorist attacks, the 2001 earthquake, and the 2008 recession had wreaked havoc on the state’s budget. In

84 “Courtesy hearing”—Shannon, Brad, “Senate Ways and Means to listen to tax advocates and opponents,” *The Olympian*, 2007

addition, the State Constitution requires that the Legislature balance its budget, which in leaner times leaves its lawmakers with the choice of increasing taxes or cutting services.

The idea of a state income tax was highly unpopular both inside and outside of her caucus, not to mention with her constituents. “I expect that we will be inundated with calls,”<sup>85</sup> she wrote in a note to her assistant, Annette Swillie. She provided Swillie with detailed handwritten notes on how to respond to constituent calls of concern. “The Senator does not take the view of rich versus poor, fair versus unfair,” she wrote, “but how we can bring stability to [our] state budget... in order to provide needed core services... .As the wife of a retired military man, a mother, a grandmother and registered nurse she knows what it means to raise a family, balance a budget, and save for a rainy day.” She also asked her constituents to work with her through dialogue and discussion. “[For] any changes to take place,” she continued, “citizens will have to be actively engaged in the discussions and their concerns addressed.”

“When it was announced that I was not running for reelection,” Rosa laughs now, “someone had written [on Facebook] that [they] ‘Got rid of the tax lady.’” As of 2019, the state’s tax structure remains the same, although debates about “progressive taxation” continue to emerge .

“Dear Senator Franklin,”<sup>86</sup> wrote a Political Science student from Tacoma Community College in a 2005 email. “What is the greatest challenge facing a lawmaker?”

“The greatest challenge facing one as an elected official,” Rosa Franklin replied, “is getting voters to understand that complicated issues do not have cookie cutter solutions. It takes time, working together, sorting out problems in order to reach meaningful solutions.”

“Sincerely, Senator Franklin.”

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85 “I expect that we will be inundated”—Franklin, Rosa,

“Income Tax Bill: Explanatory Efforts to Constituents etc.”, n.d.

86 “Dear Senator Franklin”—Jackson, Gloria, “From a Political Science Student” (e-mail), 2005

## CHAPTER SEVEN: BEING “THE ONLY ONE”

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*“Only the black woman can say ‘when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.’”*

Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*, 1892

*I know who I am. I am comfortable with who I am; I don't have to explain myself to anyone. I am female and African American—this is not my choice. I refuse to let race and gender be a detractor from what I want to do. It is their problem, not mine.*

Rosa Franklin, interview with Janet Primomo and Sally York, 1995

From all accounts, Rosa Franklin graciously accepted the complex nature of being the first and only Black woman in the Senate: the focus, the burden, the honor, and the responsibility. She was always careful to emphasize that she was “not alone”—that, as Anna Julia Cooper stated so eloquently well over a century ago, she brought the complexity of her identities and her communities (and their histories) with her into any room.

Rosa remained well aware that she was working in the wake of a tradition of other “firsts.” The state’s first African American representative, William Owen Bush (R-Tumwater), was elected to the House in 1889. She was only the third African American woman to serve as State Representative, being preceded by Representative Marjorie King (D-Seattle), who was appointed in 1965 and served in 1966, and then Peggy Maxie (D-Seattle) who served from 1971 to 1983. In the Senate, John Henry Ryan (Farm Labor-Tacoma) was the first African American, serving there from 1933-37 during a legislative career that spanned twenty-two years, representing three different political parties. Close to 40 years later, the next African American senator was Senator George Fleming (D-Seattle), elected in 1970. The state would not have another until Bill Smitherman

(D-Tacoma) served from 1986-1990. African American representatives Jesse Wineberry from Seattle and John Lovick from Mill Creek served in the House during Rosa's time in the Legislature and have since been followed by others.

But Rosa Franklin was the first African American woman elected to the state Senate. And from Anna Julia Cooper to Mary McLeod Bethune to Rosa Parks to her own family and community members, she seemed to take great comfort in knowing that, as she says, she "did not get here alone."

How did it feel to be "the only one"? "Well... You know that they're looking at you," Rosa says now, "thinking, what's going to come out of your mouth next. So... I put on my best."

"If you are in a leadership role," Rosa adds, "you are setting an example. And so if you're going to set this example for those who want to follow, what kind of example do you want to set?"

Rosa spoke publicly at a memorial honoring United States Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. "I wanted that to be my first action as a senator,"<sup>87</sup> she told *The Olympian* in 1993. Throughout her tenure, when newspaper reporters asked her to comment about the legacy of Rosa Parks, or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, or the presidential election of Barack Obama, she was prepared with something to say, knowing that she would be asked to comment. She endorsed Obama in his 2008 presidential bid. "This man is an inspired leader,"<sup>88</sup> Franklin told *The Skanner*, "who is going to be able to unite our country and bring us together. He reaches out to young people, to people who don't participate and who feel excluded. This generation really needs to be included and brought into the decision making."

Rosa helped coordinate the African American Legislature Days each February. She received many speaking and event invitations from all over Washington State and across the entire country. News of her accomplishments made national media, including a mention in the African

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87 "I wanted that to be my first action"—Partlow, Bob and Cheryl McRae, "Franklin sworn in as first black senator," *The Olympian*, 1993

88 "This man is an inspired leader"—Silvia, Helen, "Northwest still plays primary role," *The Skanner*, 2008

American magazine *JET*<sup>89</sup>.

As the Senate’s only African American woman, and often as the only person of color in the room, Rosa Franklin’s office would receive unusual requests, according to Annette Swillie. Legislative members or staff would occasionally ask her to communicate with members of the custodial staff because they were also people of color. “Um, I can’t speak Korean—why are you asking us?”<sup>90</sup> Swillie wondered.



*Senator Rosa Franklin and Representative John Lovick made state history in 2005 when they served as Senate President Pro Tem and Speaker of the House Pro Tem, respectively — the first day that both legislative chambers were led by African Americans.*

Still others, often constituents, would call the office not knowing that they were speaking to a person of color. One constituent called the office to complain because he saw a

“bunch of brown people” at work on the reconstruction of the Salishan neighborhood in Tacoma. He knew that there were some “good laborers” (perhaps, for him, White workers) that could build those houses.

“You would have to laugh. Did you not pay attention to the legislator you were calling?” Swillie (who is also African American ) says now. “Or think that it might be a person of color answering the phone?”

How did the office handle these kinds of inquiries?

“We would keep it very professional,” Swillie says, “[we’d] tell them, everyone has a right to work, and the most skilled people, the best people have the ability to work. And isn’t [the caller] blessed to have the ability to be on the way to work?”

Having an African American legislative assistant was also helpful for Rosa as the only African American in the Senate. “Sometimes depending on the issue, I would go and stand in the wings [during Senate floor

89 “The African American magazine *JET*”—“People: Rosa Franklin,” 2001, 19

90 “Um, I can’t speak Korean”—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

action],” says Swillie. “You know, just to show her that I was supporting her, you’re out there, you’re not alone.”

As one of the few African American legislators, Rosa knew what her position meant for children. She knew that the Legislature did not reflect the state’s racial diversity. She also knew that visible representation matters, especially for children. When she was able to speak to them (or write to them) individually, she would ask them who their teachers were and what they were going to be when they grew up. Just as importantly, she tried to connect the work she did in government to their personal experiences. Whenever schoolchildren came to visit the Legislature, Rosa made it a point to step out to speak with them.

“This is your house,” she would tell them.

*“I Will Work for Healing”*

Rosa Franklin says that she never experienced racial discrimination while in the Legislature, at least from her colleagues. “My colleagues were great, really great,” she says. Yet one incident involving race does stand out in her colleagues’ memories, and it’s one which also made national news.

In a 2004 meeting of health care stakeholders involving lawmakers, insurance industry representatives and legislative staffers, Senator Alex Deccio (R-Yakima) and Representative Tom Campbell (R-Roy) got into a disagreement. An intense disagreement, to be clear: in the heat of the moment, Deccio called Campbell “a n—— in the woodshed.” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the expression refers to “a concealed motive or unknown factor affecting a situation in an adverse way.”<sup>91</sup>

Representative Eileen Cody (D-West Seattle), a longtime nurse, remembers that meeting well. “The young people on staff didn’t know what that [saying] meant, but the rest of us knew.”<sup>92</sup> Sitting between the two men, she was genuinely concerned that the situation would turn violent. “Tom [Campbell] had been a Green Beret. I was worried he was going to kill him. I put my arms out between both of them,” she says.

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91 “According to the Oxford English Dictionary”—“N—in the woodshed,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, online

92 “The young people on staff,”—Cody, Eileen, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019



*“This is your house,” Rosa would tell children who visited the Capitol. 2008*

It was a late night in January, but word spread quickly. Back in the John L. O’Brien Building where the Senate members had their offices, Rosa Franklin and Annette Swillie were still working. Swillie remembers getting a phone call from Senator Alex Deccio’s office. “Oh, sure, he wants to meet? Tell him to come on in,” said Rosa. The two worked together on a number of committees together.

Senator Deccio came in to ask Senator Franklin’s forgiveness.

Days later, a tearful Senator Deccio would apologize on the Senate floor in a prepared, public statement. “I grew up as an Italian in a very bigoted neighborhood where racial epithets were used against me,”<sup>93</sup> he said, “and I should know better because I still hear the scars... I realized this has been very hurtful to members of the African American community and for that I am very truly sorry. I feel if Reverend Martin Luther King were here today, he would also accept my apology so I’m asking all of you to do the same.”

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93 “I grew up as an Italian,”—“Personal Privilege, Senator Deccio,”  
*Journal of the Senate*, February 2, 2004

Senator Franklin would accept his apology, also tearfully. The transcriptions of both statements are available in the *Journal of the Senate*, but her statement is especially telling. In a statement which began by citing Christian forgiveness as her foundation, she swiftly moved to reminding the Senate of the history of her people, and in lyric detail.

“I am a descendant of slaves, with French and Native American heritage. I am from a family who have stood up for the rights of the least of us, regardless of who you are, the color of your skin, we have stood up. I am a family from a heritage that have felt the lashes of horse whips, who’ve toiled in the cotton fields and the rice paddies of South Carolina, yet we have become nurses, teachers, pharmacists, doctors and we have stood up for everyone.”<sup>94</sup>

“I accept Senator Deccio’s apology,” she said, “and will work for healing. This is what this country needs... Race does matter in America. We don’t want to talk about it, but it does matter.” Healing had not arrived for everyone yet, she seemed to imply. Members of the NAACP from Seattle and Olympia had heard of the incident by then, and some were demanding Deccio’s resignation; some were sitting in the gallery of the Senate even then, and Rosa addressed them in her speech as “my brothers who are sitting back there.” For all of them, “the n-word” still carried painful weight. “It sears like a branding iron,” she said. Rosa concluded by shifting the focus back to the work of the Legislature “I am here to do the people’s business... I’m here to do the public’s business and that’s what matters.”

Rosa Franklin’s statement was “all her,” Annette Swillie confirmed years later: not the work of a staff member in the communications department. She had worked for Senator Deccio in her earlier days with the Legislature before working for Rosa Franklin.

“I don’t know if [Deccio] was so much as sorry for what he said,”<sup>95</sup> Swillie says now. “But he was devastated that he had to face Rosa Franklin. You know, a friend, a trusted colleague, a woman that is so compassionate and so nice and so loving and had just treated him oh so kind all of her years there... He came in and he went in to talk to her, and he

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94 “Personal Privilege, Senator Franklin,” *Journal of the Senate*, February 2, 2004

95 “I don’t know if he was sorry”—Swillie, Annette, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

came out in tears. It was that he had to face—it’s like your grandmother, you know—I made a mistake, I broke your heart.”

As the only African American in the Senate room, it’s worth remembering that Rosa was not directly involved in the incident. Nevertheless, she accepted the burden of attention, fallout, and response. She was a peacemaker in the Legislature and retained the respect and affection of her colleagues for that.

“I think that what brought Rosa through a lot of difficult times,” says Tacoma civil rights leader Lyle Quasim, “is that she has an absolutely rock-solid foundation.” A core member of The Black Collective and the first

African American to head Washington State’s Department of Social and Health Services, Quasim is speaking as part of a 2016 video testimonial, compiled for the Seattle nonprofit Foundation for Healthy Generations. In 2016, the Foundation created an award in Rosa Franklin’s name, the “Senator Franklin Creating Healthy Equity Through Public Policy Award.” “She has a belief structure,” he continues, “a value structure, a moral compass that really anchors her and when you have that going for you a lot of things may not be going for you, but it allows you to stay in the game, stay focused, fight for the things that you believe in and not be victimized by your circumstances.”<sup>96</sup>

“My focus was not just being there,” Rosa says now, “but being there to make a difference.”



*“Senate Pro Tem Rosa Franklin listens to President Barack Obama inaugural speech after he is sworn in as 44th President of the United States.” 2009*

96 “I think what brought Rosa...”—Foundation for Healthy Generations, “Senator Franklin Creating Healthy Equity Through Public Policy Award,” 2016



## CHAPTER EIGHT: “MADAM PRESIDENT”

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In 2001, Rosa Franklin was elected President Pro Tempore by her colleagues in the Senate who more commonly refer to the position as “Pro Tem”. The Senate President Pro Tem is a position of leadership which presides over Senate business in the absence of the President of the chamber, the Lieutenant Governor. Though Rosa was not the first African American senator, she was the first African American to be selected for President Pro Tem in the state—and the first African American woman to hold this position in the United States. She had already had some practice, serving as the Vice President Pro Tempore under Senator Lorraine Wojahn in 1994. She held the position of President Pro Tem from 2001-2002 and again from 2005-2010.

The selection brought additional leadership responsibilities. According to fellow Tacoman Senator Lorraine Wojahn, who had held the position before her, the duties of the President Pro Tem were:

“Oh, preside over the Senate in the absence of the President, and be vice-chair of the Rules Committee. And you become a member of the Facilities and Operations Committee, which is a nonpartisan Senate position. That’s about it. But you have a lot of latitude. You can usually go anywhere you want to... And that’s one thing: you are never limited in what you want to do because you might want to do something for the Senate; you’re not part of your caucus anymore. And although they always honored me by having me sit at the head table, I had no voice in the caucus except as a state senator. Which I always had... You have a lot more latitude to do what you want to do. You have more latitude in negotiating with the other side than you would have as a regular senator, or anything below the Majority Leader in the caucus. And they listen. You could lobby them for issues.”<sup>97</sup>

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97 “Oh, preside over the Senate”—Kilgannon, Anne, *Lorraine Wojahn: An Oral History*, 540



*Members applaud Sen Rosa Franklin after she was elected to serve as President Pro Tem. She held the position until her retirement in 2010.*

Does Rosa remember what was going through her mind the day that she was sworn in as President Pro Tem? “I remember seeing my name going across the desk,” says Rosa now, smiling at the memory. She still has her Pro Tem sign displayed in her home office on Asotin Street.

As President Pro Tem, Rosa Franklin worked closely with Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen, who she says was “a great teacher.” Over time, they had developed a trusting work relationship, so that he was able to leave her in charge more often. Rosa says that he could ask her “what had happened on the floor, who needed to be chastised, and so on.” As Pro Tem, her office was located behind in the back right corner of the Senate chamber, just a few doors down the hallway from the curtained rostrum where she would call the Senate to order. Occasionally, she would share the gavel with her Vice President Pro Tempore, Senator Paull Shin (D-Edmonds), so that he could also learn the responsibilities of the position. In keeping with the African American adage of “lifting as you climb,” she was determined to carry others with her into leadership positions.

When Rosa Franklin presided over the Senate, she had control of

the gavel to call the Senate to order, to call for a vote, to signal that the deliberations for a bill under consideration were finished. “At first, you know, you’re kind of timid,” Rosa remembers Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen telling her, “but you know, you’ve gotta really bring the gavel down. Really hit the desk.”

Having Rosa’s position as Pro Tem was one thing but presiding over the Senate with the gavel really brought it home for her. “When you have the gavel, you are in control of the Senate,” she explains now. “They cannot really do anything... If I stop presiding, people will look around, and they will just stand there, until we get them in place.”

“[With your] view when you are presiding,” she says, “you have to keep your views cast on everyone so that you serve this whole process.”

Even years after Rosa Franklin left the Senate, many of her colleagues remember her fondly. In 2019 several of them recognized her during session, in an annual Senate Resolution in honor of Black History Month. “I felt like I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize Senator Rosa Franklin,”<sup>98</sup>



*Senate President Pro Tem Rosa Franklin in action, 2006.*

98 “I felt like I would be remiss,”—Senate Floor Debate, February 28, 2019



*Senator Rosa Franklin with her daughters and grandson. 2005*

said Senator Curtis King (R-Yakima). “She was here when I first came, [and] you couldn’t find a classier legislator if you tried. She was always willing to sit and talk, have those conversations, tell you how she felt. But she was a great legislator and we have missed her since she left this body but I just wanted to recognize her.” “Thank you Senator,” responded Senator Steve Conway, serving as Senate President Vice-Pro Tempore (and Rosa Franklin’s former seat mate and successor in the 27th District), “and certainly I follow in her footsteps here in many ways.”

Rosa’s colleagues in the Senate spoke of her efficiency well after she left. “They said a lot of things about [Rosa Franklin] and how she handled the gavel,”<sup>99</sup> recalled Senator Tim Sheldon (D-Hoodspout) during the Senate floor debate in 2019. “They compared her to John O’Brien who served here for 50 years and he was known as the fastest gavel west of the Pecos. But Senator Franklin had the title of second fastest gavel. And there were times when the majority, the Democrats, needed someone at the rostrum who could make decisions very quickly and Senator Franklin was known for her ability to do that.”

99 “They said a lot of things”—Senate Floor Debate, February 28, 2019

"I got reported [once]," recalls Rosa now, laughing. "One of my colleagues from across the aisle told the Lieutenant Governor [Brad Owen] that I'd have to slow down a little bit. So Brad told me and I said, oh, I am so sorry."

Overall, though, Rosa considers her serving as President Pro Tem one of her proud accomplishments in Olympia. "It's really an honor to be able to do that," she says, "and for your colleagues to support you to do that." She served as a mentor for many of her colleagues, such as Tacoma legislators Representative Laurie Jinkins and Senator Jeannie Darneille, who both spoke highly of her presence in Olympia. Her ability to build bridges with people didn't just extend across the aisle, but also took on a statewide scope.

"An effective legislator as far as nursing [goes] is, what [are] the results? You are working for the results. So, what kinds of results are you going to have?" Rosa says now, reflecting on her collaborative approach to leadership. "If you are a good nurse," she continues, "a capable nurse, working along with others as a team, your outcome will be good. And so what kind of outcome do you want to have? What kind of outcome do



*"The President and the Pro Tems," Senators Rosa Franklin (Pro Tem) and Paull Shin (Vice Pro Tem) and Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen. 2007*

you want? What are you really willing to change, to make better? Being effective means that I can't do it by myself. I have to work with someone else, collaborating, getting them to understand what is really happening.”

## CHAPTER NINE: BACK TO MY COMMUNITY, OR “RETIREMENT”

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May 4, 2010

Hello Colleagues and Staff,

At a recent family meeting the decision has been made that it’s time for me to move on. Twenty years has been a roller coaster ride, had its high points and low points, beautiful scenery and mud puddles. All said and done it was worth it all. Now I am saying “operator let me off this ride—it is someone else’s turn.” Everyone should try it once!

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the people of the 29th District and the State of Washington. I do believe that my time was well spent and my being in the legislature made a difference. In fact, that is what supporters, constituents, family and friends tell me. Thanks to each one of you for contributing to a productive and exhilarating ride.

It is difficult to say that I am retiring from the Senate; therefore I’ll just say that I am not seeking re-election. I will miss the fast pace of legislative sessions and the debate on public policy. I plan to continue working to make our communities, state and nation live up to the principles on which they were founded and that the constitution represents all of us and not a select few. Remember always to be brave and take risks. That is the only way change is made.

Again, thanks, it has been a pleasure to serve.

Senator Rosa Franklin<sup>100</sup>

“I might have stayed on another term,” Rosa says now, “but my grandchildren were growing up. And my oldest grandson was going through

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100 “May 4, 2010”—Schrader, Jordan, “Franklin retiring from Legislature,”  
*The News Tribune*, May 4, 2010



*Rosa with her husband and grandchildren, ca. 1990s.*

his adolescent years and I felt that as a grandparent I really needed to be there for him, I was there for my kids when they were going through their adolescent period.”

Check in with Rosa on any given day in 2019, and her calendar might be full. She might be attending an event sponsored by the Tacoma Urban League. She might be working with the Tacoma League of Women Voters to plan a state convention. She might be attending a board meeting of Women’s Intergenerational Living Legacy Organization (WILLO), a Tacoma nonprofit devoted to celebrating the voices of women and girls. She keeps up with issues in her interfaith community through email and events. Or you might see her attending a board meeting at the Asia Pacific Cultural Center, where people greet her as “Aunty Rosa.”

In her official legislative archives housed in Olympia, there’s a full box containing her awards and plaques. The Washington State Democratic Party granted her its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. The Washington State Nurses Association inducted her into its Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2006, the University of Puget Sound granted her an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service. And the awards continue to roll in. In

2019, she received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Award from the University of Washington, Tacoma.

“When I retired,” Rosa says now, “I said I was going back to my community, and that’s essentially what I am doing.”

You might also find Rosa in her garden at home on Asotin Street, or chatting on the phone with her many friends and family members. She might be taking calls from her children and grandchildren, who check in regularly. She gets to “pick and choose,” as she says. “I can control my time. I don’t have to punch the clock.”

Many folks like to travel when they retire, and Rosa still does a little traveling with her family—an occasional weekend in Cannon Beach with her younger daughter Sara, or a road trip to Sacramento to see her oldest daughter Kim. But because she spent so much of her life traveling, it’s also pleasant to be at home. “[When I retired, one] thing I said,” she says, “I could not sit down and do nothing.”



*Rosa and James Franklin at the Governor's Mansion with their children and grandchildren. 2007*



## EPILOGUE

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### **10 Ways of Looking at a Legacy: A Partial Community Scrapbook**

There's a famous poem by Wallace Stevens called "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." The poem moves through a kaleidoscope of views on a blackbird—its physical details, its song, its shadow, its symbolic possibilities. The poem gives us one way to think about the kaleidoscope of legacy that Rosa Franklin has worked for in her pursuit of social justice, of making a difference. In reflecting on Rosa's legacy of diversity, equity, and inclusion, then, it seems appropriate to include a kaleidoscope of voices and perspectives from some of the people across her personal life, her career, and her communities.

It's 2019, but Rosa still cherishes a fading autograph book from her high school graduation, 1944. She has in mind her cousin Sara's admonition, "we are depending upon you to fill well your place." She is passing those high expectations forward on to future generations. It's our turn next.

#### **1. A Legislator Who Helped Her Community**

2010: Letters between Rosa Franklin and Paul T. Chromey, President of General Teamsters Local Union No. 313, Tacoma<sup>101</sup>

Dear Senator,

Congratulations, our city of Tacoma and surrounding area will finally have a trauma-care center at our two local hospitals.

The *News Tribune* in [Sunday's] issue had a two page article reporting on the trauma care centers and that trauma care was suspended five years ago.

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101 "Letter from Paul Chromey"—Chromey, Paul, letter, 2010

But they forgot to report that you Senator was the one who spear-headed the movement to bring back trauma care to Tacoma area hospitals. You Senator are the one who obtained the 500,000 state grant and some regular state funding...

Helicopter transportation to Harborview has cost our insurance carriers a lot of needless expense.

Senator Rosa Franklin, thank you for all your hard work in getting the trauma center back to Tacoma and surrounding area.

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your kind words and letter in regards to returning Level II trauma service to Tacoma.

Yes, the *News Tribune* forgot the work and effort put forth in the early days of meetings and getting everyone to the table. I did it because of people like you and it was the right thing to do for the residents of our city, County and the injured. There are people like you who know the history. Again, thanks for your support.

Rosa Franklin

## **2. A Mother**

2007: YWCA publication, “Inspiring Women”

“When people find out that ‘Rosa Franklin’ is my mother, I am so proud. It has become common over the years to meet people at events I attend to find out during the course of a conversation that they know my mom, often because of her involvement in the community, and it is evident that they respect and admire her... It is because of my mom that I love politics. I can only wish to have the accomplishments that she has rightly and patiently earned.”<sup>102</sup>

—Sara Franklin

## **3. A Mentor For Other Lawmakers**

January 26, 2018: House Health and Long Term Committee Public Hearing, HB 2531 (Health and Social Determinants). Cherberg Build-

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102 “When people find out”—Franklin, Sara, “Senator Rosa Franklin,” *Inspiring Women*, 2007, 67

ing, Olympia

In January 2018, Rosa Franklin is back on campus to testify about the possible name change of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities. This is an important hearing for her: this is the council she’s created. She signs in not as a representative of an organization, just as a “concerned citizen.”

Representative Laurie Jenkins, 27th District greets her. “I mostly just wanted to say what a joy it is to have you back in Olympia. You’re a former member of this body and this Senate and have exercised leadership in so many areas and mentorship of many of us, especially women who come from Pierce County who are here. So I just wanted to say thank you very much. It’s wonderful to see you back here.”<sup>103</sup>

“Thank you, Laurie,” Rosa responds. “I think about you, all of you, every day and really appreciate the work that you’re doing.”

#### **4. A Scholarship Namesake**

2018: Senator Rosa Franklin Nomination for the 2019 UW Tacoma Legacy Dream Award

Nominator: Professor Janet Primomo, Nursing Emerita

“Along with the UW Tacoma Nursing & Healthcare Leadership Program, I am honored to nominate Senator Rosa Franklin for the 2019 UW Tacoma Legacy Dream Award... .Senator Franklin was held in such high regard by members of our Nursing faculty that we named the general nursing scholarship fund for her in 2002. This scholarship fund has been awarded to 20 students thus far and will continue to support students in the future.”<sup>104</sup>

#### **5. A Mentor For Other Nurses**

In the same letter of nomination for the 2019 UW Tacoma Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Award, Frankie Manning, M.A.N, RN, Chief Nursing Officer (retired) of the Veterans Affairs (VA) Puget Sound Health Care System writes:

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103 “I mostly just wanted,”—“House Health Care & Wellness Committee,” January 26, 2018

104 “Along with the UW Tacoma”—Primomo, Janet, “Senator Rosa Franklin Nomination,” 2018

“Senator (Ret.) Rosa Franklin has been an outstanding leader in health care who enhances the lives of underserved communities. I first met Senator Franklin through many of the nurses I employed, where the nurses often referenced how Senator Franklin was instrumental in getting them back into school. She was central in encouraging them to further their education and provided them guidance as they pursued their careers.

“Later we met as she fostered areas of improvement for underserved populations throughout the state. She led the legislation on establishing a state-wide system to impact health disparities and co-sponsored the bill to create the Governor Interagency on Health Care Disparities (of which I am currently a member of). At the time the Council was established, Washington State was the only state that was working on systems changes statewide to impact the disparities of health throughout state government. This work was led by Senator Franklin.

“For more than 45 years she has held many positions in health care. As a member of Leaders in Women’s Health in Tacoma, she works with a group of volunteers whose primary focus is to change the narrative for women of color regarding breast cancer and to fight health disparities in Women of Color throughout Pierce County. Her life work is to move obstacles and limitations for underserved populations and to ensure that these populations have access to care based upon need.

“In retirement, she continues to use her voice and network to influence policies statewide. She is an outstanding woman who believes that working in collaborative modes with all people help make changes that are everlasting.”<sup>105</sup>

## **6. A Person Who Lives Her Values**

United States Congressman Denny Heck (10th Congressional District), who worked with Rosa as Governor Booth Gardner’s Chief of Staff when she entered the House. At his office in Lakewood, he reflects on Rosa’s impact on his life.

“[Rosa’s] one of the first people to whom you beat a path to the door

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105 “Sen. (Ret.) Rosa Franklin”—Primomo, Janet, “Senator Rosa Franklin Nomination,” 2018

of, especially for a candidate out of Thurston County. [In the 10th Congressional District] Thurston is 30%, 60% is Pierce. She was one of the first that I contacted to understand this huge part of the district, was so important in understanding if I wanted to represent it.

“I can’t remember or tell you specifically what she told me but I can tell you what I came away from that meeting and every other interaction I have ever had with Rosa, which is the thought, ‘Dear God, please help me to be as gracious as this human being is.’ I adore the ground she walks on and it’s because she is an incredibly gracious, kind and humble human being which I think we’re way too short on in this world and screamingly short in the body politic.”

“The most important thing I learned or try to learn from Rosa—that’s basically it. I know few, very few, people who can equal her in grace and dignity and living her values.”

“A few years ago, I had emergency surgery. My charge nurses were unbelievable. I couldn’t believe when I left, the depth of my feeling... The TLC that nurses bring along with their professionalism—I was fortunate to experience with each and every one of them, many times over—interestingly, it did 2 things.

“One, when I left I wrote them a thank you note because I was so taken with them. Two, I was thinking, that’s kind of the way Rosa approached her public life, whether it was health care issues, which she was personally an expert in, or housing issues, these things all came from her values because it was the way she approached things.

“Look, every time I am in a room that she is in, which is really about 12 times a year—what I am compelled to do is go over and give her a hug.

“Can I quote Scripture to you? I have a tattoo on this arm. Eventually I want to get another tattoo with Micah 6:8. ‘What is expected of me, Lord, these 3 things: that you do justice; that you love mercy, that you walk humbly with your Lord.’

“Rosa. It’s Rosa.”<sup>106</sup>

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106 “Rosa’s one of the first”—Heck, Denny, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

## **7. A Tree Planter**

March 4, 2019

To: Tamiko Nimura

From: Dr. Brent Chapman, Horticulturist/Grounds Manager

Dear Tamiko,

Attached is a photo of the Norway maple tree planted in honor of [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.] per Senator Franklin's request. It is very healthy in its location just south of the wisteria arbor on the east campus plaza. Note the presence of a bird's nest at the top of the tree.<sup>107</sup>

## **8. A Mentor For Other Black Women**

2019. From the Pacific Lutheran University office of Melannie Denise Cunningham, longtime Black community activist and longtime family friend:

"I'm just going to do real talk. Coming up in the Black community, back then as I was coming up during that time, it wasn't the norm for Black people to bring other young Black people up. That was not the norm. It was really more of trying to control you, they own you, you can't move forward unless you go through me, you know, there were no mentors.

"But she was a mentor. To show you the way, you know, to be the first Black senator, and to be accessible. She was still Aunty Rosa, Miss Rosa.

"And whenever I saw her at the conventions, conferences, meetings, it was just that accessibility. She didn't change. That part didn't change. I think it really amplified her commitment to community, ok?

"When you saw her, when you were in her presence, when you were with her, she made you feel like you were there...

"She has totally influenced the way that I give back to the younger ones behind me. I've got 30 year olds in my life that are in their careers and professions and finding their way and going up the ladder, and you know, I'm into them. Because of what I saw from Rosa. Not from what I've experienced from the greater community... I didn't get a lot of support from local people. Not at all.

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107 "Dear Tamiko"—Chapman, Brent, "MLK memorial tree?", March 4, 2019

“I have very visible role models. She did give me support. Virginia Taylor gave me support, Alberta Canada gave me support, you know, those women, Daisy Stalworth, I say their names, you know, they were all together because they were intentional about reaching back and pulling us forward. There were other people... they were just holding on. Who’s coming behind me that I’m contributing to? And she was that way.

“As she rose, and you remain humble, and as I’ve got my 15-20 mins of fame in the spotlight, the young women that are calling me and asking me for my time and space, oh yeah. I’m giving it to them. Totally.”<sup>108</sup>

### **9. A Visionary**

In March 2019, at the office of Christy Hoff, Manager of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities, Washington State Department of Health Tumwater, Washington:

“If I could make one point about Senator Franklin, it’s how visionary she was in creating this council back in 2006 that it started, but the legislations started in 2005, when she was trying to pull this joint select committee on health disparities together.

“And that is so visionary because even within the public health community, the public health professionals, we were barely just starting to talk about health equity and the social determinants of health.

“And that wasn’t language she really used, but she knew what that meant in her own life and her own community. And she created the council at a time when that structure didn’t exist, with this interagency structure to address the social determinants of health and promote health equity and that kind of work is just now starting to happen more across and here we are... 12 years later.”<sup>109</sup>

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108 “I’m just going to do real talk”—Cunningham, Melannie Denise, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

109 “If I could just make one point”—Hoff, Christy, Interview with Tamiko Nimura, 2019

## **10. A Teacher**

March 2019. Lunch with Rosa at a restaurant at Pacific Lutheran University, one of Rosa's alma maters. We've conducted 7 of our 8 oral history interviews there and spending some time with folks there. Though this is the first time that some of us have met, the gathering has been filled with laughter—it seems to accompany Rosa wherever she goes.

There's sunlight streaming through the walls of windows around our table. We are a small group, but we are Black, White, Asian, multiracial. We are faculty, students, staff. Our gender pronouns run from she to he to they. We span generations from the 20th to the 21st century: Depression, Baby Boomer, Gen X, millennial.

We are listening to Rosa Franklin. And still, she's teaching us, challenging us.

She asks us, "What do you want your legacy to be?"

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ROSA FRANKLIN: ORAL HISTORY

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### *Interviews conducted and edited by Tamiko Nimura*

Neeb Conference Center, Pacific Lutheran University

Transcription assistance provided by the Office of the Secretary of the Senate.

Transcripts have been edited for clarity and readability.

### **Interview 1: December 18, 2019 - Oral history foundations**

**Ms. Tamiko Nimura:** Today is December nineteenth, twenty eighteen. I am Tamiko Nimura, and I'm here with Senator Rosa Franklin. We are at the Fern Hill Library in Tacoma, and we're just going to talk a little bit about some foundation questions that I've got written down here. So things that will guide me as I write the profile. So, first: What do you want this project to do?

**Senator Franklin:** To tell my life story, that it would be a help for others as they journey through life and especially for women, women of color, but people in general who in turn face a lot of obstacles and think that – and they stop, and won't try to overcome those. I would like to see that it would inspire others. That it can be done, what they choose in life. That's what I would hope would happen with this.

**Ms. Nimura:** Great. Thank you. Let's see. Are there topics that are off limits that you do not want me to ask about?

**Senator Franklin:** I can't really think of any off limit topics because of the life that I've lived. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, right. So, things like your husband? Or your children? Are those people that you want to talk about a little bit when we

get there?

**Senator Franklin:** My family is very important to me. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So it's okay? That we ask that?

**Senator Franklin:** Sure.

**Ms. Nimura:** All right, great. This last question here for me is the piece about the legislation. So the profile that I have to write of you is twenty thousand words, which actually isn't a lot. Like it's, I'm guessing, it's about forty to fifty pages or so. So I have a lot of work to cover in that piece. So my hope is to focus on some pieces that you feel the proudest or some of the major pieces of achievement, legislation. And we'll also want to focus on some of the major disappointments or setbacks that you felt, that you've uncovered, partly because – you know [storytelling consultant] Megan Sukys, right? She tells me that folks also want to hear about the struggles. Not just, you know, the high points.

**Senator Franklin:** Right. Uh huh.

**Ms. Nimura:** They want to hear about how you got to some difficult point and then overcame that or transcended or struggled through. Right? So that's the piece then that, once you let me know what you what you're thinking about, then I'll go back to the archives, the research and then get myself really familiar so that I know what to talk about when we get to that point. Does that make sense?

**Senator Franklin:** Umm hmm. Sure.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay great.

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm. Well, first of all, going back, just going to the Legislature itself was a whole new experience. It's different from what you think it might be. You find out that the realities of being there and so mine was one from my experiences itself is to really learn the landscape.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, I want to know how you did that.

**Senator Franklin:**... Is too learn the landscape....[Audio skips?].... actually, who are the decision makers? Who are the leaders? And then to sit back and to learn. As a new member of the Legislature, you cannot just

walk in and make changes. It's, you, by learning who does what. Who makes the decisions? Who do you go to for information? Um, and just observing. And so I'm good at observing and learning. And so, through that process then, that was my number one goal was to learn. I told them when I went that I don't want to introduce any legislation. I don't want to do anything. I just want to learn. But they said no.

**Ms. Nimura:** Ah. Really?

**Senator Franklin:** And so what happens as a freshman, they will give you, [unintelligible] a piece of legislation to "carry," as they will say.

**Ms. Nimura:** Like a test, kind of?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, well, uncomplicated. So then in turn, then I started out having these uncomplicated (legislation). So that was my first term. Then learning, looking and seeing how other people operate and the other is knowing your subject. Not speaking out of turn and not knowing what you're talking about. So I'm one that is very good for reading and research and knowing what my issues are. And because my major issue – nurses have really dealt with health care – and social justice issues. I was pretty well versed on a lot of those. And so through that then, in my first term, then it was a learning process.

One of the major things, was that I served on the Housing Committee, which is a major thing, a major issue, because I ran on issues of housing, affordable housing, health care, affordable health care and senior issues. There were a lot of freshmen who went in that year and so I made friends with the people who were around me and we did things together. The second [year], during the interim, we worked on research on housing. And through that process, and getting to know people and really working across the aisle, was my major piece of legislation. It dealt with housing, which then followed me into the Senate because my senator [Slim Rasmussen] died and so then I was appointed. I said the only way that I would go to the Senate is that I served on the Health Care Committee and they said that that would happen.

The work that we had done during the interim on housing, that came, because once you get a bill, you have sponsors on both sides, from the

House and Senate, and I said, I want to the bill to come over, to follow me. Sometimes it's the right time and the right place. So that piece of legislation on affordable housing was one that passed. What I saw, as I said, in learning and knowing and studying and observing and working with people — I knew that our state had put a lot of money into housing but it seemed to have been not sort of a coordinated effort. Seemed like everybody was doing something different. And so there was no real policy. That was my first major piece of legislation, affordable housing.

**Ms. Nimura:** Is this the fair housing? It's one of the fair housing policies?

**Senator Franklin:** It's called the Washington State Housing Policy Act and it's still in action and it has a committee. And they're supposed to really look at housing for the future. Future housing because we were, these issues that we were facing then in housing back in the nineties, we're facing shortage [of] housing but a lot was focused, at that time, was called low-income housing and senior housing. Now it has morphed into affordable housing. So my question, if I were still in the Legislature, would be to answer, "Well, what's affordable?" Because what's affordable for me is not affordable for you. So who then takes that and turn that around and say, "How? What's affordable?" And what did we do in the past? We have a bill, we have legislation. Are we following that? Are we carrying through with that? Are we doing what it says? Because lots of time we passed legislation and there's no follow up. People come in new, they tried to do something different. And so mine has been, also, to let people know there was a [housing] policy. There was legislation that was passed. Are they really working with it?

So in regards then to how did you get issues passed and difficult pieces of legislation passed? You have to really get everybody on board. You have to be able to bring them together to understand what the issues are because everyone have their little piece and may think differently. And they may not be exposed to the kinds of things that you, and if you've been out there and you have worked and you've seen what is happening. My going to the Legislature was that I could make a difference because if you have nothing to offer, you can't accomplish anything. And if you can't bring people together, get them to understand, if they don't know,

you won't be able to get anything done, either. And then you have to risk, and [my approach] was respecting everybody's opinion because everyone has thoughts, is being able to respect that. So that is how I managed to get through some of the issues that needed to be addressed. They say it can't happen, but it can happen if you bring people together.

**Ms. Nimura:** I'm wondering, where do you think that came from? That approach to solving a problem? The bringing everybody together because not everybody does that, right?

**Senator Franklin:** A lot of it comes through experience and it comes through working with people from across the spectrum..[In] nursing I worked with people from across the spectrum whether they were rich, poor, black, white, whatever color you want me to say, of people of every....

[In] policymaking and bringing people together that everybody needs to be at the table — so that actually, for me came through working with people across the board. And I worked in the private sector and the public sector. I worked with all categories of people, and so I know, in order to get things done, you have to... you can't play it close to the vest and you have to respect other people's opinion. And say, "I respect you.."

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. So that wide range of experience, then, is what would have naturally grown your collaborative style, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Uh huh. Yes

**Ms. Nimura:** That's good to know. I wonder about how that happens now, right? I think that's a good thing for people to know.

**Senator Franklin:** Of how you really bring people together?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. How do you really do that?

**Senator Franklin:** We build too many walls. It's like in government. We have too many walls. And I said we have so many different departments in government. And one sector doesn't speak to the other sector. And within that sector, you may have all these walls. You may work for the same agency but you have so many walls it cuts off your communication. And this person doesn't know what the next person is doing. And they don't come together too. I think maybe now, through years, [we]

might be learning. I keep saying, and as one of our former Presidents, President Reagan, says, “Bring down those walls.” because you cannot solve problems unless you are able to bring people together, to be a good listener, to be able to listen, and to be able to be respectful of each other and their opinions. And a lot of that you just don’t pick that up. That is, you learn a lot of that through experience. – But, of course, people never learn.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. [Laughter] I think that’s why I wonder, right?

**Senator Franklin:** But you keep at it. If you have a vision and a heart for serving and for public service, but not just publicly, but humanitarian spirit [?] is that you have to be able to listen. What we call sympathetic understanding of what that person is really experiencing and, then, collectively, bringing and working to solve that and listening.

Another thing is having other people at the table. A lot of time in public policy, too much, you do public power and say, [mockingly] “It’s for the people” but the people are not at the table. Those who are the intended service for, they’re not at the table helping to make the decision. And so that’s another issue in public policy. It becomes, well, in my life experience, — which I’ve heard over and over, even before going to the Legislature and that’s what prompts me to say that I know we could do things better — is that people will say, “Well, they pass, they do policy and pass laws and it’s supposed to help people” but the people that it’s supposed to help are not really receiving the service. Because somebody else is telling them what to do and they’re not included in helping to make those decisions that affect them.

**Ms. Nimura:** So can we say that’s another component of what you wanted to do? And when you were making helping to make policy in the Legislature was to bring those people to the table, right? What’s that look like?

**Senator Franklin:** In policymaking? That, you have people who, in turn, come to the table and order something. Then you have my constituents that I represent, to hear from them and hear what they have to say in regards to the policy or what’s affecting them. And having them at the table when those policies, someone who represents them, sitting

in in order to be able to be a part of that discussion also.

**Ms. Nimura:** So when you say that you got to talk to them at the table, would that mean, like at town hall meetings that you did? Would that also mean bringing them to Olympia? Did they email or talk to you?

**Senator Franklin:** In several different ways. Coming to my office and sitting and talking about it. And the people who, because, as you know, in Olympia, you have people who represent groups of people. Lobbyists. And so they, in turn, that information then too transfers into their lobbyists. So you gather information, you hear what – because the everyday working person does not have the time to come to Olympia, but then, too, we, “we,” the universal “we,” tend to lock them out of the discussion. They’re not a part of the discussion.

So in order to be a part of the discussion, I represent the 29th District but not just the 29th Legislative District. They’re the people who elected me and sent me there to be their voice but now I’m a part of a total organization of, uh, forty nine counties. [Thirty-nine counties; forty-nine legislative districts] I have to be able to really communicate and work with all of them in order to solve a problem that may be relative for my district that also that might affect them. So having these voices of your consumers, the people whom you represent, and, of course, and that voice then comes in to the persons who represent them, their representative in Olympia who will be lobbying for them for that particular issue.

But not only that, I may address an issue that is not even thought about, with the lobbyists, it’s not even on their agenda at all. But then, in turn, I have been able to work with the lobbyists and whomever who may not see the issue as I do to win them over to say this could really affect you, the people who you represent. And so it becomes a sort of a give-and-take, a compromise, so that becomes a win-win issue. That’s a lot of work to bring people together and [people] don’t want to do it because they think that, but you get things done when you do that. I think everyone comes out a winner when you come out in that way. So I’ve had my, uh, disappointments. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Can you remember some of those? Things which might not be fun to revisit, that they would be helpful, right? for, our readers.

Can you think about some disappointments that we might want to talk about a little bit in the future?

**Senator Franklin:** Yes. There's one. We, as a society, we tend to put people in different boxes. One for me, was with kids. Calling them "at risk." Everybody, everyone of us who are born on this Earth, have some, come with some kind of risk factor. And society, in turn, has put kids, poor kids, kids of color, under-served kids, calling them "at risk." Everything is "at risk." And building, what they do, in order – a lot for funding, . Um, and so there was a, I'm several years ago, the, uh, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club in Tacoma, I think left. And then he, in turn, founded an organization, a group that's called "Kids At Hope." And, man, that has grown, they have had the data, they had everything about kids and kids' support and how they could do and what they could do with someone who they could — I don't remember all the details — who would be able to inspire them. To give them hope instead of locking them down, and saying they're "at risk" because, for failure, and putting, targeting the kids for failure before they even and have a shot [?] in life. I just hate the labels: "At risk."

During the interim I did a lot of work and gathered information and had legislation and worked with everyone. Went to the Department of Education about removing those terms that we use that seemed to penalize kids. And we were having, people were telling me, kids who had free and reduced lunches. Kids would not have lunch because they were seen as different. So the [State] Secretary of Education, "As long as it didn't interfere with the funding to remove those terms, what really is a drag on, there was no problem." I went and got information from everyone, got the support from everyone and had legislation drawn up. And it was scheduled for a hearing in that session. This was, in the 2000s, not the 1900s but 2000. Let me write that. 2000 and, let's see, it was 2010, might have been [2007].

**Ms. Nimura:** We'll find it.

**Senator Franklin:** [2007], and as it was scheduled and it was going through, it would go to the Committee on Education. She pulled it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you happen to know...? Or?

**Senator Franklin:** that they would not have the hearing?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Why?

**Senator Franklin:** Because the News Tribune wrote an article that the bill would be calling the kids “at hope” to give kids hope. And he, that negative article was written that would want to take away and now you want to call, whether it would be kids who were incarcerated kids or whatever. Now you want to call them “kids at hope” and put them with all the other kids? The article was in the News Tribune and there was some of my own colleagues [who were] the ones who probably [stopped] the bill.

**Ms. Nimura:** When you said you talked to everyone about getting that information right? Who’s, who’s “everyone?”

**Senator Franklin:** Who would have been against the bill? Who would have not supported the bill because they would see that would have had an impact on, a negative impact, but the more, the major one would have been the Department of Education, Secretary of Education, state education would, was fine. Usually, when I [drafted legislation], I would talk with everyone in order to get the support and get sponsors. And I don’t recall just how many sponsors I had to sign on to the bill but I mean, it’s a detail because there were so many things that I’d work on. I’d have to go back and do the whole research on it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, we can pull that.

**Senator Franklin:** Because the kids, the way [the bill] was written, we would remove those negative terms for kids. And then, of course, it would be these kids then, would be, because now we have “Kids At Hope” in school. They have, they have, I went to a meeting, um, just, uh, an annual, one of their annual meetings, for an update of what they were doing at their regards. And now, I think it’s expanded to, they’ve got “Kids At Hope” in Canada, in one of the, uh, in Canada. And now they’re on the campus of Arizona State. I was just, that was one of the recent things that I learned. So that was one of them major, one of the major down issues, that and I thought, “Oh, you know, for kids.”

But other things that I’d worked on, um, and in regards to there was

a concern that came and people were really complained, the kids came home and said they weren't having recess because there's no time for recess. And I said we need to have recess. Everyone needs to have recess. And the kids, we can reschedule the time, the teachers needed recess and the kids needed recess. And so that became an issue.

So, I worked on legislation, we found and did a lot of research on that and found out how they really were conducting recesses. And, I guess, within their curriculum there were certain ways of how they were having it so that had to be clearly defined. Some of the other, what is the expulsion of kids. And the expulsion of kids from school. And kids, they want to be expelled. They don't want to be in school in the first place. I would continually get calls from parents, especially, African American parents, who said that their kids were being expelled from school more than others, just when others weren't done and it was happening with Hispanic kids that they were being expelled from school. They sent me all this data and information that they had gathered. And so what I did is I contacted the Tacoma School District and others and, of course we really sort of got that squared away in regards to. So now, over the years, I think they're reviewing that whole issue of expelling kids from school and its way of keeping kids in school to learn. So that was some of the issues in regards to what has taken place. I worked on racial profiling issues, um, where

**Ms. Nimura:** Wait, with the kids and the rec-, just to back up, with the kids and the recess and the expulsion, is there legislation that you got to introduce then about those issues?

**Senator Franklin:** What? About lunches?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, lunches, recess, expulsion,...

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I did. I can't recall because I know they came to Olympia in support of it and I think, I'm pretty sure there was legislation, during that period, that dealt with school lunch, with school, school recess that we did, recess.

**Ms. Nimura:** That was successful legislation? Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** It's important for kids. Those things are important for kids, such as school lunches. I mean the [idea] of putting them at risk and putting them all in a box and saying they're "at risk." Putting labels, let's say, putting labels on them is really not a positive thing for kids at all. They need to have positive.

You don't put negative things on kids. You get all the positive and you and hope. You give them the hope that they can and then inspire them and be a model for them so that they can move on. Because all of us, in turn, have barriers that we have to get across, you know. And so I was deadly against any type of labeling.

**Ms. Nimura:** What sustained you during that time after you knew that [the bill] got pulled? What inspired you to go back and say, "All right, we're gonna do something else" or we're going to move forward? Is there something that you remember that kept you going anyway?

**Senator Franklin:** Kept me on to the next?... [Laughter] It was on to the next one. It was dealing with reform. One was, I took on, which had probably been done before, is our terrible way of funding services. Our taxing system. [Laughter] We had had studies. We had a committee studying Washington state taxing system and come up with recommendations, and it was beaten down every time. So I decided that I would really push for some type tax reform based on the information that had already been gathered by the committee, in order to, have reform, the reform of the tax system. And it would have reduced – the bill that I had – and I don't, it would have reduced taxes on business, it would reduce the sales tax and it would be one in which it was well thought-out. And so up until..., I left in 2010, I think it would have been 2008 to 2009. So that was one of my latest bills. So when I announced that I was not running for re-election, someone had written that, "Got rid of the tax lady." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** The tax lady?

**Senator Franklin:** It was something on Facebook. I don't remember the exact term.[Laughter] But it was because the lowest of our wage earners pay the highest amount of taxes. And I said, we are nickel and diming our residents to death. Plus the sales tax, every time they got

ready to do something, we put a little penny this. And every little penny counts. And so now we are among the highest when it comes to sales tax rate and it hits the poorest of the poor. When people talk when it, first you mentioned reform, first thing comes up is income. It is not income tax. We paid income tax, state income tax in Colorado. But here, it's something that they really sort of, just push [away]...

**Ms. Nimura:** It is like a cultural thing, right? You know, I'm from California, right? And the culture seems to be this, you know, here it's this like, "Oooh, statewide tax," right. People get very, very worked up about it, right? When you come from a state that already has a state income tax, right? You're kind of astonished, right?

**Senator Franklin:** But it's not. What it doesn't say because you pay a state income tax that it's going to alleviate you from everything else. It brings some stability within your structure and then — it brings some equity, let's put it that way, into the structure. We have what I refer to as feast or famine. If we have high unemployment and everybody's making money, then we have a lot of money. Once we go in a downturn, we have no money. So that has happened. And you look at our history, you see, we have that up and down.

So what happens when we go into that [downturn], then the services that's expected of us gets pushed over and does not get funded, like the teachers and their raises, like others. They get pushed away and say, Wait, no. We can't do it. And then when the economy comes back, you are forever trying to play catch up and you don't really get caught up.

And so mine has been for our citizens, that they don't really know. I discussed that when I was in the Legislature too. And we tried to do something about it, educating our citizens about the budgeting process and what it is. We have three budgets, which is the general budget, the capital budget and then we have transportation and most money comes from the general budget. And so I said, in order for the general population to understand the budget of where the money comes from and where the money goes, maybe they would be more amenable to looking at changing the structure.

But, the general population — I had that discussion just recently with

the League of Women Voters, which I had been talking about for several years now because I've been involved with the League of Women Voters for years and they are highly respected — is you have, they don't, as much as you are fair and work and representative, the general public still does not trust what they call, "Olympia." And so, in order to make any type of changes, you need to have a neutral person like, say, the League of Women Voters.

But you have to have a staff and everyone for support for the information and have town hall meetings throughout the state and communities so that people will understand the budgeting system, and that you have three budgets and that most of your funding comes for education.

Before I went to Olympia, we had, again, issues dealing with education, people [would] say, and when I went, they said, "Well, that's what the lottery is for, is to fund education." Because, at the time, when we needed, when they passed a lottery and the lottery, the people said it was to fund education.

And I'm in Olympia and later on, I'm in the community and I'm knocking on doors — and they say, "Well, what about that lottery money? That's supposed to fund education." And yet, I'm getting the information when I'm there, now, so that I would be able to come back in the community and explain to them about what the lottery money funds. And what the lottery money wouldn't begin to fund. What, by the time they paid the winners, if you will, and by the time you shared out this money, it was not enough money to even fund education.

And so, therefore, as the representative, I go out and I have my town hall meetings. So I have to be able to explain to them about what is going on in Olympia. And also we, health care, as now, was a big issue then. And so we were working in order to pass legislation in the State of Washington so everyone would be insured.

**Ms. Nimura:** That is so radical, right?

**Senator Franklin:** We got, finally got legislation, and we then, in turn, were beaten up, the Ds, were beaten up and we lost control because it's the same information that goes out. They say, "they want to choose, they'll choose your doctor for you. You're not going to be able to choose your

own doctor.” There was a lot of false information. And that was like in 1993, we passed legislation and I had to come out and face the public, the voters. When I was addressed about, my opponent at that time, he says, “She’s a nice lady, but she [Laughter]... she wanted this, everybody to have health insurance and somebody else would be choosing...” And based on that false information, just like at the national level, we lost. And [health care] finally got chipped away. And so, now, well, we have Apple program and we’ve got the ACA [Affordable Care Act], but citizens get confused. They are so confused. They just don’t know.

I just continued to get calls, and I would be working like late at night, because in Olympia I felt I was elected to represent people, the voters in my district. And so that meant that, at that time, I found I could not really do the job that was needed if I continued in nursing, and that’s when I gave up nursing because I found out it was a full time job. And so through that full time job with the people as, and they would say that, because it was really never my intention to run.

**Ms. Nimura:** I know. We’re going to get to that. I want to hear all about that.

**Senator Franklin:** There were two of us who would be working late at night, Senator Marilyn Rasmussen and I and, then, of course, there was another friend. They were like the three of us who ran. She’s now deceased. [Snaps fingers] Oh boy, I’ll think of, why can’t I think of, I’ll think of her name later, but I would be one of the last ones, eventually, to leave.

But what I would do is, I would make calls, stayed to make [them], and I had a great legislative assistant. I only had two [assistant] out of twenty years that I was there. And the one that was with me when I retired, [Annette Swillie], she had been on staff, and I had asked her. At first, she wasn’t ready to come over. And then Angela Knight, who was my first legislative assistant, and, she recommended Annette. Angela was going to relocate to Georgia, and Annette, she wanted to come, she had made up her mind.

I would not have wanted a better [assistant], because [Annette] had been there with Senator Fleming. She didn’t work with him but when he was in the Senate and she’d been in Olympia quite a while before I ever

went to Olympia. And she was a staff member on one of the committees. She worked in one of committees, and then she came over and of course, she lives in the district and she grew up here and so she was just, just great. So after I left, Connie hired her. [Connie Ladenberg, Pierce County Councilmember] So she's with the County Council.

**Ms. Nimura:** So we've got health care, then, as one of your, uh, disappointments then some of the health care stuff, right? The universal health care piece.

**Senator Franklin:** No. No, we got that. We got the Washington health care piece of legislation I think my second year, when I was there. Because it always got stopped in the Senate but we did get that. But then it, once it was passed, then it was eroded. And eventually, it went away. We had it where our system would, would then have been one of the really, the tops... Always, in so many things across the country with the state of Washington for environmental health, for health, other health issues... We were tops.

But when it comes, you mentioned disappointments, you know, I don't really... Like one friend says, "It's not [a disappointment], it's like a bump in the road" is what it really is. You had asked me earlier, well what did I do after that? Well you move on and you do something else. There's always something that you can really work on. But you know your district, and if you represent [them], you know the people in your district, what they want as their priority. You know that you're only one person...that's what I'm saying. You can't make a lot of promises.

**Ms. Nimura:** That's smart.

**Senator Franklin:** Because, you will see, I will try, because it's going to be more than you. But these are the issues that's important for us as a district to work on. These are the important issues for, not just the district, for Washingtonians.

It's like someone who represents a farm community, an agricultural community. Well, food is very important. And so that's health so you have to be able to, not only, I'd say [be their] representative, but you have to educate your constituents about how people connected with each other.

And it's not just one thing.

Based on that then, moving on to the next issue,... I worked on that when we did any construction or building of communities that we need to have open places and spaces for people to walk and to exercise. And that's where the environmental came in. The other dealt with, back in the nineties, we were taking waste along I-5 and others. The issue came but not just for us, but across the country where they were putting these dumps in poor neighborhoods and neighborhoods of people of color. With the environmentalists, it was very, very strong in the nineties, so it was environmental justice. I worked on environmental justice in the nineties.

Then with the fumes and everything, there were people with asthma and people with a lot of health problems. Then I would get calls from constituents about mold that would be in people's homes. And then, of course, I'd call the Health Department and tell them about what was happening within these apartments and about the inspections and what. So working together with the local government, local health department, and working together with state and [you start] educating them, saying, also, with your constituents because they are just thinking about, they know within their community. They're not seeing the community at large or the state at large.

So it became mine in order to teach and to respond to them and let them know. And then, of course, to connect them too with the services, which they sometimes were afraid to even ask for. They were not, like within [the system], when it came to going to the school board. They would come and complain to me. And then, in turn, it was saying, these are things we don't have here. It would be within your local school board. So [I would say,] talk to your school board and to your district about that. So there were several things, you become as a representative for your district, you become some of the teacher, advocate, you become a problem-solver.

I would encourage people to come to Olympia. Now, my office was the office, I've called it, of congregations. [Laughter] Because people always felt comfortable coming to my office because I would say, "It's yours" and "It's your house." And so I encouraged people to come to Olympia.

And I said, It's the people's house. It doesn't belong to me, it belongs to everyone. They were afraid and they don't know. It's because you're there, because I'm there, you know I'm no different.

**Ms. Nimura:** But that building is so imposing, right? And it's so big and it is kind of meant to make you think, "Wow."

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right? So did you feel that way at first, when you went? Or were you kind of like, "Uh, it's Olympia?" Or did you kind of feel that sense of awe when you went there?

**Senator Franklin:** It's of awe and of respect. Of this, this place is mine. It's the people's house. Well, it's a place of respect, that you respect it and that's how you treat it. And it being the people's house means it's not just mine. Like some people think, it's mine. No. It belongs to all of us. And so the sense of awe was, is one of learning. How do you learn all of this stuff?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, I know. I'm in awe.

**Senator Franklin:** When you're all on the floor together, you're all there in the chamber together and you look up and you see these people sitting in the gallery and then you think you got in, in a way. You think back to the founding of the country, what they had. You know, when you look back historically and we are new, in comparison to other nations. [But you are] in the state House itself, the people's house that you have to treat this with respect. And the people who you represent, you treat with respect also.

So that's awesome, and so that's why too, when kids... Like I go back to encouraging people, to really come to Olympia and see — you're not going to see everything, but just see what it is because it's yours. You are paying for it, and then people will come. You have a lot of visitors and then when the kids...The big thing is when the kids come. And I had the opportunity to talk to kids from different schools and different ages and the little ones. And I would say to them now — and I'd ask them questions, and we'd talk and [I'd] say, "Who do you respect? Or do you respect your teachers? Or what did you learn today?" [Laughter] Ohh,

the kids. And then, of course, the pages. I sponsored a lot of pages. And now, I see adults. And along with the pages, it's the student interns. And I see people now, and they say, "I was your intern. And I was your page." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Ohh, really? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** This next one deals with health disparities. And so we had a committee. A Joint Select Committee on health disparities in order to look at the issue. Because there were a lot of complaints about health care. How people were treated. What they were not getting, the services. It was just a lot of problems and it had been going on for quite some time. So it's not unique to Washington, it was national, it's a national problem. And so the Joint Select committee on health disparities, which meant it was the House and the Senate that worked together and for the interim. And, of course, it was led by the Senate because I'd become prime sponsor and I said that I would not do anything without the House being a part of it. And having, also, a Co-Chair. So the co chair was another nurse. I'll have to think of her name. She is still working. She served and she's at Good Samaritan. I think in, I don't know where, ICU or where, but she's good. She co chaired it.

Then we had this committee, collected a lot of information, lot of data, very good staff, Don Sloma. I think he was the head of that, of our health care committee. And from that study and all of that information, we developed legislation. There were five pieces of legislation that came. A major, major part was the Governor's Inter-agency Committee on Health Disparities. Then there were the other legislation dealt with cultural competency. And then the other one was impact. They would do impact studies, any time you would form legislation, we would see how it would work, then that was the third one. Then I've got one board member for the tribes. They had been trying to get on the board, the health board for quite some time. So that was one. And then, there was another because they were five pieces. I can't think of the others, one, but the major one, the inter-agency on health disparities. And so that is, we celebrated the tenth anniversary a couple of years ago on that. Then I had information, legislation on racial profiling was studied. And that was put under the

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State Patrol, who was the lead on that in order to track data.

**Ms. Nimura:** So would we count those five pieces as something that you're very proud of as an accomplishment?

**Senator Franklin:** That and the housing and the legislation we just spoke about... um, gosh, I can't think of them. There were others, can't think of them, the major ones.

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you want me to compile a list for you so you can see? Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I can share because...

**Ms. Nimura:** I'm sure there are so many. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Well, it was a good time.

## **Interview 2: January 17, 2019 - Childhood, early schooling**

**Ms. Nimura:** Today is January seventeenth, twenty nineteen. I'm Tamiko Nimura and I'm here with Senator Franklin at the Neeb Conference Center at Pacific Lutheran University. And today we're going to talk about her childhood, and schooling, early on, that stuff. So that is our plan. We'll try and take a very short break, kind of the middle of the way through, just so we can keep our blood flowing, and... circulation on then we'll see what happens from there. So, all right, let's see, all right. You have notes, it looks like. I have topics and questions but let's go from where you want to go and then I'll see what I need to weave in. Does that make sense?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh good. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay, let's see, so tell me where and when you were born and tell me about your parents if you would.

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, yeah, love that. I was born in Berkeley County, South Carolina, and now in the division that is called Cordesville, C-O-R-D-E-S-V-I-L-L-E, South Carolina. Because Berkeley County, in South Carolina we have these divisions. And of course, the county seat for Berkeley County is Moncks Corner. And that area, of course, is a historical place because of what happened during the Civil War. And one of the areas where I grew up is called Biggins Church. My parents are James Gourdine and Henrietta Bryant and they were married in 1920. This would have been the ninety-ninth anniversary year for them if they were still alive. I'm one of eleven and I'm the fifth. There were eleven of us, six girls and five boys.

**Ms. Nimura:** And there were boys first, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Four boys and then I came along. I came along and so I was the fifth. And I'm the oldest girl out of the six. And so, you see, I had to fight four boys so I grew up... my early years were with these boys but my, then after that, then the girls decided that they will pop up. April the fourth, 1927 is my birthday. So I'm also one of those Depression babies, which I didn't even know that there was money. I thought bartering was the way you really... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Tell me about that.

**Sen. Franklin:** That's how you bought stuff. I'm sure my parents had money because you had to have, you couldn't just barter or go and take things and make trade off. You had to have some money but it was one of those Depression era [things]. But I didn't look at it really more after I became older. Then I thought back, "Oh, that's really why" all of that bartering was going on.

**Ms. Nimura:** What were the things that you remember bartering?

**Sen. Franklin:** No, what they would do is, since they didn't have money, then they would, because people gardened, and grow things and so it was usually, it was food stuff because even food stuff was not really that plentiful. And so there was the country store, if you will, that carried everything so most things that people might have bartered, maybe some staples like maybe flour or... but so much of that stuff was made or homegrown.

In my early years that I can remember even, they grew rice south of the area because [where] I grew up right, Berkley County is a bit inland. It's not exactly on the coast, like Charleston or Georgetown. It's kind of inland but there was a lot of marsh and water so rice and stuff was grown around there. So I can remember my dad bringing rice and they had this sort of mortar type thing and then, what they would do is, just sort of beat it up and then they would sift and I would see them with this basket. And I just wanted in there and they were getting the seeds, separating the seeds and everything. I could remember that because, as I said, my first seven years [were] with my biological parents and then I went to live with my aunt by their requests with them, [and my biological parents] saying that, "She has to come back here every year." But, so that's where I was born. I used to refer to Cordesville as a hamlet but it's really not a hamlet. When I just looked at the map recently and the way they record it as a sort of different [place]. And I think it has, from what I saw last night, a population of about four and a half thousand that they've got now.

All of us were born in the same [place], in the house that my dad built. The nine of us were all born in that same house. We lived right

across the street, my dad was very active in the church so we lived right across the road from the church. So that the church was right in front of us. And he was really active in that Emmanuel AME Church so I could remember early on going to Sunday School, it was Sunday School. We all had to get out to Sunday School. Every Sunday. And my dad, of course, was a Sunday school teacher. And so those early years with my family and growing up really with my brothers.

And there were a lot of other kids. We say, in that whole area, because there was one housing area just a few steps, and next to the church, but a few steps from where we lived, what we call [Unintelligible] Hill, and there were families, like brothers, who owned all of, a lot of acreage, and they all had built, and we called that Gillen's[?], it was called Gillen's lot. And they were brothers and other family who had built and had their homes and everything. So there were a lot of kids around in the area where I grew up. And then my grandmother lived south of us, [Laughter] right down...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. This is your father's mother? Or mother's mother?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, my father's mother and his, and of course, she, this was her second marriage when I remember because his dad died, from what he said, in the small pox epidemic. I guess they had a smallpox epidemic. So his mom remarried so, so they became Bryants. Her second married name was Bryant. And so, how it is, my... actually he was my uncle. He was my grand-uncle, that married my grandma. It was on my mother's side so that's why it's Bryant. She's a Bryant.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. I remember you saying, [Unintelligible] Bryant. That's an interesting...

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. But they had, they didn't have any children. So all of her children were from her first marriage. And there were two girls and two boys. I don't remember. I just hear my dad speak of my of his brother, Richard, but he, and my two aunts. And so my aunt, I had two aunts, Bryant, but my, by that time, see they were all grown and she, um, we called our step-grandad, Uncle John, because he really was our uncle. And then my mom called him "Uncle" because it Uncle so he was our Grand-Uncle, the kids' Grand-Uncle. And so my grandmother,

then, who lived across -- and they had big acreage too and they did gardening and all that, but there were no phone in those days so you could just yeeellll [Laughter] or send up a smoke signal or something...

**Ms. Nimura:** Can you talk a little bit more about your parents? Your first set of parents, right? What were they like?

**Sen. Franklin:** My biological parents? That I was with for seven? That's what, that's who I'm talking about.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right. Right. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Sen. Franklin:** That's who I'm talking about. And so then my mom was a stay-at-home mom. And of course, she took care of kids. And then my dad, of course, he farmed and then, you know, I'm sure he worked also. He was a hard worker and he also farmed. So that is, and his mother, he was very well clo-- Well, you know, when you have a grandmother, the grandmother sort of ruled the roost. [Laughter] He was very, with his mom, I remember him being, how should I say?... respect of the grandparents, you know. The grandparents sort of raised us, because they stepped in and swung a hammer too. [Laughter]

And [we] got with the kids and so we had just a lot of people who were around us who helped to really grow. My mom would stay-at-home. My dad worked. He was the boss of the house. And I could remember one day that my brother, who I'm next to, who lives now, he lives in New York and he's still living, Nathaniel, I followed him, and climbed up, and [we] went up in the ceiling of the house. And you have, like those vents?, [we] went up through with vents and went across the house and leapt out the front window and crossed to the church. When we came [in], when we went to come back and get down from out of that attic-type thing where we were, then there was my mom's china closet, saved for all her dishes and I stepped on it and pulled it down.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, no! [Laughter] Was all the china lost?

**Sen. Franklin:** I was in trouble. I was in trouble. You know, I don't remember the full details of it except it came out, I was in trouble. I think, I think she must have said, "You wait. I'm gonna tell your Papa when he comes." And I think I went under the table, did something.

Waiting for him but...I don't know whatever happened to my brother. I don't know if he ever got in trouble or what but I was always out there with them shooting marbles or running around the house. And I remember one night, you know, like families always get together in the evening because there were people all over. The kids would be around running around playing. And I ran around the house and someone pushed me up against it, or I fell or got pushed up against a pillar of the house and got a bruise. I think I still have that bruise now [Unintelligible]. But those years early from birth to seven that I remember. And then, of course, I started school there. And we have to walk to school because nobody took you. Everybody walked to school.

**Ms. Nimura:** How far did you have to walk?

**Sen. Franklin:** I would think...I'm no good at mileage. It was probably about a mile or so that we walked to school. I could remember that they fix lunch and we'd have lunch. And when I grew up, there was no like, kindergarten and first grade. They were known as first and advanced first.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay.

**Sen. Franklin:** And so you were split so everyone, it was a small school.

**Ms. Nimura:** Schoolhouse style?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. It was a small school. And then the kids themselves, I think from my recollection, the first and advanced first were not in different rooms. They were separated by rows, maybe the beginners were on one side and then the first graders were all on the other side. The teacher taught both and she had, I think she had helpers. The other, the older kids helped the smaller kids.

Then we had, like, programs. And I remember the first program that I was in, and I had this little song and this little verbs that, it was about a bird. [Laughter] And when we had the program for the parents, then I had to say my little verses and then I had to imitate and sing like a bird. And so, [vocalizing] "Aw, aw. Aw" [Laughter] And those, and families and everything from around the area, really with their kids, and going to school and you had to [go to school]. That was a must. And then you had to pay very strict attention to the teacher.

And then it was cursive. It was cursive writing and A, B, Cs. I remember my first book was a Baby Ray book. And Baby Ray said, [Laughing] and Baby Ray said this. And Baby Ray said that. And reading, and it was reading, writing and arithmetic! [Laughing] And that was that.

There were no amenities, if you will, like today. The water, like for us, down from my house, there was a spring and it ran continuously all the time. So what they did was they, I guess my parents, or whomever would — I don't know that they might boarded it up and made it like [a well]— you would get spring water. So what you would do is, we had buckets, so you would go and you would put the bucket in that and bring that water back up to the house. And then there was another place which was, oh, a few miles from our house. And that would be the water that they would drink. It was drinking water. And so it was the kids [who had] to get the water. But then there was the strict thing too, very traditional about girls, that girls, in turn, did homemaking and did all of the things. And they weren't out there. And the boys were the ones who [were] out there doing the harvesting and agriculture and all that. That's the way it was in our house.

No amenities, let's put it that way, because it was a wood stove. And then in our house, that I remember, we had — there was no rural electricity then. And so you had lamps, kerosene lamps, and so those kerosene lamps in turn were ones in which the kids had to keep those lampshades clean. And so your windows like now they've got, I look back, I say, "Oh, they've got it really easy now." For cleaning windows if you had the glass windows back then, it was what they called Bon Ami. It was almost like a soap so you would take it and you'd rub it on the window, and then you would take cloth or paper and then you would clean it with that. And then, of course, you had, but if you had a windowpane, you'd have to have a cover. You wouldn't, so they would have a window, like now, today's, in today's world, you have a different cover for your window but your windowpane but they were wooden, you'd have wooden windows. So what you do, you'd close those windows, when a, wooden windows, and that's on, that, in turn, would protect if you had windowpane, if you have had not have any windowpane, it'd still protect and keep the bugs and stuff out.

But we had in my house, a fireplace and then we had the kitchen and we had bedrooms. The heat in the summer was so, so hot in the South and humid that a lot of times people, you know, would just sleep on the floor— they didn't sleep in the bed or anything because it was so hot. When we did our studying and stuff, we studied by lamplight. And if you have a fireplace, you could roast potatoes and stuff in the fireplace... During the winter then, families would get together for butchering season and then families would help each other with butchering. And then, of course, they would have what they're curing meat – I didn't know all the details, I was little but I would see them doing these, doing what they were doing, and butchering,...

**Ms. Nimura:** Pigs maybe? Pigs?

**Sen. Franklin:** Curing... Hm? Yeah, pigs. I didn't no, no butchering of the cow — Oh, and I never learned to milk a cow. [Laughter] Oh, my goodness. I would have tried, I just tried to milk a cow... That was something I never learned to do... was to milk this cow.

The other thing, what my dad would do because they had to preserve things for winter. He would make these big banks, he'd make a huge bank of dirt with straw in it because there was a lot of straw and stuff. And then what you would put in there would be potatoes and everything. You would bank them for the winter and when you need them, you would just go and get them.

My dad also kept a rifle over his door and he would shoot a squirrel. [Laughter] He got a squirrel, pick a squirrel off. And so I don't know what [happened to it], like I asked my sister, "What happened to that rifle that was always hanging over the door?" But he always did, and then my grandfather, my uncle, Uncle John, as we called him, my step-grandfather, he wouldn't like that. We had snakes around too. You have to always look around look out for snakes. Oh, they were plentiful. And there were those snakes that grow in the water, that he called water moccasins and he would take it and [mimes shooting a rifle], "pick!" [Laughter]

But then coming back to every summer, which my dad said that I had to come back every summer. And as I grew older and older and then we still, you know, had friends and my grandmother. And my grandmother

was, we'd love to go to her. She had — we'd laugh about it now — she had an ice box. You know, in the early days, you'd get this ice box and you put the ice in it and it kept. And then she had pictures.

But my grandmother was strict. My brother and I, I have a brother, this in California. My youngest brother lives in California. We laugh now about what we would [do], see, Grammy wouldn't even let us pick the pear off the trees. She said, "Wait until it falls on the ground." [Laughter] "Well you wait until the pear falls on the ground." We laugh about it. We were talking about it last summer when I saw him. He said, we'd run in there, Grandma didn't know we'd be picking those pears. And so over the years of coming back. Those seven years of growing up with my biological parents and stuff were one of which was really some of my base, because of my dad. Here, let me show my Dad's picture...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! Wonderful!

**Sen. Franklin:** and my mom. Here's my dad. And this one we took, it was in a mirror so this one, this is my mom. That didn't turn out too well.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, my goodness.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. Yeah, that's my dad. So you can tell, the way he sits in his dress, what type of person... You could tell that he was, he popped the whip.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, he did. He doesn't look too comfortable in that chair, right? He kind of looks like, he's kind of ready to go. Right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, he was always on the go.

**Ms. Nimura:** This is where you get it from, huh?

**Sen. Franklin:** He was, yep. He was always on the go.

**Ms. Nimura:** May I scan these later? Okay, I'll just...

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh yeah. Yeah, he was. And he was very, in fact, I have my letters now that he has written to me.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really? So while you were with your aunt and uncle, he wrote you letters?

**Sen. Franklin:** No, no they was after I was already an adult and stuff.

**Ms. Nimura:** He still wrote you letters?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. When I was an adult. When we were growing up and stuff, no, I would just come back and visit. They weren't any letters and things like that.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay. So maybe we could move to when you started living with your aunt and uncle when you were seven, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. When, let's see, I was counting back the other day because and it would have been in 1934. And so I was seven that April. What happened is, my aunt, who was my mom's oldest sister, because my mom was the youngest [sister in their family]...My mom had lived with her because [their] mom had died. And so she went to live with her older sister. And so she... actually, she never really told me how long she lived there but she did go to school in Georgetown also because my mom is, along with my aunt's children, and my aunt had five. Her oldest was born in nineteen, um, nineteen-three. She went to Charleston because there was a relative in Charleston, an aunt in Charleston.

**Ms. Nimura:** This is your aunt or ..?

**Sen. Franklin:** And I think that's how [my mom] met my dad. Yeah. And so when my mom, my Aunt Julia, her name was Julia, Julia Bryant was my aunt. And then her husband was Norridge.

**Ms. Nimura:** Norridge?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. You never hear it. N-O-R-R-I-D-G-E. Norridge Mayhams. You probably haven't heard that name either. M-A-Y-H-A-M-S. And so their youngest daughter was going, was off to college and they had, were always used to having kids in their home. So then my mom/my aunt asked my dad if I could come and live with [them]. And that was when he said, Yeah.

He relented and said, "Yes, she can but you were not to ever change her name or try to adopt her and she has to come back every summer." So that I would know my sisters and brothers. And so they agreed to that. So that's when I said, every summer I had to get... Can you remember

back then being in that train and riding those few [miles]...

**Ms. Nimura:** Did you go by yourself on the train? This is to Georgetown, right? Georgetown?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. They put me on the train every summer. Yep, every summer. I made, it wasn't that, back then, you see, people didn't have cars or, if they might have owned a car it was, or if – he didn't own a car. But if you needed, then, you know, you would get somebody, would hire somebody to take you but the, traveling back in those days were trains. And so, yes, they put me on the train and to go those few miles, I should have looked it up, what the miles were from Moncks Corner because it would go into, the train would go into Moncks Corner and then, from there, it would go to Charleston. And from Georgetown to Moncks Corner, in those days, I don't know if was fif-, it wasn't a hundred miles.

**Ms. Nimura:** I thought I remembered something like twenty but I can't, I did look it up but I can't remember what the number was. I'm going to have to find it.

**Sen. Franklin:** But see where, the way the train did, got on and, I think, if I remember correctly, is if I had to leave out of King Street or change but then we went into what we call Cordesville Station. And then my dad had someone with a car, and him, [they] came and got me and took me to the house.

**Ms. Nimura:** So do you remember when your parents said we want you to come? You know, your aunt wants you to come live with them. Do you remember that moment when that decision got made?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, that, that wasn't, that wasn't made in my presence.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, but do you remember when they told you about what was going to happen?

**Sen. Franklin:** Nuh-uh, they didn't, they didn't. That wasn't in my presence. They didn't make that – they made that deal. I didn't know anything about that deal.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, but when your parents came to tell you, your bio-

logical parents came to tell you this, do you remember that?

**Sen. Franklin:** No, I'm saying that was, that was never... That wasn't something that they discussed with me. [Laughter] I don't know, didn't know a thing about [the agreement]. How I knew about it was, in fact, my cousin told me about it. And she is now, she just had her one hundredth birthday on, celebrated this weekend. That was the youngest daughter that went off to college.

**Ms. Nimura:** To college. [Your cousin] told you?

**Sen. Franklin:** And she told me of about the pact that they had with me. She was the one who told me. I know, because, if it were left up to me, I wouldn't have gone.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow. .... I wondered about that. I wondered. Was it hard?

**Sen. Franklin:** No, I would not have left if I had gone because I was leaving my sisters – my brothers at least because I had, at that time, I might have had a baby sister. Yeah because my sister, that's next to me, was born in December of 1928. See and I was born in April of 1927. So I grew up with, my first, all my first years were with boys, my brothers. Yeah, no, and I was having fun.

No, I would not have gone but, no, my cousin really — I call her my sister because we more or less grew up like sisters — she's the one that we went [to visit] with my daughter and her husband. I went back this September to see her because I knew I was not going to get back to [see her for] her birthday this January. And she was still playing the piano and singing. Looks great. And then they had her birthday and they sent me tons of pictures of her with her [family], there were three generations, she, her daughter, her granddaughter – who's a doctor, um, and her grandson. She has three, let's see, the granddaughter had three sons. Her daughter, one daughter, had one child and she was the one that, Eleanor, was killed head on. She was a pharmacist, in a crash in Chicago. And that's her daughter that has the three sons. She's a doctor and her sons are studying to be a doctors. Her husband is a doctor also.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow, a lot of health care in your family.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. And then her baby daughter who lives in Atlanta, has three sons. So and then the middle daughter has one son and one daughter so she has one granddaughter. One granddaughter and three, um, great grandsons.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, wow okay. It is a large extended family then, right?

**Sen. Franklin:**... that she has. Yeah. And so [this cousin], in turn, was the one who told me, well quite sometime ago, about what that pact was about. So growing up then, in Georgetown, with my second set of parents, as I called them, which was [my] aunt and uncle, which is right on the coast, right on the Atlantic so I was around beaches. And so my cousin, the other day when we were talking, and she was saying she could not understand that there were people who didn't have beaches around [Laughter] because we're right on the coast. So growing up there was really like growing up as an only child. And so then I went to Howard, started Howard High, Howard School.

**Ms. Nimura:** High School?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, and when I first started, in fact, I think that I had the same teacher as my mom had had. She had taught my mom. She says, "Oh [Unintelligible] because, you know, I think I went at seven so I must have been in second grade." And then from there on, then it was, they were really, they were great. Like I said, I missed my biological parents early on but, you know, I always went back to see them.

But then there were kids around and then I had friends at school and I was right in walking distance, I just was around the corner from school. Yeah, I got to hear when the bell rang. I had great teachers. They really instilled in us too, education. For me and my families both, education was very important because of the conditions of African-Americans and slavery. And when I was born, [slavery] hadn't been too many years before. And then, of course, my dad was never a slave but the house where he built his home. His land was inherited from his uncle, who had been an ex-slave. And that's where, as I said, all of us were born and that house stands, still stands today.

**Ms. Nimura:** It does? Wow. Do you have pictures of it?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. I had my [youngest daughter], Sara take pictures of it when we were there this fall. So I'm going to ask her because she never did send it to me, because like I said to them, "Take, take pictures of this house. Take pictures of this house."

So the church was right in front of it so my mom and dad are interred there. We were busy taking pictures of the church and that. So I'm going to ask [Sara] about that. My sister built her house on property that was adjacent to that. She has this huge house built [next door]...well, it's on property that's adjacent to where we were born.

**Ms. Nimura:** How big is the house that you grew up in? Those first years? That your dad built.

**Sen. Franklin:** The house, where I was born? We had, um, let's see, one, two, three, four. Four rooms.

**Ms. Nimura:** Four rooms? Including a kitchen and... ?

**Sen. Franklin:** Four. [Laughter] including a kitchen and a porch. No, we have four rooms and a porch, a front porch, and I think there was a back porch, and a barn [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Because he was a rice farmer. He was a rice farmer.

**Sen. Franklin:** No, he wasn't a rice-. He was, he raised corn. He raised corn.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay. Okay, he raised corn, all right.

**Sen. Franklin:** So it was a small house for a big family.

**Ms. Nimura:** So tell me more about the adjustment, then, from going from such a large family.

**Sen. Franklin:** Into a small [one]? Well, the adjustment was first, I was the only one. Then I had a room all by myself and not only that, we had, there was, I don't know. It was like is growing up in the city or town. You, there were the convenience. It's different growing up in on a farm than growing up in a town. There were no cows. [Laughter] That, there were no cows and there were no pigs. There were no pigs, and no, and you didn't have to bother, brothers didn't have to bother about

going and feeding, feeding the pigs or feeding the cows or bother with milking the cows.

Um, but then my aunt, in turn, she had a garden and she had... We had fruit trees. She did a lot of baking and canning and, uh, oh my, I thought, I don't ever want see another pea--, I don't want to can anything. [Laughter] Because you have to peel it. Back then, of course, like I had my duties. I had to keep my room. I was assigned duties of keeping things clean. [Unintelligible] make me doing the dishes but those things were, my education was number one or my education was number one.

But I know what my duties were. And I knew if I did not do them, I could not go out to play. So you get to work on [your lessons] so you could go out to play and be with your friends. So with my classmates and my friends — what we did, we'd skate. We did a lot of outdoor skating. I'd climb trees, [I was] climbing fences and going down to the post office to pick up the mail. Because my aunt also, she was home and what she did, she did laundry.

The ships, like I said before, the big ships came in. That's when I was introduced to big ships. Because, at that time, the size of the ships and the size of our bay, the ships could come right in because I lived on Orange Street and Orange Street took me right down. You can, let's see on the map now, this is Orange Street and where my cousin lives is 49 Orange Street, Georgetown, and that's where I grew up. But there's a different house. She had, she tore the old house down and built another house.

But I would walk down. Walking, it was always walking. And I would go to the post office to pick up the mail and then come back home. And then well, on Sundays we had to go to church, Sunday school. Then we had midweek service, which was Wednesday. And my mom, my aunt was, we had what we call home missions, home missionaries, where they'd have meetings at different people's houses. And sometimes I said, "Oh, my God, I don't really want to..." And so sometimes I didn't have to go to Wednesday night service. She'd let me stay with, there was friends that lived around the corner from us so I could stay there and study my lessons.

But every Sunday, it was church. And then my uncle, who was active in the church also, they would visit other churches out of the city so I

would go with them. They would take me and we would go out of the city to visit so was very active. But I was active at school. And so, then I had a bicycle. I delivered paper, newspaper, on the weekends.

What else did I do growing up? Oh, and then when the war started, because there was Pearl Harbor, that Sunday we were getting ready to go to church when there was a Pearl Harbor attack. And after that, everything just... During the summers prior to that if I didn't, well, I had to go to my parents but when I became older then I went to New York because my aunt's, uh, her children lived in New York after they were adults. One was a pharmacist and he had a drugstore with a partner in New York. And then there was another son and he was a musician, and then her daughter, one daughter, was a nurse that graduated from Meharry Medical School, Meharry Medical School of Nursing. And then there was a nursing school. And so then the summer, I went to her. So I went, I took the train and went to all of these different places during the summer.

**Ms. Nimura:** So not, not just to your parents then? When you were older then, you would come, you would go to New York to visit family?

**Sen. Franklin:** As I became older, yeah. Went to Tennessee.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. So you remember seeing when the ships came in then, do you remember different kinds of people coming through? And being kind of excited about that? When the ships came in?

**Sen. Franklin:** When what? Because my uncle worked at the post office, and then when the big ships came in my aunt, I think she did laundry for them. They came up to our house. We had them, the sailors that came to our house. [Laughter] I knew when the ships were in because, remember, I grew up in a state, the state was a segregated state. And anybody that did not look right or was not right, they're not... There was no place for them. So they, people, the sailors who were probably African-Americans or other people of color, in turn, well, where would they go? And so...

**Ms. Nimura:** So they came to your house.

**Sen. Franklin:** They came to our house and [my aunt and uncle] would

say that we know when the ships were in because [the sailors] would have also their musical instruments and they would come and play. So that's how I got introduced to them. To the international world at a very early age.

Apparently this sailor had gotten, I think he went, he... They came onshore. I don't know whether he went to Myrtle Beach or somewhere but, anyway, he didn't make it back to the ship and got into some kinds of a problem. And so my uncle interceded for him and took care of whatever needed to be taken care of. And that sailor, in turn, sent him, I remember him sending packages from wherever from around the world to [my uncle] for that. And so that's how I really was introduced to that by [the sailors] coming. I was young but my uncle brought them.

[My aunt and uncle] were people who, in turn, just looked after other people. They really cared, cared about other people and had like open, open houses or took care of you or whatever. They were just people who worked with kindness. That's what was taught to me early on about really caring about other people. But not only that from them, and see, it was instilled from my biological parents, too, about really respecting and caring for other people. And so growing up with them and Georgetown....

And having too, once in school, and people, teachers, who really cared instills in you that you, regardless of what other people say or who you are against. Because growing up then, like people ask me now, you know I didn't really think about that because you had segregation but African-Americans had businesses; your own store, you had stores; we had candy shop; ice cream shop; and your communities. And it was someone who push[ed] the kids to do the best. You know they become better because, for them, they always wanted their kids to do better, like all of my aunts' kids are professionals. All of my brothers and sisters went to college. And so [growing up in that environment] was one in which says you are here. Your education is important. And you got to, this is what you have to do. And then you have to help other people. And so you can't let someone tell you you're not going to do it. You know, so sustaining and communities....you have a community of people because growing up, if I did something, which I know I'd better not do, my parents would know it before I ever got there, before I got home.

Growing up in Georgetown in that, from an agricultural community, a farm community, to one in town...The country mouse and the city mouse. It was was different in a way that, you had the farm and stuff you had to do but in town, because we had not reached a point of improvement for, let's say, they were still having private farms of milk. And the milk, in turn, when did pasteurization come in? Years later. So I know we got our milk from this gentleman, raised cows, and he had his own dairy. This one-person dairy. I know what his pasteurization was. It was boiling the bottles, the water, the milk bottles but so far as the milk going through pasteurization? You were having raw milk, let's put it that way, in clean bottles. So we had that. He delivered our milk in town.

We didn't have that out on the farm because you went directly out to the farm and you milked the cow. And I think I remember that they had something like you strained the milk. If I remember correctly, there was some way of straining the milk that they did. Then because you did not have a way of keeping the milk, of course, the milk then soured. That's what they would have sour milk. The milk turned. But what happened? They did not waste the milk. You know what they did? They took that milk that had soured and then used it to make bread and other things. So that nothing was ever wasted. In town, where you did not have, you did not, you had a refrigerator, a Frigidaire, in order to be able to keep your milk.

**Ms. Nimura:** Did you have amenities as you're calling them? Are we talking amenities in town?

**Sen. Franklin:** The amenities, the amenities were more in the city than it was on the farm. And so the amenities in town, you also had a radio. I remember the radio. We used to sit and listen to the radio. They had radio shows, music over the [Unintelligible] And then on Sundays, I could remember listening to, they had a lot of church music on Sunday. Then on Sunday morning, they had a lot of church music on Sunday morning on the radio. There was no TV. There was all radio. There would be special programs that would on certain nights, like on Monday night and on Tuesday night.

And then, of course, we had, even though we're in town, I remember

we burned coals. We had coal heat, coal for heat. Where on the farm we had wood for heat. We didn't have coals. We had wood and then growing up with my aunt, we had, over the range? Like when I was little, I remember that, with our range, you had, it was a wood [burning stove]. And for the hot water, you had, on the side, there was something that, they called it a boiler or tank or something, and that was connected to the stove. So that heated the water and then your range at the top was [an] area that you could put, once you baked, you would keep, put the food up in order to maintain or keep it. Then in town — again I'm measuring in town and being on the farm — my aunt, as I said, did a lot of baking. So what you would do, you'd bake. Nobody cooked on Sunday. What they would do is heat up food on Sunday because all the food and everything was cooked on Saturday. And then, of course, you'd have visitors. We had visitors for dinner. The other thing, too. From, both my [sets of] parents, were, before we could eat you'd have to get, you'd be on your knees and pray before you have [dinner]... I'm thinking, "Oh, my God. I'm waiting for the food." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** What kind of food are we talking about? What kind of food are we talking about?

**Sen. Franklin:** Food? Oh, the mealtime.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, I know, I mean but just, you know, what did you eat?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh breakfast but before you could eat, prayers always came before meals.

**Ms. Nimura:** What kind of food, sorry, like biscuits or... ?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, it would be, could be bacon or grits, well for breakfast or biscuits. What else could I think of? Biscuits. I think it might be pancakes. So it was grits or milk or, and, of course, they wouldn't give kids coffee. You couldn't have coff-- [Laughs] No coffee. No kids' coffee. Then, of course, dinner, for dinner could be, God what is, might be a roast or a chicken or rice, greens or beans or peas, corn. But before it was the breakfast before you ate that food, you'd be on your knees.

I remember, back to my mom, I could remember my mom saying, "Praise the Lord for salvation! Lilly of the valley!" right as the morning

started. And that was because she had to get, she would get up and we would, we would get, as I say, four brothers and I but remember, we'd get ready, that's in those early, first seven years. But when I came back to that, everybody'd get ready to go to church, to Sunday School, and after Sunday school was church. And, you know, she didn't get there, but the rest of us did.

Children were just, how should I say that? The children were treated just a whole lot different, because the children themselves, you were a child. You would listen. This is what you have to do. We had too, for church, we had Children's Day. It's almost like, say, they worshipped the kids. In a way. It was kids. The kids were really,...they were important. And then, we had in our church just... They celebrated some of everything almost because we had Children's Day where they celebrated the children and the children had a program. And I remember that because after, what my dad would do, they would make this a big container of lemonade.

So back to Georgetown, then, in regards to the amenities that were different from being out on the farm, when there was electricity in the city but it was not in the rural areas. And then I took piano lessons. I was an avid reader. I just read a lot. I read a lot. I could remember books after books after books. And then with my aunts, they had books. And then, of course, in our library. And, of course, with segregation, how they treated back different...[As] African-Americans, I don't ever remember could there even [be] a library in town. I don't remember if a library even was there. I can't remember. But the schools were segregated. And I know they had the better books and better schools and we got the hand me downs but we used those and I had a French teacher. I took French. And then we had...

**Ms. Nimura:** Was that middle school, high school? High school.

**Sen. Franklin:** High school. Took French in high school. And then I had other [languages]. You could choose. Latin, I think they were teaching Latin and I remember saying, "Why in the world are they, who wants to take Latin?" And then they had French. I don't recall any other. They didn't have Spanish, I know. And we started the, gosh, we started the Greek orders. We had to learn what they don't really even, I think,

teach today about what happened in Greece, what happened with, and “Thanatopsis.” I can remember studying “Thanatopsis.” I don’t know if they ever... Do they do that today?

**Ms. Nimura:** So my daughter knows a little bit about ancient Greece, ancient Rome, some of those early civilization stuff.

**Sen. Franklin:** They still teach it? Oh, okay. All right, well...

**Ms. Nimura:** I don’t think everybody got to but I know she did.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, because we, and then we had, and, of course, American poetry. We didn’t just read them. We had to memorize. And then, of course, we did plays. I always remember being in high school plays but we, in turn, had to memorize all of that stuff.

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you still remember any? Do you still remember any poems that you had to memorize? It was a lot though.

**Sen. Franklin:** You know, I don’t quite think so. I think, it was it wolf or “when I’m weary, when I’m...” What was it? There was one about when I’m weary. Oh. I used to know them all but now, I doubt it.

**Ms. Nimura:** You’re an avid reader and you had a lot of books. Where did you get all your books? Were they from your school or your family...?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, your schools. Got them from school, wherever we were collecting them. Yeah, I just read. And then, of course, newspapers. We had the black press. And then I read stories about what was happening on segregation and other poems. Oh, yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** This is a good place, I think, to take a very short break. So why don’t we do that just to kind of stretch our legs? I’ll just keep this recording but I will, you know.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, I’m trying to think about some of those poems.

**Ms. Nimura:** I was thinking that you might have studied, like, you might have read some Whitman by then, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, American poetry? So much of that. I did. And then of course we had, we also had black writers. Paul Laurence Dunbar. A lot of the black writers we started to, at the time.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. I think when I read Paul, so did, would you have read Phillis Wheatley then or was she?

**Sen. Franklin:** Who?

**Ms. Nimura:** Phillis Wheatley.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yes, Phillis Wheatley. And then we had. And then too, as we were growing up there were, there was Mary McLeod Bethune who was very active. So we knew so much about the, our black pioneers during that time, who we were really trying to break them, bring down barriers and, of course, education too this one. And, of course, Meharry Medical School was the only school where it trained just went all of the black doctors. And then there were, then you had Howard University. So there was just Howard University because African-Americans were not accepted in white schools, medical schools so that's where they ended up. But my cousin, one of my aunt's second son, Joseph, graduated from Columbia. He was the one with the pharmacist and had his drugstore in Brooklyn.

**Ms. Nimura:** So... I'm trying to think about a good way to talk about this... It sounds like then there was a simultaneous segregation as a constant presence, as a fact of life, you know, but also a very strong resilience and resistance to go along with it. Does that sound accurate to you?

**Sen. Franklin:** Um hmm. Um hmm. Yeah, because it wasn't one who sat down and said, "Ohh. Oh man. I'm not really [Unintelligible]." Because the fight has been going on for a long time in order to break down the barriers and people just did it in different ways.

And so we had the Masons, who right around the corner from me was a Masonic Hall and they would have functions, right around up on the corner from me was this family had a candy store down on Front, we called it Front Street. On Main Street. Down in Georgetown, the Atkinsons had a market. So black businesses were there. So if you have segregation, then you have your own community. The problem is when you separate and segregate, and people are unequal and they're all living in their own particular community and you cannot have the same privileges, the same educational opportunities, and you're paying taxes

and they're not charging you differently on your taxes. You're paying the same taxes but you're not getting the benefit from the public, the public benefit for what you're paying for and being treated differently. Now, if they want to say, you're going to treat me differently and I'm not going to charge you. I'm going to charge you a different rate and lower your rate, not give you but not take your money.

You know, that's a whole different story but the thing about it, what they, what people don't understand about, in regards to slavery, and I'm just talking slavery now, not other immigrants and other people who come to say that because you enslave me, you don't enslave my mind. See? And so there were artists and what happened was, with the artistic skills and what African-Americans invented were taken away because of [not] having the rights. That's what happened. And they're not given credit, just like a major part of building Washington, D.C.

A major part of a whole, the ones who were the economic engines of the south, were the slaves, when cotton was king. And but not only were they just field workers but they were thinking all the time. It's because otherwise they would not have survived.

**Ms. Nimura:** So you got that sense of history of black people, you know, doing what they always do, right? Which was to rise above their circumstances. And you got that from your schools, right? Your segregated schools, from that education. So that sounds like it was a very important part of building your sense of self.

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh yeah because the thing about it, when you [are] just a few generations, see the further away you get from that time of 1800s, then people don't think about it, you know. But the closer you might have been to that particular time of the 1800s, then you really know what, all this. It's just like being a part of the Depression. That's why now you see, we'll see with older adults who, in turn, would not, say they didn't believe in banks because of what happened during the Depression. Or they don't get in debt because of what happened. And so each generation has a story to tell. But the further you get away from it, then it becomes like you don't think that much about it.

Like in the forties because I think people don't really think too, that

America was an isolationist nation and like now, like what they're trying to do, bring it back to being an isolationist nation. But what they were saying now, when I was in school, how great these are the countries were, then all of a sudden, and then what happened? Then they were no longer because here we were in World War Two. But then there was World War One also. And where, well, see again, what they were when you have the war.

When African-Americans went and fought in each war but yet when they came back home, they were segregated. They didn't have privilege. And you go, and you fight, and you die and you come back on your own turf, people would say, "We were treated better in France than we're treated here." So but yeah, that the resilience, you said, of African-Americans like we say, my goodness, and why, so people don't misunderstand, that the church was the mainstay because of the segregation. You could go to church [with] everybody and why? It became segregated church, it became black churches, because they were not allowed to worship together. So the churches became the gathering place of African-Americans. So that, how all these but the examples that your parents and your elders set for you and what they expected of you what, is what really matters. And then they said, "Do it!" You better... [Laughter] You did it. There was no back-talk. No, nothing. No indeed. Not in my ear.

**Ms. Nimura:** So where do you think you got the means then, to speak up? When you saw that something needed to be changed, right? If there was the respect for authority? The respect for your parents, your community. Where did you get that sense that things still needed to change?

**Sen. Franklin:** To speak up?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, where do you think you got that? Where do you think that came from?

**Sen. Franklin:** Well, the thing about it is my parents had told me that there's a way to do everything. I learned that there is a way to do everything. There's a time to talk and there's a time to keep quiet. And when you, it's almost like, how should I say? It's almost like, I can't say playing cat and mouse, [Laughter] that you look at the situation. They said, you have to really think about what you're going to say because

the first thing out of your mouth is not going to be the way to get it, to solve the problem or get it done. But, so for me, it had become a learning process. Because I would tell you that I saw things that and I thought, “I’m going to change the world.” And I found out it’s not gonna work that way, that you cannot. One person can’t change it, that you have to build allies. [Laughter] In order to get it.

**Ms. Nimura:** We’re going to get back to this when we get to the Legislature, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** But when I get the chance to speak up I would really shoot off. I would really, um... No, I wouldn’t say things that I would not want to repeat again, but I would get really, sort of, blown, as they say, blown out of shape. And then I just learned that, and I’d go back and I’d think about what my parents [said] that, then think about what other people said that you can catch more flies with molasses. You know, I think about all those things. And so now I think, how do I do this?

And so it’s something that begins to show maturity and how you really face problems. And through that then, you are able, what I’m saying, when you share that with other people to tell them. When you see others who fly off or who treat other people unfairly or do things that they shouldn’t or say things that they shouldn’t — then you speak, you have a way of approaching them and you saying, “No.” Because if you start squealing and running around, jumping, a lot of time...

But maybe you have to have those. Because you have a group of some of everybody but, so probably you need other people out there running around and jumping and squealing and demonstrating but I did that too, see. I did walking. I did the demon — I didn’t do the real outlandish stuff. I just walked in parades and stuff like that. I’m like, more or less, like Martin Luther King, his approach of how he did things but even prior to that, you know, on the waterfront and what took place, when they were organizing and when the longshoremen and how they were treated and when the unions were, you know those were bloody warfares with some of those things that went on. But a lot of the things, I think, you learn as you mature and observe. That’s why observing and thinking, what is your next step. You have to have those kinds of people but then

you have to, I think, you have to have the other kinds who get out and...

So you have all these different groups. So you find out what group you're going to be in. And so, for me, [I] learned through more or less like observing and listening and looking how other people did things. I'd sit back and look and I'd say, "Oh my gosh, I... really?!" I'd look back and say, "That's not exactly, I wouldn't, I don't think I'd do that." Then I think about my parents. I don't think my parents would want me to do that. And that was not the way I was brought up. So you go back to really, where you're beginning and your history. So that's why education is so important. That's why education is sooo important. Your education, because once you learn to think, you can think for yourself. And that's why they didn't want to educate us because they didn't want us to be thinkers. Right? Because if you can think you can, you can...

Education is it. Like one of our governors, former governors [says], education is the great equalizer.

**Ms. Nimura:** My parents always said you have to have a good education because they can't take that from you. Right? They can't take it away from you.

**Sen. Franklin:** That's what mine would always say, too. They cannot take it from you. They can't take it from you.

**Ms. Nimura:** I just want to clarify. We've got, like, twenty minutes or so we're good. I wanted to take us, we'd got gotten as far as high school. You were living with your aunt and your uncle were still going back every summer, right? to see your biological family. What did your uncle do? Because your aunt was at home, did laundry for...

**Sen. Franklin:** My uncle worked at the post office. That's when I knew him. He might have had jobs before, but all the time that I knew him he worked at the post office and he'd ride his bicycle to work. And I would go down to the post office sometimes to visit him. So he was at the post office. I always think about when James Farley, I think, was the postmaster general back in those days.

**Ms. Nimura:** I read in one of your interviews that it was in high school that you went to work somewhere in the summer and this is where you

decided that nursing was the...

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. I was working. That was after I graduated from high school. My cousin Dorothy, my aunt's middle daughter was that I said was a nurse that graduated from Meharry Medical School, School of Nursing, lived in Knoxville, Tennessee. And I worked during the summer at a hospital, Oak Ridge General Hospital is where I worked. And this was during the war. Because the war was in, started in forty-one and ended in forty-. Was it forty four? Forty five, in forty five. And so I graduated in forty-four. Because, yes, [my cousin] also would have an impact on me because she was in nursing. Her name was Mariam and my sister's named after her.

And so I got this [job], I was sweeping the floors or mopping the floors, was not [yet]... [Laughter] at Oakridge General. And then during the weekend, well, like in the clinic, well, there were books and all that in the clinic. So, if that was my assignment, to dust in that clinic, I would read those books and look and wonder what what they were doing. I went into the patient's room.

But I sometimes I think to myself, "How did I really come to be a nurse?" I thought about being a doctor but I knew then what the obstacles would have been and so... my cousin had an impact. She was in nursing and she had graduated. And, when I went to live with her in Knoxville, spent summers, I spent a couple of summers with her. One of her assignments was at Tuskegee. She always was a nurse. She was working. I think she also worked at Knoxville General, I'm not sure. And so she had an impact on me also. The field of health had an impact because then, too, I had this, my cousin, her second brother, also as I said, was a pharmacist and I would visit his drugstore and drive into New York.

During the war when the nurses who were there were all gone. There were shortages there, in fact, they were recruited for the military and there were shortages of civilian nurses. And so there was the Cadet Nurse Corps, so my class was the last class of the Cadets. And so I went in as a Cadet Nurse and the war ended in forty-five. So because that was when they had created that program on the national level to recruit more nurses and educate more nurses, I think the way the legislation was that

it would end when the war ended, when there was peace.

So mine was the last class because what we did but the cadet nurses – and I looked for that picture. I think my daughter must have had that picture. I had a picture with my uniform and everything as a Cadet Nurse. So I'm going to ask because they, when we had a fiftieth anniversary, I went all through my pictures and everything and and so my husband would say, "Now Kim's got those pictures." So he, she, and I looked last night and I didn't have them in some of the pictures that I have. So I'll ask her. What they did was see, they paid for our education and plus the fact, we also would do, like, not an internship, but [like a residency].

And for I think my last semester, I went to Richmond, Virginia, at St. Phillip's Hospital, from my hospital for my last semester in which I was [doing] as surgical nursing, surgical and maternity is what I went for. Obstetrics. The more I got in, and the more and more I got into the health care field, and actually saw what was happening... Which really said, things are, things not right here. They could do things better in the health care arena for all people. So I became really involved with it.

Yeah, my first assignment – no, my first assignment. My first professional duties, I told you before, was at this huge mental health hospital in New Jersey. Which was New Jersey State Hospital, in Greystone Park, New Jersey. Huge. Huge. And then the only thing that they were doing were like insulin shots and, um, insulin. Not insulin. What was it? Electric shocks and lobotomies, and, I think it was insulin shots also I think they were doing that they would go into shock. It was this horrible.... And then, of course, the patients then, in turn, those who were kind of stabilized also would work. That's when they would work, like maybe, in the cafeteria or they might work in the laundry or they did some out of the farming. But I don't think they ever really got discharged home. I went to work, left there, and went to Brooklyn and worked at Brooklyn Jewish. Then I knew this family because I didn't know, really know that much about mental health. I didn't think I would start out [in] mental health and I learned more and more about mental health. Even then, if you had money and you went to private doc, you still – They hadn't done the research, they didn't know...And [these private patients] going and getting shocks. See, because the new thing, back then, was doing

the lobotomies. Can you imagine? Going in and...? And, here I'm a new nurse. [Laughter] And I'm young and I'm looking at, I didn't have a clue of what it was. And they were, see during that time, they were doing research [at Greystone] and

**Ms. Nimura:** Testing on folks, right? Testing on folks, kind of, what you're telling...

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. And they were, then, but then they would have, we'd be taking pictures, coming after they'd done the surgery, then they would be taking pictures and they would, and, of course, for me. But I, my, I worked nights, sometimes I worked the evening shift, but I worked the night shift also. So what my duties was really, to, more or less, was supervisory and I'd have to go around to these different buildings in order to make sure that the, um, not the corpsman, but the nurses and stuff were carrying out their duties. And then, of course, at that time I had a lot of, there were a lot of new nurses who came, who were there about the same time I was and a lot of them, after that, left and went back to graduate school. And then I had planned to go back. And then, of course, and then I got married right afterwards and that's when other things changed. So mine was delayed.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Well, we're going to get that in our next session so I'm very excited.

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, yeah!? I am just rambling on and on.

**Ms. Nimura:** No, is there anything on your notes that you want to get?

**Sen. Franklin:** No, no. What I did was copied down much of what you asked me. I have spotted it already.

**Ms. Nimura:** Good.

**Sen. Franklin:** What I did was put it there so that I would kind of remember. Not to say because I spoke about my parents' background and siblings and growing up in the segregated South, extended family, you said. Communities and strategies for resilience. You had that. My parents, something about my parent's, biological parents and my second

set of parents. Um, about my dad. My dad also was a WPA worker.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. Okay.

**Sen. Franklin:** See when the Depression came. So it was not a good time.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Sen. Franklin:** A leader in his church. And, of course, my church is still standing tall.

**Ms. Nimura:** It is? Wow.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, because they're enlarged it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Maintained it? There are still, I looked on line, and I saw that there are still plantation houses in that town though too, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh, those are plantations there. There were. That was the South. [Laughter] Yeah, you will find on there, when you go online and you go on the, look up Mepkin's plantation. You'll see a Mepkin's and that's a monastery now. And that's where the monks are. And they grow, raise, I think they raise chickens and eggs and have shops and stuff. And that's Mepkin's. That's it. Oh, yeah, that's we're on the plantation. And Georgetown. Berkeley County. Yeah, and yeah, they were all kinds. But on the road, if you look up Dr. Evans Road, is where I grew up.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really?

**Sen. Franklin:** The name, he was a black doctor and the road is named for him.

**Ms. Nimura:** Dr. Evans Road.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, Dr. Evans.

**Ms. Nimura:** And what town is this.

**Sen. Franklin:** This is not a town. As I said, this is Cordesville.

**Ms. Nimura:** Cordesville. Okay. Right, right.

**Sen. Franklin:** And it's all, it would, I think it's, my sister's number is eleven seventy five Dr. Evans Road. And the house that I grew up in, it's right next to it, but I don't know if you'll be able to see it. You

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may be able to see. And the church is right on that road across the road and, with the cemetery and everything, is there. And my mom and my grandma's property and everything is all on the other side, is up on the opposite of the road of where we are.

**Ms. Nimura:** So we're going to do your nursing career as much as we can in the next session. I've been putting together a little timeline that I have for myself, just because you were awfully busy.

### **Interview 3: January 24, 2019 - Nursing career (part 1)**

**Ms. Nimura:** All right, today is January 24th, already, 1-24-2019. I'm here with Senator Rosa Franklin. My name is Tamiko Nimura and we are here at Pacific Lutheran University in the Neeb Conference Center Room and we are going to talk today about, as much as we can, about her long nursing career. All right. So, we were going to pick up, talking a bit about Oak Ridge, right? Where you spent your summers after high school. The one in Tennessee.

**Senator Franklin:** After high school?

**Ms. Nimura:** Uh huh.

**Senator Franklin:** Yes, the summer of 1944, after graduation, I'm waiting for my acceptance for applications to nursing school when I went to Knoxville, Tennessee and spent the summer with relatives. It was my aunt's daughter and she was a nurse and had graduated from Meharry School of Nursing in Tennessee. She was married and living in Knoxville so I went to spend the summer with her and also to work for that summer. That is when I went to look for summer work and, of course, that was either, back then, in the 40s and 50s, it was either in restaurants — and, of course, it would have been very limited in just what you would look for — or elevator operator. And I got a job at the Farragout Hotel in Knoxville and, of course, when my cousin's brother-in-law, because there [my cousin] says, "Oh no, she can't work, work there." He did not want me to be exposed to what might have been going on there, in the hotel. So, oh no. So I continued to look for work and I was hired at Oak Ridge hospital in the housekeeping department. I think I just had turned, '44 was it? That would have made me seventeen?

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I had just turned seventeen. And so then that is where I worked, in regards to dusting and cleaning in the out-patient clinics and also in parts of the hospital. And when I started reading books because I had applied for nursing school. I did not realize, because we were in World War II, I did not really realize what was going on. And I know there were a lot of activities. Didn't know there was

research going on in regards to the atomic bomb. And so, the thing is I was leaving work from getting off the shift, that is when I learned when they had dropped this atomic bomb. And I'm seventeen. I really didn't know. I wasn't keeping up with that. Then, reading later on, really the disaster and stuff that had taken place. Didn't know that at Oak Ridge, they were doing research work and stuff at Oak Ridge.

**Ms. Nimura:** They were doing research? What kind of research?

**Senator Franklin:** This was during World War II.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right.

**Senator Franklin:** I think the making, research was divided across the country. Each part, I think they were doing different things at different installations. Oak Ridge was one of them but I would not have known what was going on because I was there at the hospital. There were a lot of activity and stuff going on during that section. And, so, that is what, after graduation, is really what, and from there then in 1944. Then, of course, during that period of time my uncle died who, my aunt's husband.

**Ms. Nimura:** The one that you were living with?

**Senator Franklin:** That I was living with. He had remarried and, of course, he, and so then his, that was my cousin, so then we, he came, she came to Georgetown in order to, you know, for his funeral (?). So between the sisters, because there were three sisters, so they were responsible for me because they already had instructions from my aunt of what they needed to do in order to look after their younger sister because I was seen as their younger sister. And so, her name was Mariam who was a nurse, who my sister is named after. I have a sister that lives in Seattle that's named after her. The sisters asked, they decided that I would come back to Georgetown during the Fall and the I would go to college. They'd enrolled me at South Carolina State College. My [cousin], their younger sister, Dorothy, who is now living, who's 100 years old.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** She had been with her husband in Oklahoma. He was in service but she came back also with, she had a baby. And I was

to babysit her daughter who then, now she's [deceased], she was killed in a car accident, was a pharmacist in Chicago. She was a baby. I babysat her while her mom was teaching. And that January, see I came back for the Fall, and that January I went and went to South Carolina State, which is in Orangeburg, South Carolina. And so then, let's see, what happened after that? During that time, after leaving Orangeburg, I was accepted into nursing.

**Ms. Nimura:** Is that Good Samaritan?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, uh huh. The summer of... was it the summer? Or was it September? September of '45.

**Ms. Nimura:** '45 probably.

**Senator Franklin:** Was when I entered nursing. And so that's that part, that was left out. And so after then, graduation. So you wanted me to take up from what happened at nursing school?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. What was nursing school like?

**Senator Franklin:** Nursing school was...

**Ms. Nimura:** How did you feel about it?

**Senator Franklin:** We were, except we were, as I've said, the last cadet class in '45 because I think legislation was put into place during World War Two in order to create and recruit, of course, men were not in nursing at that time, entered nursing for the home front, if you will, because those who had been in practice, a lot of them were going to the military and so there was a shortage at home. And I think that legislation was to end when there was the winning of the war. So we were the last class. And so that's the program that I received my nursing under and graduated, then, in 1948 in... what was it? Yeah, graduated 1948. Being there at Good Samaritan was a great time. [Chuckles.]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. Really? Tell me about this.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. But the students, they were all women. We did not have the technology of the day there as we have. There was more contact with the patients and you really gave the hands-on. And

our nursing school was connected to Benedict College so we were Good Samaritan-Benedict. So some of our courses were through the College there, Benedict College. Of course, as I say, not having the amenities of that era we, in turn, had a lot of the close contact in the hospital itself. As you know, there was segregated period.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** There was no integration. It was all African-American patients and

**Ms. Nimura:** And teachers, right?

**Senator Franklin:** And the teachers, yes. Everything was separate but then there were white doctors that came and there were Black doctors that came to care for patients and we had that which we had to go away for the last three months for, gosh, what did they call it? Because if you did not have all the facilities in order to do, to make the necessary grades or practice or, but we had to go away for that particular period. So we could choose what hospital and where we could go to affiliate with. So I chose to go to St. Philips Hospital [unintelligible] in Richmond, Virginia, in my senior year, I think it was the last three months, at St. Philips Hospital and from there went back, after that term was completed, went back to Good Samaritan and then we had graduation ceremony.

And from there, then, what we were doing is applying, because at that time, everything was, there wasn't any TV, or Internet, so you had a lot of communication through letters and magazines and there were nursing magazines and everything for recruitment. So then we had the opportunity to look throughout the country of hospitals and where and where you wanted to work and make applications for that. So then I applied to a hospital in Morristown, New Jersey, and my application ended up... And I really don't know how it ended up at New Jersey State Hospital which was, as I said earlier, the... of the day in the 50s and 40s, where everybody went, Greystone state hospital. Which is equivalent to the hospital here in Tacoma, Western State Hospital. Even, I think it was even larger because there were residential, there was treatment, they had everything like the bowling alley and the nurses lived on campus. I lived there, at Greystone Park.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, which was New Jersey State Hospital. I lived there. So the students, there were a lot of nurses. My cohort who came from other hospitals in order to work there. So we interned, the patients then received, because which, as I say, electric shock was one of the treatments and that was a time they were doing prefrontal lobotomies. And there were different buildings throughout this huge campus. Doctors lived on premises.

Our work day was I think one day off. It was like a 44 hour week, if I recall. Then, of course, you'd have one day off one week and two days off the next week. Yeah, I think that was, it was a 44 hour week. It was not a 40 hour week. And so with this, my role, and being assigned different shifts, I would be assigned different buildings and I would work, say, the night shift. I think I was night shift most of the time. And I would go from one building to the next and check the patients and check with the nurses and mental health therapist to make sure things were under control and the patients were getting their treatment. So that was on night shift.

And then of course I think we called it like the day shift, we'd be assigned to one particular building and that was a part of it. We went and had what you called rotating shifts of, maybe, night, day, and evenings. And of course, I was one that really never liked the evening shift. [Laughs] Because all activities were cut out. And so with my cohort and everything and then the nurses began to go receive further education within the nursing profession so they went to different places.

While I was there, on my days off, of course, we did a lot of things. The ponds, there was ice skating at the ponds. It was very, very cold and you could skate, ice skate on the ice ponds. The facilities were there. You could go bowling. Of course, patients bowled. And, of course, there were a lot of open space around so you could go hiking or walking. So it was just huge and it was great. Greystone Park [was] set out like, in the county. Then on my days off, I would go into New York, into Brooklyn. I would take the train. You'd go into Morris because where the Hospital was, I think it was called Morris Plains. Morris Plains and you would go into Morristown in order to get the train, and then to get the other subway and trains to go into Brooklyn — because my relatives, I had

a lot, my brothers were there, a lot of relatives and other friends. So I would go and spend my days off there and then come back.

During the period of time, of course, after graduation, that space of time from '48 until, let's see. '48 I was at Greystone. And '49, then I got married between there. I got married while there. It was November 18, 1948. I looked for my marriage certificate because so [often] we had to give [it], during that period of time, if you got ready to travel. We have it placed somewhere.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** But I think it was Camp Kilmer we got married. I have to look to be sure, November 18. Because it was between Fort Dix and Camp Kilmer and I had a high school classmate that lived in New Jersey and everything, of course. We didn't have a car. We just hopped on the bus, hopped on whatever public transportation there was. And I had met my husband at Fort Jackson while I was in nursing. We met at Fort Jackson. He had enlisted, had come from training from another state into Fort Jackson. There were, during that time, there were just military force and, you know, Army and Navy and Air Force, you know, all of that. And so, in nursing school, there were nurses, we would go, on our days off. The USO was like around the corner from our nursing school.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** We would go dancing on our days off. That's coming back now. See how I leave things out all the time? [Laughter] From New Jersey, to here, back on campus, with the marriage because you will ask, "How did my husband and I meet?"

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** So we met, when [the troops] had their days off they came into Columbia. Because in Columbia, we would go to the USO. But in those days, it was dancing, it was singing, it was, really, because they were all going off to war and there were Army songs. All kinds of songs related to going away, coming back, I'll see you again, White Cliffs over Dover, this whole thing. And so my classmates, there were about four of us, three or four of us, that used to run together and

we had this singing trio. [Laughing]

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! So you would perform at these?

**Senator Franklin:** We would go at the USO. It would be singing. I have a classmate now. We were in nursing. We talked on Saturday and we talk about how we just used to dance away the night. There were strict rules. You have to be back at the nursing school, within your room with the lights off at a particular time. The gatekeeper came around to check those rooms to make sure you were there and you were in. And once we got caught by our Nursing Director, Executive Director, and we did not get back in time and we were grounded.

**Ms. Nimura:** What does that mean? Like what could you not do if you were grounded?

**Senator Franklin:** You had no other privileges. You couldn't go any... That mean you did not sign up or go or have any of those kind of...

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** So, anyway, that's how I met my husband.

**Ms. Nimura:** At a dance?

**Senator Franklin:** At Fort Jackson and USO and dancing and that. And he was transferred with his unit to Kilmer or Fort Dix. I'll have to ask him again about that. Where they were waiting shipment overseas. So during that time with the graduation, because while he was in New Jersey, we had nursing school, we had graduation. And then, after graduation, going back to work at New Jersey State, then he'd asked me to marry him. And then, of course, my family were...they didn't really want me to get married. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Because you were young? Or because they didn't know him? Or... ?

**Senator Franklin:** They really did not want really want me to get married.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh.

**Senator Franklin:** Especially my, well my, the oldest of my aunt's

daughters didn't want me to get married because, first of all, he was in military and going away and we didn't know whether he'd get back. And I was young. And I was working. Away from home and they were concerned about me. But then I was in New Jersey. I was not in New York with all the other relatives so that really was a concern. But then I met his parents, my husband's parents, and they were a great family. And so it was at graduation, back to that then, we got married on this particular date. And my high school classmate came with me. We got married in the chapel. In the chapel in...

**Ms. Nimura:** The chapel where?

**Senator Franklin:** I think it was Camp Kilmer. As I said, that one I'll have to confirm because

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay. Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Then he left the next day.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** He left the next day for Germany and I did not see him again until 1950 when I went over for my first trip on the Ile de France. And that's how that connected, and between that time of '48 and '50, I worked at Greystone Park and then at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital because I went to Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, let's see, '49?

**Ms. Nimura:** On here you have '50.

**Senator Franklin:** No, I didn't. No, I was there before 1950, I'm pretty sure.

**Ms. Nimura:** Then your resume is wrong. [Laughs] It's old.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** It says Greystone from '48 to '50 and then Brooklyn Jewish Hospital from '50 to '52.

**Senator Franklin:** It was, '48. See because I went over, I went to, I took that first trip in September of 1950 to go to Germany and I had to have a special permit in order to go because my husband had not really reached the rank where, and if you were certain, if your husband was

a certain rank you could get housing and everything in order to go and stay and join him. He had not reached that yet.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh.

**Senator Franklin:** And so he had to reach a certain rank before he was able to get housing and everything so that I could join him and stay with him. So that really kept us apart so I saw, when I went he was a corporal. And then when he reached sergeant he was eligible to have his family join him.

So that first trip when I went. Ile de France took me. It was a nine-day trip as I recall. And I left out of New York Harbor, stood out on the, whatever, what do they call it? Watching as the Statue of Liberty faded.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** They saw it. Everybody stood there waving.

**Ms. Nimura:** Did you have relatives to see you off?

**Senator Franklin:** We were going to Europe. Uh huh. There were tourists along with everybody traveling on that ship. It was one of the very well known line, great service. The Ile de France was one of the big ships of the day that left out of New York. And as we went and everyone was on deck, that what it was, waving and looking at the Statue of Liberty

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** as it really moved and faded. And then we went down [below deck] after that. And, of course, I think we had, and then it was in September. Tornado season. That showed you how much I knew about traveling. That tornado season on the Atlantic comes in around September. I was seasick – plus the fact that I was not traveling on the upper deck. I was not making a lot of money. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** I was what we call downstairs without the window. I was seasick all the time until we got to England. I think I came up on deck, I managed to and, of course, they'd bring you food or whatever. I went up on deck and I saw, that's when I saw, people were saying, they

were saying, “the White Cliffs of Dover.” I said, “Those cliffs? They not white.” [Laughter]

That was my first transatlantic trip. Nine days. And then we went into La Havre, into La Havre, France where we disembarked. And I had to get on a train that took me into Paris. And from Paris I caught another train into Germany where my husband met me. And I was there I think it was for two months. I have to look at that because I was looking at, last night, checking the, looking at the early passport that I have.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, you have your early passport? Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** I got my passport from the first trip from when I went and when I came back. I got back home, I disembarked in New York in December 4th, 1950. Things were very close and checked very closely. So I have a lot of stamps of in and out because going, crossing the borders, and getting stamped every time you crossed the border. And while I was there, and I didn't bring it with me, I'll have to bring my passport, and it had in there, once I was in Germany, he didn't have quarters where we were staying. He had to secure all that, with permission, before I ever got special permit to visit. So those special permits to visit your family during that time was not one the came easily. And so, once I got there, then they stamped my passport that I could, because he was in the military, that I had a set number of time that I could get, that he would be able to get the food, food service. And so that was stamped into my passport, also. And so then I came back but that visit there, we stayed with friends. Those friends were the Moutons. He and his wife were there. They didn't have any children. We didn't have any. And so I visited them, spent time with them.

**Ms. Nimura:** This is in Germany now?

**Senator Franklin:** With the Moutons, that's where I spent that first. And so when it was time for me to come back my husband came back with me to Paris. And he visited for a few days in Paris and he went back to Germany. He was stationed at Gelnhausen, not Darmstad, Gelnhausen, Germany. G-e-l-n-h-a-u-s-e-n, I think that was it, Germany, where he was stationed at the time. He went back and I took the train to La Havre. Then from La Havre got on the Ile de France, again. And the night,

it was overnight at the hotel in La Havre, the sea, and I was there by myself, and the water, the weather, the water was, and I thought “Oh my goodness.” So I got on the ship the next day and forged ahead to come back home to New York. So there was another time of being seasick.

**Ms. Nimura:** I was going to say, what do you remember seeing while you were in Europe? What do you remember noticing while you were there? Because this is after World War Two, right? What do remember noticing about your surroundings?

**Senator Franklin:** There was farming. There, what, what I think America was doing is helping to rebuild. And there was an act, no, that was the Berlin Lift because Berlin was shut off during that time. Now on that trip there was nothing about Berlin. It was the second time that I went in regards to Berlin. But during that first trip what I noticed right after that was, because this was right in the, it was not, Gelnhausen was not really in the city because that was out from Darmstadt. Darmstadt was another [unintelligible] city [unintelligible],

It was like being in a rural area. And there were farms. And then what they used for fertilizer were, were, we call them the Honey Bucket where they drained and used that as the fertilizer. Human waste as you would call it as fertilizer. And what we did, what we noticed around, my husband was gone a lot. The Moutons had no kids and so we didn't really have that much contact at that round with Germans. It was a time when it was still all very militaristic and people were really recovering and because the War ended in, what was it? '45? And this was 1950.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Can you spell Mouton for me?

**Senator Franklin:** M-o-u-t-o-n. Mouton. The Moutons. And so what we did, of course, were to get, we would get out. We would walk around and the military families were, more or less, with themselves, within themselves...And they were under recovery.

**Senator Franklin:** And so we went to the clubs, the USO clubs and stuff as we were in the military and stuff. Not USO clubs but the Army clubs and they had separate clubs for the commissioned and non-commissioned officers and others. And that's how it was within the Army itself. So that's

[the first round], and that trip also in Gelnhausen... I was young. I think I was younger than the couple that we lived with for that period of time of visit but yet, being young, I was fearless because I did it.

**Ms. Nimura:** [Laughter] You went on a trip all by yourself.

**Senator Franklin:** And then, when I got off the ship, you know, I recall walking around Paris and someone came up to me and said – you always look American, it doesn't matter where you go, it seems like you were always kind of. And I said, I could have been anybody from anywhere. So he walked up and he started talking and said he had been to America. And he helped me to get over to the next station in order to get into Germany. It was in Pari-, Paris is great. I love Paris.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, what did you like about it? What's not to like about it — but what did you like the most?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, what I liked about it, it was the camaraderie, the people itself, there was not any of this racial divide. We had come from a country with a segregation. And that's why World War II veterans, when you read history, says they were treated better in Paris and they came home and found out all this segregation and here they had served. But Paris, was, it was a city of really, just wonderful. And my last, most recent visit had been, before I got out of, before I left the Legislature.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And so, that is what I liked about it. The camaraderie, the fun, you know, the people, how you were treated. It was just great. And I liked the Arc, going to the Arc of Triumph and then there was the big ferris wheel. And then to see a history of this time, what took place there. And then the Champs-Elyssées was just really great. So that first trip and all of that introduced me to that, seeing with that so later on, and I came back again at other times.

So, back home then. Came back, got here, got back home to New York in December, the 4th of December, then I went back to work in, at Brooklyn Jewish but not only did I work at Brooklyn Jewish, I did other work because I would do extra nursing. At that time, we all did. We would work, be employed by an employer but then we would do private

duty. I did private duty at several different hospitals. I did relief nursing at Harlem Hospital. I did private duty nursing at various hospitals in New York.

And then, my husband came home because his time was up. I thought he was going to get out of service. And he decided that he was going to re-enlist. And so he re-enlisted and that's when, then he went back to Germany. [Laughs] And so by that time, he had become a non-commissioned officer and that's when he went back. Said, okay, because I didn't know what this part of the world was like, at all. It was all the East Coast.

**Senator Franklin:** And I really loved where I lived in Brooklyn and I loved working. And back in the 50s, and there, there were times, you know, we had, there was restaurants, theaters, we would, there was so, it was very urbanized. And so, back where I would have, then my relatives were, so many relatives were there. I had brothers. I had cousins. And then when he told me he had re-enlisted and he was going back to Germany...

**Ms. Nimura:** You're making a face.

**Senator Franklin:** Okaaay.

**Ms. Nimura:** So he didn't talk about this with you beforehand? He just said he was going to do it.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, no.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay. Okay. Got it.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, no. He was young and... No, no. There was not any of that kind of the communication but all right. So then he, in turn, we then started and by that time, too, between him coming home, because I came back in '50 and he came for re-enlistment in, was it '51? Think it was '51 for re-enlistment and by that time, between those times, I had, I bought my first car.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh? What was it?

**Senator Franklin:** A Chevrolet. And what you do when you buy your car. We didn't buy it in New York. We went over the border to New Jersey. Bought my first car in New Jersey. I learned to drive in New York.

I went with a friend. And we drove the car back into the Harlem Tunnel and by the time I was living on St. Mark's Avenue in Brooklyn. Of course, you really don't need a car in New York because of all the public transportation but by that time, I had gotten my own apartment. And in those days, people would have this brown, huge, brick home. What they would do is like rent out apartments or rent out rooms. I was living on the first floor, when my husband came home for re-enlistment and when he left, I think I bought that first car. The family [that I lived with], it was her husband was the one who took me out to teach me how to drive.

[Laughter] The Hunters, Margaret and John Hunter were the family who I'd rented from. I'm growing up now. And I want this car. So, what they did was, John would take me out and there was an area you could go and drive around and those lessons is what I had to learn to drive. And it was after I had the night shift at Brooklyn Jewish...So after night shift, I'd go out, have a driving lesson. Finally, about, after the second [test], I didn't get my license the first time, the second time I got my license. So, I had my driver's license. I had my new car, bought a car without a license. And what did I use it for? We would take the car... to leave town. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Where did you go?

**Senator Franklin:** We would drive to Washington, D.C. We would go to visit friends, because you would use it to leave town, you know. Now you had this car but where do you park? You parked always on the street by your house. I didn't drive to work because I could walk to Brooklyn or I could take the subway or whatever. And so that is when, then, so in the meantime, also, me, with this car, with no, driving lesson with a friend. Good friends, the Hunters, husband John who taught me and after a few thing but at that time they were getting away from stick shift so that was when we had the automatic shift because a stick shift, I would have never learned to drive, probably. So I got this car, this 1950 I think it was 19... was it '50 or '52 Chevrolet? I can remember it was green. No, 'cause '52 I was gone. Or was it '51? I'd have to look. I'd have to make those dates because between the times he came I got the car. I was living on St. Mark's Avenue. I then would drive across country.

**Ms. Nimura:** You did?!

**Senator Franklin:** Yes. Yes. I drove what, then, you would start your driving at night when you drive like that because the truckers were very much control and they were the most, safest person, drivers, to follow. And so my first trip, I drove, took an elderly woman. I dropped her off in Virginia and I drove on to South Carolina.

**Ms. Nimura:** To see your family?

**Senator Franklin:** To see my family. I drove all night. And I took the car with me overseas so I'll ask my husband [for the times he came]. So they, in turn, let's see now.

**Ms. Nimura:** Virginia to South Caro-

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. I'm trying to think. So I went to Georgetown, yeah, to visit my family and so that was across country. And I just, back in those days, you follow the signs. [Laughter] You followed the signs. You followed the road. [Laughter] You got a map...

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, you're saying, no GPS here. You just got a map and... [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, you got a map. You got a map and followed the signs. And when I drove up and saw there were, this is my, one who I refer to my "younger sister," my cousin, my aunt's daughter, Dorothy, who is now 100, and when I drove up and they saw that I had this car. And so, no accidents, no nothing. So then I went and I told them. And, of course, they were uneasy. Like, part of the family but not all, they were not really excited about me going to live in Germany. And then I went back home, back to work and then, back to Brooklyn and prepared to go to Germany.

**Ms. Nimura:** Can we pause a bit at Brooklyn, to talk a little bit about nursing at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital?

**Senator Franklin:** At Brooklyn? At Brooklyn Jewish Hospital I worked on, worked in labor and delivery and that was where I worked all the time. I didn't work at any other assignments but labor and delivery. And labor and delivery room, we worked in the delivery rooms, and it was the night

shift. I always worked the night shift somehow. We liked to choose the night shift because you didn't have all this other stuff around. And the night shift it seemed to have been, really the better shift. You didn't have all this other things to deal with in the day time and all of that. That's when I became aware, really aware in some way, about what happened in World War II, with the concentration camps and what happened when I saw these imprints and numbers [on the patients]. I didn't know what they were at the time until later on. And then the women, who when they were in labor, and, of course, they would, to me they were speaking in a foreign language and I didn't, you know. Back in those days in the '50s and stuff, you know, if they have labor pain and back and that... but they were women who had just come, Jewish women because it was a Jewish hospital, who were new to America. I worked in delivery rooms, labor and delivery, we would monitor them while they were in labor. And then, when they were ready to go to the delivery room to deliver, we would be the one, you followed them through the whole process.

**Ms. Nimura:** Process, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Then, of course, it was the hospital where all the boys were circumcised. On a certain day, and they had what they called a bris.

**Ms. Nimura:** A bris.

**Senator Franklin:** Uh, huh. They had a bris. It was a great place to work. That's where I met friends and we'd talk about, we would talk about, oh. We would have fun but we would talk about other [things], how people were accepted but, of course, because the Jewish Hospital itself was — for us, for me, and a lot of my other colleagues — it was a different place. And it was a place where you really get to like people because they were our friends, the doctors, the interns, the residents.

**Ms. Nimura:** So it was integrated, it was an integrated facility then?

**Senator Franklin:** No, it was just what all Jewish...

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Oh, I see.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, yeah. When I walked in, when I went to work

there they asked me, was I Jewish? And I said no.

**Ms. Nimura:** Were you the only... ?

**Senator Franklin:** It was just all Jewish families because see New York had some many other hospitals. And people would maybe choose their hospital or where they really want to go or where they don't. It was an all Jewish hospital. So, consequently, you were not going to find any other people other than, you know, other than the Jewish community, a lot were conservative Jews, and then everybody, babies. Because I didn't know, it was new for me because I didn't know much about Jewish faith. And when the babies were born and then, that's why they'd go to the bris room and women stayed for a number of days but women in other cultures and other religions, they, back in those days, stayed for days in the hospital after having a baby too. They didn't go home right away like today, have it this morning and go home this afternoon.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, it was, so that was a whole different thing. So it was a whole ritual and then after that, you know, they would have this party and then you'd... We'd go on at night and, and there would be, I think there would be food, or people. It was just a different atmosphere but then too, as I said, I was really introduced because by that time I would have been, like was 21? Oh, would I'd have been 20, 22?

**Ms. Nimura:** Um, hum. '47, yeah, 22, 23.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I was getting more and more introduced to the world and to different cultures. Plus, during that era, we still had the military so there were people who I worked with a lot ended up in the military. That's when women started going, also, and joining the military. So some of my nursing friends, went, joined the military. At Brooklyn Jewish then, [there was] that experience of working with the team, with the doctors, and having fun and really learning. And then, of course, the conversations you didn't really, how would I say it? When women were in labor, they were leaving we would have to be with them and check them. And do the fetal heart checks, and do the whole bit until they were ready to be taken to the delivery room. And then going

through them, with them all through the whole process and everything. And then they would go into be observed and then transferred over to the maternity. So I was never with them after that, was always in the delivery room, I mean in, in labor and delivery is where we at, always were. And in that atmosphere, in working with them and learning and seeing and then going, which would be not this first trip, but the follow-up after two additional trips in living in Germany and seeing what really happened and the, what did we call it? When they took them to the... ?

**Ms. Nimura:** The camps.

**Senator Franklin:** When they took them to the chambers. The gas chambers or whatever they, in order to when I saw that, it was in Dachau. I went to Dachau on this follow-up trip. And to see those ovens, and to see – that is when you put it all together of what really [happened]... And then, in the meantime, during this expanse of time of being there with that first trip – not the first – this trip going in '52 and staying and then going back in '59 and staying and learning more because that first trip from '52 to '59 I did not work.

**Ms. Nimura:** But it's '54, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm? From, not '59 but from fifty, um

**Ms. Nimura:** In Germany you have here that you worked as a home-maker from '52 to '54 and then...

**Senator Franklin:** Right, I did not, I was not in nursing during that time.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right. Your kids were born somewhere in here, yes? Right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Our family started with our oldest son and then he had a little sister and so and then we came home, I came home.

My daughter, when she went back because she went back to Germany to see where she was born. And then also, that was when she went back for a tour, not just Germany. And since that, she's traveled all over with her family. And the kids and stuff, we always took them traveling. So they have been world travelers, they've been introduced to the world. But the cuckoo clock was very [Laughter] Yes. That was the, the, how

should I say it?

The mark of the day was a cuckoo clock. Because it was known for cuckoo clocks and Dresden china. And so people collected clocks, china, crystals, um, oh, you know, there were articles that people really, really bought. During the rebuilding of Germany people were looking for work. And Americans, in those day, they put a lot of money into Germany and Europe itself because there were a lot of people who came from Italy into Germany looking for work. And so there was a lot going on during that time. During the '50s we came back then and I stayed home that time because I did not work. They were not hiring civilian nurses. All were German nurses and military. And if they were having civilian nurses, I don't know, but mine was to stay home, raise my kids and stuff. During that period of time, we had a lot of other friends. We had made friends. We would visit. Oh, we traveled.

**Ms. Nimura:** Well we have your, your first stop in Tacoma after this, right? Was in the '50s. '54.

**Senator Franklin:** Was in fifty-, we came back from that first, the first tour, let's see, of my husband, we came here to Tacoma in 1954. That was...I thought it was the worst place.

**Ms. Nimura:** [Laughter] Why? Tell me why.

**Senator Franklin:** Because... it rained. It rained, and see it was at Fort Lewis. We stayed at Fort Lewis. And there was no permanent housing and, of course you didn't have as many troops, you know, things have grown. But they still had the World War II housing. The old hospital on North Fort was still there. That was our first housing on Fort Lewis. On North Fort Lewis, not on the main base.

But when we came, we had our car, we picked it up and came from the Port of New York, drove across country in order to see family. Because my husband, I'm from South Carolina, he's from Florida. We had that first [car] and coming back home we had the two kids, Kim and Werner. And so we visit family in South Carolina, and my second home, my birthplace, across country where my family was, came into Florida, visited his family, his mom and dad, and sisters. The kids were little.

My plan was, well now, I'm going to go back to work. We had to think about childcare. What was going to happen? So we took his younger sister with us and brought her out to Tacoma with us.

**Ms. Nimura:** Whoa, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Okay. And she, in turn, was in high school, she graduated. His younger sister [Yvonne] graduated from high school in Lakewood. His younger sister that came out with us. Tacoma had its problems because when we came, and I said it was the worst place, that first time that we came. We ended up spending time at a rented place overnight, downtown Tacoma, until we got housing on base which was at the old hospital unit which they had in World War II. That was our first place where we lived in Tacoma. I went to work at Madigan. My husband was working.

**Ms. Nimura:** What department were you in at Madigan?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm? At Madigan, at the time, I was working in delivery room again. In maternity that first round, first trip. And then, what happened?

**Ms. Nimura:** From there, back to Munich.

**Senator Franklin:** Let's see, I'm trying to think. Yeah, his sister and my sister were out. Okay. So he, in turn, then, I was at Madigan. Then he was recalled after we were here from '54 to '59 and during that time also with his duties they were doing testing out in the desert, with dropping whatever they were dropping, a lot of that stuff was, you know, confidential. And troops, we would always see troops going from here, back. So he was gone quite a lot. And so with the two kids and then his sister was here that I brought. Then my younger sister, not the youngest, next to the youngest biological sister who had graduated from high school and she went into nursing also but then she left. And then my aunt, who was raising those two younger sisters after my biological mother, died.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. Okay, when did that happen?

**Senator Franklin:** My mother? I told you my mother died when I was, I think in ninth grade. Then my aunt, who I call my second mother,

she died prior to her. So actually the two mothers that I had had, you know, they both died. So it ended up that the women who — but my grandmother was still living, but she was in another city, where I grew up — but my two biological, my aunt and uncle, they died.

And so, now coming back to coming out here then, when my sister Mariam, she and my younger sister, Henrietta, when my mom died, then this other aunt took them and raised them. And then I had brothers who were [older], and then a younger brother and three sisters, after my mom died, were with my dad. Am I confusing you?

**Ms. Nimura:** We'll have you draw me a family tree later.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, yeah. And so, but back to where we were. Here in Tacoma and with that span between '54, because when we came home from Germany, we, and that was the year that *Brown v Board of Education* and we heard that case coming home. We came, we drove across country, came through Wyoming and I say, came to the worst place that I had ever thought I could ever come to.

But everybody seemed to be, seemed like military people, my husband had apparently heard that Washington State was a good place to come for families and the schools were good. That they had a good education system. And so then we brought out his younger sister, and her parents agreed to have her to come out so that we would be able to have somebody who would be able to watch the kids, also. But she was in school so while she was in school also, and because if I worked nights, there would be someone. And we would take her to school in the day time. And our kids were too young. They were not yet in school. And then my husband, you know, would be there.

So we had to work out a system of how our kids were going to be cared for and how we were going to be involved with their education. And so this is what took place. Yvonne, that's his younger sister, who was the one, and then when she graduated, she got married. And she now lives in New Jersey, has her family. So we, in turn, grew to be a huge family who turned out to be really great. So we were here for that while I worked at Madigan.

Then I returned to college and that's when I went to, we were on post.

And here again, where rules and regulations come in that if, um, Oh, we wanted to buy a house. That's what it was. Nope, we didn't buy that house on. No, we bought the house in, um, we bought our first house in the '50s. Yeah. We bought our, we bought a house when we came here in the '50s. The first one and it still stands, off Prospect and 12th. And there was a Konsmo Appliance right next to it. And I enrolled, we moved off base, we bought this house.

I moved and I enrolled at University of Puget Sound and [later I enrolled at] Pacific Lutheran University. University of Puget Sound was the closest and I enrolled, to get my degree and the degree was going to be, because everybody in the '50s, there was [no] BSN. Everyone graduated as RNs and went on, there were other students who might have been, you know, BA, whatever, RN or what. People continued. There was a tendency for everybody to continue their education. And so those of us in my cohort who graduated from nursing school were going to go back and get our degree. Some went to school in Massachusetts. There were schools, Boston. We came here because my intention was to live back east and I was going to go to Massachusetts school. Like, some people went to Columbia, others went to NYU, others went to Boston. The nurses were going to look to schools and found which was the best. I enrolled at the University of Puget Sound and they did not have an RN. PLU had a nursing program but it was RN also. And their nurses were going to school, I guess finishing or doing stuff, in Oregon and it was connected with Pacific Lutheran University in some way. So, since they didn't, so I pursued, so then I, in turn, was to graduate from the University to Puget Sound but prior to graduating, my husband got reassigned to Europe, to Germany.

**Ms. Nimura:** Munich.

**Senator Franklin:** So that then kept me from graduating with that particular cohort that I was in. So we left in '59. So when we went back to Germany in '59 then, here comes, yeah, the sixties were coming in. Had two kids, my sister-in-law now, who we brought from, who came with us from Florida, was now married. She had graduated from Clover Park High School. And she met her husband at Fort Lewis. And we were talking about that the other, when I saw her, went back to New Jersey in

September because I hadn't seen her for years. We communicated but she hadn't been back and she's younger, [my husband's] younger sister. And he laughs now about how they met. I said, how did you come to marry Yvonne? He'd always say, you did the best thing for me. He was from Virginia, "You did the best thing." And he explained how he and Yvonne met and how they became husband and wife. When he told me, I don't quite remember, because he was laughing about that. Apparently in those days you had to go through the routine of questioning of "Who? What? How? Are you going to get permission..." Then, of course, they were together. I think he went overseas somewhere because she went with him. I think it might have been Panama.

Then, of course, I drove. Then my husband then was reassigned in '59. We rented, we moved off base before we bought our house. We rented a house on J Street right within the vicinity of McCarver. We had rented an apartment [near what] was called Tacoma General Hospital and it was just that one structure if I recall. We bought this house, went looking for it because I was brought up that you always invest in some real estate and always have your own home. That was the way it was, just the way it was.

And also in regards to finances, how you manage your money. So we bought this, and they said, you always, you must plant your roots somewhere, that you cannot be all over the place and not have planted roots. You have to have someplace in order to come back to. That was always instilled in me so that was the first thing, was to get that. That's how we bought that first house. We bought that on 1049 South Prospect, I think it is. Right, it's right off the corner of 12th and Prospect, house still stands.

By that time our daughter had just started her school, Kim had just started school and then Werner was, and they were going down because they had almost like zoning in school. And we were on one side of the street, on Prospect, and then there was some on. We ended up going to, to Franklin. They went to Franklin Elementary, Werner started, well we were renting before we bought the house. When we were renting on J Street, he was going to school, Tacoma Public School was in their administrative building...They had classrooms there, in that administrative

building, and so he walked to school. He could walk to school.

You know, kids could walk to school. There was no picking up. You took them or they walked or you walked them to school. And there was no fear of anybody because it was a time that you didn't lock your doors. It was just a different time. You get the kids ready, go off to school and you were involved with them at school and you would expect them back at a certain time. The teachers looked after them and they made sure. Our son, he would — we always laugh about this now — he said, you were something else. He's supposed to be home at a certain time. We'd look for him. He wasn't there. He'd stop off and play with his friends. We'd [Laughing]

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. What'd you do? [Laughing] Did you have to go look for him at the parks or?

**Senator Franklin:** He would, and, of course, there were a lot of military families. People, people a lot, they would, a lot of people they made, who wanted to not live on post, there were people who were buying their homes. They were [unintelligible] they want [unintelligible].

**Ms. Nimura:** I read something about how you said you were prevented from buying a home?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh yeah, that, when we were living on, when we were renting on J Street. Yeah, well they had these, um, what was it? Forget what they were calling at the time, which we knew nothing about. It was built in their contract but not to say...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, covenant, right? They're the restrictive covenant?

**Senator Franklin:** Covenants. Restrictive covenants. Which we have, did not really have a clue about. We thought, you know, how you are in an environment where people will say, the South there was outright segregation, in the South, but here in the North, in the West, and Northwest...they had these restrictive covenants that Blacks and people of color could not live.

We knew nothing about that. We saw places. We went, looked around and was at that time Lakewood was still the suburb. They were building and people were looking for the nearest [place], we want to be near

to the base but looking where the schools were so the kids could walk to school there. So we were renting this little house on J Street which is really within walking distance. And not only that, our daughter also took ballet. There was a ballet school. They had ballet recitals at McCarver. There were things here that people will not think that was ever here. But I have a picture of her now with her ballet thing, at McCarver.

So when we started looking for a house, we looked at new houses, we looked at different [ones], and called a real estate company. When the realtor came in my husband was away, again. Maybe out of the state. To look at houses, I wanted to look at houses, and when he walked to the door and he saw who I was, he started back to and I said, come, just... [Laughter] come on in. Then I proceeded to tell him, I said my husband is out there protecting the country, living in potholes, dog, foxholes, whatever, and we're looking to buy. And he proceeded to say, and see I didn't know, and I wanted to go to a particular place to look.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. And he didn't take you there.

**Senator Franklin:** No, so what happened was this realtor who came he says, well, I will, you know, sell a house. And we weren't making a lot of money at the time, you know. So we went looking and we had to look, to look for the convenience, where, how. How you going to put all of this together? And that's when we ended up buying that house where we finally bought it.

But no, he said well, I, and I th-, I would not say this for sure but I think it was, there was a Jewish salesman who, in turn, that we bought from. But no, where they were taking, um, let's say it was primarily Black folks-, because it at, see where, the Hilltop area where, because when I came back the second time and I wanted to know, "who called this place Hilltop?" I had never even had heard of that name. There was no Hilltop when we came in the '50s. There was no Hilltop. So I said, who named this place? But they, in the '50s, what they were doing is taking people into the east side. Oh, Salishan, and they were expanding out in Lakewood. And, of course, you know, the military and people come from all over looking for [houses].

And at that time there was a very active NAACP and Jack Tanner

was involved. There was fighting, and we had, fighting desegregation, a lot during that era. And I, also, fighting discrimination and that's, too, again, growing and learning and seeing the difference of where you have lived and seeing. Having been lived in Europe, having lived in New York, even though, New York was more open but you did not find that, but growing and coming, and coming to a place, where you least, in the military, where you least expect that when you go to purchase that you would not you run into this. And then, that also was a time when we had, um, well the Hilltop as you, from history, were immigrant, Joe Stortini, it was the Stortinis, I think it was. We had the Japanese School that was there. You had Greeks. You had Masonics. And then as people's lives changed and they expand, they move out. It's no different. They moved to other areas, just like what is taking place now. Then, what came in, then there were more African-Americans who, and then they tend to really kind of put everybody in the same spot. And, for those homes, I mean when you were buying and if you are here, at this level, and you're moving up. Remember, there was an old TV thing, "moving up to the east side?" Remember that? There's an old TV show, moving up to the east side.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, Jeffersons?

**Senator Franklin:** What?

**Ms. Nimura:** The Jeffersons?

**Senator Franklin:** A long time ago. It was on TV.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** "Moving up to the east..." Well that's in a comparison. The people who are, what they, now they're getting better. They're earning more, they're moving up more. So I'm comparing that to what happened. That they, as people, wherever you are, whatever race you are, as you then become more affluent, you look for a greater and larger place to live and as your family grows. So in these areas, Tacoma not excluded, there were people who, in turn, who moved out and more moved in but there were other people who, in turn, want to buy elsewhere and they don't expect.

Bill, Harold Moss ran into the same problem of not, they didn't sell to him and he can tell his story because I know about it. But with us then in buying...There was Jack Tanner, there was a strong African-American community working for desegregation, and social justice and all of that back in that era. I had to fight it at Madigan where, in turn, the military nurses or people who were afraid to express or complain for what might happen to them. Then I would get it. [Laughs] And I said, it's not going to happen. And then, I would take it on and go and see the commander. So what happened there all during this time, I wanted to make sure, was then I would [not] get "written up" and that would go on my record. So then I had to hire Jack Tanner [as] my first lawyer.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really?

**Senator Franklin:** In order to say, "no, you take that off of her record" because they were going to. Because when they were just beginning to bring in Black doctors because there was discrimination in the military. And these dependents, I was working in labor and delivery, and the women, one of them said, they came to me, said, "I don't want to see a Black doctor." [Sighs] And so, I took it to the commander. All of this was going on. Plus I was raising my family, plus my husband is gone, plus I'm in school. I would take [my kids], button up, and snow was on the ground [Laughter] I'd take them, button them up. "Put on your jacket, let's go," put them in the car. I'm going to see this commander. And the commander, I went in to see the commander, and you know what he told me? I'm not prejudiced. I have a chauffeur.

**Ms. Nimura:** No!! No! [Laughter] Oh no, no. No. No.

**Senator Franklin:** And so now, I said, wait a minute. So between this span, of time of '54 and '59, all of these things are going on. And that is, too, when my husband, who's a golfer and Jack, they were golfer, they golfed together. We had strong women, they then eventually built the Colored Women's Club. They were a lot of college-educated women, they were women who were very much involved within the community. And one of the women's daughters taught our youngest daughter piano lessons. But in the '50s then, in this span of time, between the Brown v Board of Education, desegregation, plus fighting, plus then, Jack be-

ing, he had been in service and came back and had gone to law school. He'd worked as a longshoreman, became he became, I think, the first Black lawyer\*. He had his office downtown. There were businesses, um, Black businesses downtown. So as I said, but then this span of time of what was taking place then, all of this was going on, plus the military, plus the military did not have, plus the military bringing, desegregation took place after, with President Truman and so it was, even though desegregation of the military had taken place, there were people still with segregated minds.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** And so then, here, with these military people who were then nurses or whomever or whoever were, you, you know, were still afraid to mention or to even looked at but anyway. Then I became the wiser but then dealing with that and dealing with this. And then, after we got the house, having to deal with another military man, who then was then really causing problems for my kids.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh? What was he doing?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, well, by reporting and saying they was doing things, well, it wasn't Kim. It was my son. Then at that time, too, I was very active, not just with just my family, but then I had, in the '50s, I had Boy Scouts. I had a troop. I had put them in, by that time we had traded in my car, got maybe a, what did we have at that time? Station wagon where I could put them in and I would take them to the ice cream factory or to the bread factory and...

**Ms. Nimura:** You were a troop leader?

**Senator Franklin:** Huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** You were their troop leader?

**Senator Franklin:** Uh huh.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh my goodness. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I had Cub, Cub Scouts.

**Ms. Nimura:** No. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** When did you sleep?

**Senator Franklin:** Whenever I could. [Laughter] Yeah because when I would get off at night and when I had class at UPS, then I would take them, then Werner would be in school. I would take the baby then to daycare and then I would go to class and then would come back. And my husband might be gone or he might not get her, you know, he was in the military. Oh, no. All of these things were, that's why I say we can multi-task. [Laughter]

And I had a teenager and anyway, yeah, which was my sister-in-law because and then, my sister, who had been in nursing, who was next to the youngest, she left nursing. And I told my aunt, 'cause she was living in Charleston, South Carolina, she's not going to hang around there. You send her out here.

So I got her back in school again where she also at the time was going, would go into, I think she went into nursing, no, because she ended up, I think, working for the telephone company. Because when I left in '59, I took her back because, she had, I could remember very clearly. She had just learned to drive and we were driving across country. We drove across country to go, in '59, to New York, in order to get on the [ship]... So we went, again, during the hurricane season in September. We left from here and went to Florida. And, from Florida, to see [my husband's folks], which was around Tallahassee, Florida. And from there up to the coast to South Carolina.

**Ms. Nimura:** To see your folks.

**Senator Franklin:** Then I left my sister off. And then continued up to New York and then we went to Fort Hamilton. I had to get the kids ready so we could get on that troop ship in '59 in order to go to, back to Germany. And so between this span of time, a lot was taking place. From seeing the kids, and seeing their schools, visiting school, working and then, of course, I was doing the night shift. So there were friends that I had that lived in the area that I'd sometimes, and Yvonne got married, is to take the kids to them and they would stay and then I would pick

them up. So it all worked out.

**Ms. Nimura:** It worked out. Well, okay, we are at almost at one o'clock, believe it or not. So what I want to do is call it a day for today and we'll take basically the second part of your nursing career, coming back from Germany, into Colorado, and Swedish in Seattle, your second Tacoma, all of that stuff.

**Senator Franklin:** So we got through the '50s?

**Ms. Nimura:** We got through the '50s.

**Senator Franklin:** Whoo.

**Ms. Nimura:** We'll get to the '60s and the '70s I think in the next session

**Senator Franklin:** Was that, was that the one that we were supposed to get through with this session? Were we supposed to start something else?

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, you know, we were supposed to get...but I think, because your nursing is so long, that we'll just put the second half of your nursing career into the next part because it's tied up with your community activism which is what your next session was supposed to be about. So it will kind of all tie together, right? With the next part of your nursing and the work you were doing in the community at the same time. That make sense to you?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, my eyes. Whoo.

**Ms. Nimura:** But I think that's okay. We'll get all the way up to the Hill-top Children's Clinic, and the Alice Hamilton Women's Clinic, Upjohn. All of that stuff. We'll get through all of that I think in the next session and talk about what else you were doing in the community. The Links.

**Senator Franklin:** God, I have talked for two hours. Jeepers creepers.

**Ms. Nimura:** You're a pro. You are a pro.

**Senator Franklin:** Well you should, you're going to have to stop me.

**Ms. Nimura:** I will. I absolutely will, when we get to it. [Laughter]

#### **Interview 4: February 7, 2019 - Activism**

**Ms. Tamiko Nimura:** All right. Are you ready?

**Senator Franklin:** I hope so. [Laughter] You know, if this wasn't happening... I said, Well, this [project] has forced me, I would not have even thought about all of this had it not been for this. I had been planning to go through everything anyway and start throwing things out. And then, when I started going through, and wanted, I said, this is not believable. I didn't, I couldn't really put it all together. I said, "When did I..." And the dates and the time,

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, there's so much. There's soo much.

**Senator Franklin:** All of this. I can't believe it. I didn't do all this stuff. I must've been half asleep. I can't remember...

**Ms. Nimura:** That's what I'd been wondering. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** All right, today is Thursday, February seventh, 2019. And I am Tamiko Nimura and I'm here with Senator Rosa Franklin. We're at Pacific Lutheran University in the Neeb Center, and today we're going to talk about – as much as we can – about her activism. So, let's see, I was wondering if I could get you to talk about what you see as "activism." How do you define it? What does it look like for you?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, the way I see it, is really being involved to advocate for those issues in which you support. And so it's really a continued advocacy. When we see activism, you can be active in your community in various ways. Mine, that I chose, was advocacy and being involved but not just in issues which centered just on health but on those issues that were related to social causes because of what had been happening. When we said, social changes — people, whoever had been discriminated against. Like in school, where the kids were not getting an equal quality education. Or whether it would be local issues with certain groups of people who were really not involved or [there was a] tendency not to be heard or felt as if they were not being heard. It's to speak out and up. And then to be out there. Not just to talk but become engaged in helping to make the changes.

We speak of people being activists now but I didn't really see that. I saw it as really being engaged in the community. And then through that engagement also is really learning. It becomes a learning, much more than giving, in listening and learning and knowing what the issues are. Getting more information. Not just jumping out there in order to be out there but really to know what the issues are. So when you want change or you're advocating for change, then you know what you're talking about.

When you speak to those change makers, if you will, who are responsible for those laws, what's on the books, that you present them with [your background] because what they will want to know, "Well, where did you get your information from? How do you know this is happening?" And you can also bring in personal stories. The person who you work with, who will have [questions, will want to know to whom] these things are happening, who can tell their personal stories. So that is what I see that as being like. And so, for me, it was running concurrently with my act of working. [Laughter]

**Sen. Franklin:** Now as I was supposed to go through all this stuff and I look back and I have been pulling things out and I said, "Well, when did I do this? I don't remember even, I don't remember." And then it comes back to me. And people were [asking me], "How could you, how did you? You were working, how could you do one of these things?" But you, then— you work them in. And that's what they say about women, we multi-task. So we do several different things at once and think nothing of it. You just do it.

I had this friend, when we speak of advocating and making changes, too. Like in the Democratic Party, when it was really not what it really should be. It was one in which, here again, women and people of color who were left out, were really not engaged. In order to make those changes, you have to be in there and you have to be advocating and you have to be telling them and you have to be showing them.

Sometimes I would be at meetings, it would only be me, somebody that looks like me. But now it's just me, but it's, it's not. It's the person of color, really getting people more involved within their community. And a lot of times people are afraid to step up so when you are there

and you see and you know and you hear, you are able to have your input and have your voices heard.

And you can also be a conduit and go back and say, “Well, you know, this is really what it’s like. Just try it. We know it might be difficult but people really want you to be involved. And it’s not what you really think. Come and see.” And you, of course, come. So there are ways of doing it.

With the Democratic Party, I was involved with that and making those changes. And it took people who were progressives ([like] the person that I really speak of highly now) in helping to make those changes, Karen Marchioro, who was the first woman who was elected to be the chair of the Washington State Democratic Party. And people felt she couldn’t do it but she actually did. And we have this whole discussion of two Washingtons, western Washington and eastern Washington and rural Washington and urban Washington, northern.... Bringing people together and really having them and, and getting people elected who were progressive who will relate to those changes. So she was one who really did a great job. She knew what she was doing. And, of course, while I was in the Legislature. We lost her. She expired while I was in the Senate. So I did a memorial recognition for her, and the work that she had done.

So that’s really [what’s involved], learning the issues. I speak always highly about the League of Women Voters who are – they may say we are political but we’re not partisan and we do support issues and progressive issues and changes but it goes through a whole myriad of studies. We just don’t jump out there and say we support this particular issue with without studying the issue and it, and take it as one to say that this is what we wanted. And it goes through the membership, because the League of Women Voters, which of course, will have its hundredth birthday on, next year, 2020 and

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. The national organization or the... ?

**Senator Franklin:** National with the women, it began with women’s suffrage. Yeah, the women’s suffrage. But the state convention will be in Tacoma, um, this summer at the Murano Hotel. So that’s what we’re working now.

Back [then], I really learned a lot about issues and approaching issues and being involved with League of Women Voters. [In] doing advocacy or working on issues or talking to people to tell them if you're going to work for the change of issues within, being involved with your community, [the League] is one's resource that you could really use and become involved with their other resources. But they have been around for so long and they really know what the issues are. And so, that is what I would [see myself], as being an advocate for change.

**Ms. Nimura:** Great. Can you tell me more about who has inspired you or influenced you to be an advocate to make change?

**Senator Franklin:** I'm trying to think of some names. Who might have influenced? As I said, I started doing some of the things on my own when I saw what was happening from those early days on and in my nursing is what I really, —

**Ms. Nimura:** In Tacoma or earlier?

**Senator Franklin:** From my early childhood — Who inspired me actually is my uncle and aunt. It's in my whole family.

**Ms. Nimura:** The ones that you lived with [Julia and Norridge Mayhams].

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Who were people who, in turn, acted in order to help and to help to make change and just don't sit back and complain. So it was sort of instilled in me early on, even though they live in a segregated society. Then we had, it was during the time of NAACP who would organize for social change. And I would hear them and they would, we would have meetings, plus the fact that the press, I remember the paper that I delivered was *The Lighthouse & Informer* and it was a black newspaper because of, back in the segregated South, how much did they print about African Americans actually?

You know they weren't trying to really hang you from a tree or [whatever], which is unfortunate...The kind of life in the segregated South, are the same people, in turn, who present themselves as statespeople, as really caring but then at night they belong to the Klan, Ku Klux Klan. And so those kinds of things that we knew were happening. And people were getting organiz-, you know, and things. They did what they could.

So the next generation that came, you have to always remember that you're standing on the shoulders of those folks who went before. Like, for me growing up, seeing, and I saw the paper, I'd read the paper and they were steadfast on education. And, [it] was during the Depression, and people were poor and they were handing out this food, food for people. That people who didn't, we say food bank now but the government had places where they would give out these foods, whatever the type of foods they were to give to people who did not have any food. And then there was this lady, now that I think back, she was a lady with disabilities and I'd have to deliver food to her. And then my aunt prepared food for another gentlemen who was living alone. And so seeing all of this, so knowing that they, in turn, did not condone what was going on and that they were doing what they could in order to make a change.

**Sen. Franklin:** So that instilled, plus the family and that an education, and the kids, their kids, which are my first cousins. One became a pharmacist. The other was a musician. The other a nurse, the other one a music teacher, very world-renowned, and music. And then the youngest one of that family now, who's one hundred, that I told you about. They were always, you know, [saying], it's looking you in your face, is making changes. Do what you can. Speak up.

And then here, in Tacoma, being involved with progressives and the Democratic Party, Ruth Fisher [who] got elected to the House of Representatives. And then there was Bill Baarsma, Dr. Baarsma, who was involved. Oh gosh I'm trying to think, my good friend, who pushed me to run for office, who's now deceased, Rosie Hargrove. And one of the influencers was Dr. Tanbara who was out there. Who was really doing things and caring for kids that nobody else would care for.

So those were really some of the people who were around – and, of course, Jack Tanner. And he's now deceased. And he was very much involved politically and after, he had served [in] the military. And then after he got out of the military he went to law school, became a lawyer. And he was one who took the cases for the tribes when nobody else would.

And there were others in the community of women who I did not know personally but who worked really, they still had, built the Colored

Women's Club and they were leaders. And they were people who really fought for, because some of those same people who came to the Tacoma were discriminated against because of their race, was not hired, could not get a job in Tacoma public schools or elsewhere, would not be hired.

Dennis Flannigan, who I'd worked with who was still, he got elected to the House of Representatives, who was one who was out there fighting for those changes. And I think Dennis did the MLK walk [organized after Dr King's assassination]. I think he walked in that, the MLK March. And of course, his wife, she died, we lost her and she was an inspirer also. One of inspiration. But those members who were progressives in Tacoma, who worked for social changes, were also some of the people who really [taught me], I saw that you could, did not have to be out there by yourself. That there are other people who, and they used to tease me about, because they would tease me about the Twenty-ninth District because it is, the Twenty-ninth District itself, was supposed to be, it was Democratic district but conservative.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes! [Laughter]

**Sen. Franklin:** A conservative district. And because they said it was [conservative], but they were very much labor-oriented. Very much. And I had very good too. And so, for me, that was, because too, I'm a labor person too. So that didn't really present, but they would always tease me, "Rosa, what are you doing over there? [unintelligible]?" And I said, and they would laugh about I guess, that "You were the only progressive over there." [Laughter] But I really wasn't. There were others, there were.

But, you know, the thing about it is, we speak about this art of compromise but you don't compromise. But I've always been of the opinion, how would you know what to do or how you would address the issue if you didn't go into the den? How would you know? You can't just take somebody else's word for it. You have to sort of go and see what it is like yourself.

For me, it was no problem in order to really work with, although I may not agree, to really work with them...You pick your friends, right? You choose who you want to. But, so this whole issue, then, of activism, making changes, throughout, let's say, my lifetime and then really inspiring

her and her and her...As it went on you saw more.

It was actually one of learning, one of learning, and how you dodge the pit holes and how you work around the pit holes. How do you really change and make it better? How did you really do that? And it's ongoing. It's one, through learning. It's working with others, it's being a good listener and respect for somebody else, even though you might disagree, even though it's tough at times.

**Ms. Nimura:** It is tough. [Laughter] It is tough.

**Sen. Franklin:** It's tough at times, it may be tough at times but then your faith comes in too.

**Ms. Nimura:** Tell me a little bit about that, about how your faith comes into that.

**Sen. Franklin:** About my faith? Because if you really believe that things will be better and you work for it and I'm a Christian and, but I don't play it up. I don't go around saying you've got to believe in my religion and you got to believe because I think people of all faiths, they worship who they wish to worship and you respect them. That's what our country's about. There's freedom of religion, right? So why should I condemn somebody? And when you look back historically, of what happened when the Pilgrims came because, it was Huguenots who came to America, for what was happening in Europe, and then to come to quote the "new country" and then condemn and put, burn somebody at the stake when they ran away from it doesn't make sense. Absolutely no sense. So for us and for my family, who are Christians and are faith believers says, "Well, how can you do that? The Bible doesn't say that." How can you use that to say, it's like they used slavery and said it was biblical, to do that in the Bible. Well, in those days, because they had it didn't make it right. So I mean to transfer and to use it in the new country and say slave. And you can't go and you bring somebody in chains and treat them the way that they were treated when they didn't ask to be here and then say it's the Bible. And so my faith and I don't have that kind of faith.

Mine is that you treat people, and that's what my folks told me, the way you want somebody to treat you. And it's not always about self. Is

not, “Me. Me.” It’s not self. It’s helping somebody else. And so I believe very much in that. And I see it works. [Laughter] Really, really.

**Sen. Franklin:** Because they will say, “How do you stand-, how do you do it?” And I says, you know, there’s a reason why we’re all here. Like I tell my kids in growing up. There’s a reason why you’re here. You’re not here just to be here. Everyone is here for a reason and I really believe that.

So that’s how, as I said, when it comes with my faith that I want to be, I want the way I treat you, I want to be treated is how I will treat you, with respect. Even though I don’t agree with you, I will listen to you. But then, of course, my husband may say different. [Laughter] Okay. So I said, all right. So you think, How do you think I stuck up with you for seventy years? [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** [Unintelligible.] [Laughter]

**Sen. Franklin:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah. We have fun about that. You know, that husband-wife thing goes.

**Ms. Nimura:** I do. I do.

**Sen. Franklin:** You know how that goes. You have give and take.

**Ms. Nimura:** I do. I’ve been with my husband since high school. So over half my life.

**Sen. Franklin:** So you know how that goes. It’s a give and take.

**Ms. Nimura:** I do know. It’s a give and take. Absolutely.

**Sen. Franklin:** And you’re supposed to listen but sometimes you don’t want to listen. Well you were with your husband for, since your high school days. Seems like I’ve been with mine ever since I was in nursing school, more or less, before we got married.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah, that’s amazing.

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, it is amazing. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** It’s really amazing. [Laughter] I want to jump back because I want to make sure I get the details about this correctly. So I think this, and then we’ll jump back to activism and political involvement, but I

want to make sure I get the details straight about, you said you hired Jack Tanner for a case? Maybe when you were at Madigan...

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah. I did. Women did not want to have a black doctor and they were afraid to really say anything, a lot of them. Things happened because of what their commanders, and just like my husband, you know, when I was out of there and I had to, getting ready to buy a house and the, um, was looking to buy a home after we were renting, and he came and he saw that I was black, he started backing up.

**Ms. Nimura:** The realtor, right?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, the realtor. So what this case [when I hired Tanner] was, of course, they would put things in your personnel record so that when you maybe apply for a job someplace else, as a new, personnel. So I had gone to the general. It's old Madigan now we're talking about. It's not new Madigan because this was back in the fifties. And that's when we had the sprawling Madigan. You walked for miles and miles and miles. We didn't get the new Madigan until probably, was nineteen-, was the eighties? Might have been the late, Norm Dicks was in, I think, already elected when we got – and, of course, it had been planned prior to that.

But it was, and I went to personnel and tell them that I wanted it out. I don't want anything in my record to show that I had that [incident]. Because it would come, more or less, to say that I would be a troublemaker. That goes with you from one... Yeah. So and we went out. So I don't quite recall what because you, with your personnel record, what was in it or what was said. I don't really recall but we went to personnel office and I told them and he went with me. Yeah, I hired him. So nothing like ever showed up about that because, um, so I never had anything like that to happen again.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. So there were, just to make sure I have at least the skeleton of it straight, so there were white women who did not want to have a black doctor,...

**Sen. Franklin:** There was, it was, yeah, it was in labor/delivery. This was in labor/delivery room.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay, and so...

**Sen. Franklin:** And I was working in maternity labor and delivery when this happened.

**Ms. Nimura:** Uh huh. And so you went to the general or the commander?

**Sen. Franklin:** Yeah, the Commander. I remember I took my kids and I piled them in that car and I went out to Madigan so fast to meet with, because there were other things that were happening all the time... that people were afraid to speak about. So I can remember putting my [coat], it was a winter day and it was cold. I could remember it being cold. I piled my kids in [the car] and I took off. And I think that Commander, it was in the fifties. I don't if it was Commander Wilson but that was the one [who] said he wasn't a racist, I don't remember the exact term, because his chauffeur or somebody was, was black, was something. I don't remember all the, the full word for word detail. But no, and so from that, and of course, I wanted to make sure too that my [record was okay] because people do things. I learned that that they will do, and they will undermine and they will say she's a troublemaker or she's done this and... and it was all during that era.

And Jack was, his office was downtown in the, I think was the Puget Sound Bank. It was on — not Broadway, but on Pacific Avenue. I could remember that and it was upstairs. And he had not been in practice that long because he was one of the first persons, he and his wife, that we met when we came out here. In fact, we became good friends. It was he and he, the Claxtons was another old family who had been living here, African-American. And the Claxtons were longshoremen. Jack was a longshoreman after he got out of service, and then he went to the University of Washington, Tacoma. Became a judge. So it was, it was the, oh, I'm trying to think of other guy. Oh man. Claxton, Ed Claxton, and, of course, Ed Claxton's mother. I think she was the first African-American child born here. But she was one of those early ones, you know. Don't quote me because I, they may get the dates wrong, but..the Claxtons and the Tanners and... Because he, they lived next door to each other the Tanners did, and this guy was, um, taught at Tacoma Community College when it was first built. The other, the other couple that I knew. And so those three, but no, but yes, so that's what happened in regards

to Madigan.

**Ms. Nimura:** So you basically had him as, there as a sort of legal protection then, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. After there was, that period now, there wasn't any repercussions at all... There was nothing after. And I continued to work in, with the military until we left in nineteen fifty-nine and then came back by the way of Colorado. And when I got to Colorado after working overseas and here, that I wanted to try something else and not work with the military anymore. So that's why I went and worked at, with, I worked at Norton Nursing Home.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay, thank you. I just want to make sure I have that right.

**Senator Franklin:** Sure.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay, so, let's see. So I have a whole list of just some of the activities here but I have a kind of grouped, right? So there are things like planning committees, right? Things to do with the kids; the Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; March of Dimes. I have African-American associations, so like the Tacoma Urban League; and nursing associations; and, of course, tied in with that are like larger health associations, right? How do you choose or prioritize among all of those things? Or is that just, that's what you care about, that's what you decide to go for?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, that's what I went for. So they all worked together. It was, if I was with the work, Washington State Nurses Association, with them what I did was, I had served on their minority committee. Again because, again, there were not, there were not nurses, you know. They were all Caucasian nurses and they were not really [diverse]... And so they were trying to really attract and bring in more nurses of color and so I served on that. But then not only did I do that. I also chaired what I think was the national nurses organization because, too, we advocate for nursing and nursing issues. And so much of what was happening, a lot of times, decision for nurses were being made for non-, by non-nurses.

And so I've chaired, actually — when Norm Dicks, I think, became elected — a group that would meet with our congressional folks and others. By that time, the seventies, see the women's groups were all

becoming more vocal in the seventies as an outcome of the civil rights movement. And so I then, in turn, served being an advocate and was on a committee to push for more input and recognition [in] what was going on in nursing and health care. And then Pierce County Nurses Association, I was involved with Pierce County Nurses Association, so that's sort of really interrelated with each other.

So that all was involved there and then, but the Planning Commission, was that in the eighties or the seventies? Because after I ran for City Council then I served on committees for the Health Department that dealt with budgeting, if I remember correctly. Because there were concerns, too, because in that department, it seemed like the Health Department itself was, it was not organized. We didn't feel as if it was really getting the type of accountability in regard to budgeting. So I served on a citizen's committee for that. And then, of course, when it came to the Planning Commission, I think that was in the 80s, I'm not sure.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, '82 to '90.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, because I was appointed, on the Planning Commission, by Governor Gardner. He was not the governor at that time. He was the first when we went from a commissioner form of government. Then there was Joe Stortini became the County Executive and then, I think before Joe Stortini, it was Gardner, Booth Gardner, who was County Executive. And then after, I was appointed by Joe Stortini. I served, too, under Joe Stortini while still on the Planning Commission when he was there. And along with doing that I think I was still, at one time, at Upjohn. I was working at Upjohn at the same time, because I went back and I looked at some stuff that I found when I went, and I was at Upjohn more than five years. In fact, I have the picture. I'll have to take it down and bring it to show that I went to, got a trip to Kalamazoo, Oregon along with the other group leaders to recognize, being recognized for being five years with Upjohn at that time. And I went to Upjohn at that time as the Coordinator for Home Health. And then I became the Director of Upjohn Health Care Services. Then, eventually, something happened and I just left my keys and walked out.

**Ms. Nimura:** Whoa. What happened?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, I don't even remember.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** I don't even remember. I walked, I don't remember because I think they were going through some changes. See, because this all came about when Dixie Lee Ray was Governor and when Home Health came in under her. And then, of course, I was in one office, in Upjohn office and Upjohn, which is pharmaceutical, was going to expand itself into the home health care market. And then there, of course, was another, there was an agency in another building, and they were also doing home home health care at that particular time. And I think that was state, I'm not sure. I can't recall but what happened when I left Upjohn something was not in, because they had a new, what was [it]? A new area director because was Portland, we had, there was Portland. There was Oregon and there was Washington. And then I was hired by another Field Director, John. And then after John left then this other person became the Field Director. Some clash we had. I don't remember. But there were changes in the office so it was something, some disagreement and I said, "You know, I don't really need this." So I just remember that I just left the keys and left because there was always something else.

And then after that, I did agency nursing. I never did, I did not really want to get on anybody's staff. And there were a lot of agencies because, originally, when I was in New York, I also did private duty. It was a big thing at one time, doing private duty. So we, as nurses, we used to do, if you did staff in order to make extra money, we'd do private duty nursing or would do fill-in. It was a shortage or it was something, I don't know, back then.

When I came to Washington, I was going to do private duty also but that didn't work out. That's how I ended up at Madigan. But after I left Upjohn, when I left Upjohn, then agencies, there were agencies, I decided. I looked back the other day. I was going to do nursing evaluation services because while I was at Upjohn also, they would call us and we could do a nursing evaluation because they would need certain things say, if they were going to court. I can slightly remember that when because I had to go and testify at one court hearing on certain things. After I left

Upjohn, I thought maybe I was going to go into, do my own business. And I found the other day head, stationary, which I'd had...

**Ms. Nimura:** Really?

**Senator Franklin:** Yes, [Laughter] Nursing Evaluation Services that I was going to do...Because I could have done it because what you would do, they would call legal services or attorney, whatever, they would call and they'd want you to do evaluation. And then I said, you know, I really don't want to do this so then I started working for several different agencies. Or, then I worked at, maybe I did work at Norton Nursing Home. I did, yeah, long-term care at Norton's. So I think I was on their staff for a while.

**Ms. Nimura:** In Colorado. Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Norton Nursing Home staff? And then I eventually, then I started doing agency nursing. Where I was from Kitsap to Olympia to Seattle. I did a lot of traveling. I would work nights. I worked night, always worked nights. I always worked nights because I would be able to do different functions or attend to my kids or school. When I worked with the agency, I could decide my time. Whether I want to work or whether, what shift I wanted to do. It was based on my other commitments and activity because I was very much involved with the Democratic Party. And then I was doing all kind of other volunteer work. So the agency really, later on, worked out really well for me. And when, up until the time that I ran for office was when I was working for agencies. Then even with that, after I got elected and I found out that if I really wanted to do the best job I could as a legislator that I could not be committed to agencies or anybody else because somebody, something would have to go. And with the schedule that I had and the committees that I had, that would have never worked. And so the people now, because I had already seen what had happened with people who still had their profession and were still trying to do legislative work. There was one doctor, I think. Because they weren't there to do their practice. Somebody else had to do it and that wasn't going to work out. So the people now, who say they are – unless they've got an absence while they're in the Legislature – that they could be committed but I know, boy, she and I worked on a

committee for the Inter-, when we did the Interagency,

**Ms. Nimura:** Council.

Morre-, why do I want to say it's Morranch? [Rep. Dawn Morrell, a nurse at Good Samaritan, Puyallup] She is on the staff at Multicare in Puyallup, and she was still actively practicing. So I don't know how they did it but they did it. So anybody who was any type [of] official or have other jobs or whatever, it's like the people who were and who were farmers who came over eastern Washington, you know. And so something has to go. So for me, I found out that wasn't going to work.

I was committed because when I looked at the schedule and it was not just that you're there in the Legislature for that period of time. People, I don't think the general public [know] — maybe they know now, but I didn't know then — that you had this interim work that you were doing also. So you had interim work plus you had, not only just your interim work, you had your additional duties where they would want you to go to this meeting, or that meeting. Which was really a value to you because when you came back, you had that [information], that gave me a lot of information about what somebody else was doing. So you could be able to craft your legislation and advocate and work that. So it's a lot to it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, I saw that. I went to your archives at the state, right? In Olympia. And I saw the stacks of invitations that you had, right? So all these, I'm not sure, you might not have been to all of them, right? But the stacks of invitations to events, right? "Come to this meeting and"

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, did, where did you? Oh, my gosh.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. "Come to this meeting and this meeting." And it wasn't just your little appointments at Olympia, right? It was all these events around that people sent you invitations to.

**Senator Franklin:** No, yeah. And, but then people, then, of course, when you are out of session is meeting with constituents and it is meeting with. So I still, it would be really nice to know how other people really do their bit on like Laurie [Jenkins] asked, Laurie asked, "How do you do it?"

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, Jenkins? Laurie Jenkins?

**Senator Franklin:** Because she's always on the go too. And she works at the Health Department.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right. I have no idea. I'll ask her.

**Senator Franklin:** No, if you really want to do the best job... You asked the question was how do I prioritize? Well, the thing about it, you know what you're doing and, for me, you know what you're taking on so you don't take it on unless you figure you can do it. So that was my approach to it. If I can't do it, I'm not going to take it on.

So I found a way in order to really arrange the schedule and arrange all of these activities because they were all very important to when I was advocating for. I can't really advocate for social justice and health care unless I am involved and know how it's funded, where the funds come from or how the laws are made or who is in charge of it or who do you speak to. Because for me, I don't want to just speak to somebody here who knows absolutely nothing. Plus the fact, though, when you're advocating for an issue, on the legislative end and on the congressional end, they don't know everything. You have to go and you have to educate them on the issue. So you'd better know what you're talking about. I had to really decide what I'm going to do and how it all fits together. And plus, I'm an avid reader and researcher, if you will, but that was even before we had computers. I look back and I did all [by hand]...Because when I was at UPS, I picked up some stuff, when I was going through my papers, and it was all handwritten.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** So I guess I was half asleep when I was doing it, but it looked okay to me. [Laughter] Yeah, so that's really... [Sigh]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Well, let's see, we are at fifty-four minutes, uh, which I think is a good time for a break, which I promised you. I'll keep this recording just in case anything comes out but it's a good time for a break.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, cause I reminded you, I said, [Unintelligible] time for a break.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. I know, a break.

**Senator Franklin:** I don't want to bore you.

**Ms. Nimura:** No!

**Senator Franklin:** Bore! Bore!

**Ms. Nimura:** Nooo! It's not. It's not.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh my goodness. As I said, I would have never even thought about this. And I went and looked in my... and stuff I still... I looked in boxes of stuff... from meetings and journals and then in my library I've got all that stuff in the library, with books I haven't even read. I had hoped that I would read them.

**Ms. Nimura:** What, um, when you were saying, remember those newspapers you said you read when you were younger? What kind of newspapers were those? Were those like African-American newspapers?

**Senator Franklin:** Um hmm, it was African-American press.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay. Do you remember the names of those of the top?

**Senator Franklin:** The one, one back then. when I was growing up was The Lighthouse and Informer. And then there were print newspapers out of Baltimore. Gosh, can't even think of it but there... Oh yeah, back in the, in the forties and fifties. And the paper that was The Lighthouse and Informer was printed in Columbia, South Carolina. And they were weekly. Just like you have the Tacoma Weekly? Yeah, well, you see, they were weekly newspapers but I'm thinking about the one out of Baltimore. But there were several.

**Ms. Nimura:** I'll have to find those. You know, doing all the work that I do, especially on minority communities has taught me that you don't trust the mainstream press or archives to keep, or cover, what you need, right? So, I was like, okay, there's got to be more that's not there. You know, like the Tacoma Public Library will have some things that I need but it's not going to have everything that I need, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Like here! In Tacoma. There was, um, there was Virginia Taylor's paper.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. Tell me about that.

**Senator Franklin:** But, oh my, yeah, what was it? You'll see something. Well, what they have now it's no press. I call it, more or less, like a weekly advertisement. But Virginia Taylor, here, her paper was, was it the Northwest Dispatch? Because, there [was] the Black Press conference and I'm sure they still have those. But her papers, I put ads in her paper when I ran for office, always. And so she was operating in nineteen-ninety. And so there should be, in the Tacoma Library, archives. She died, she developed cancer. And I saw her sister when the present mayor ran two years ago. [Mayor Victoria Woodards] And I hadn't seen her sister for a long time and she was talking about re-opening her sister's paper. But she, and Virginia and Judie Fortier. You've heard of...?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Did they have a little talk show together? Or did something. They worked together on issues, Judie and Virginia Taylor did. But, and so those, that would be in the, Virginia's paper would be in the nineties, and it would be in the seventies, would be in the eighty, it would be, probably the seventies or the eighties. I know it would be in the eighties. But she printed every week. Every week. And it was right off, the building where she was in, is right where they've got the community, was it a community health center? Or the apartments? Where they built those apartments right on MLK. I've seen it.

**Ms. Nimura:** In Hilltop?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, and that's where her office was. Yeah. And in fact, we used to call her, because I'd call her the Mayor of Hilltop. Yeah. I think the paper that, the Baltimore Su-, why do I want to say the Baltimore Sun? I don't think it's the Baltimore Sun.

**Ms. Nimura:** That's the mainstream paper, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm?

**Ms. Nimura:** The Sun is the mainstream paper right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah for the Afri-, yeah for the Afri-, no. The Baltimore Sun is the Afr-, mainstream?

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** No, it was, but it was, there were papers that were printed in New York. They were in Baltimore. Those are the ones I remember. South Carolina. Those were the ones the, and I'm sure they were in California also. But those were the ones because I lived on the East Coast that I remember that we had. And the one, as I said, was The Lighthouse and Informer. So if you look in the South Carolina archives, or whatever. And, of course, what they have got down in Charlotte. I don't know what Charlotte, North Carolina might have had at that time but, um,

**Ms. Nimura:** All right. I can find those.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, yeah, yeah. What happened back then too, was the NAACP because of what was happening with the Ku Klux Klan was we could, with my family, hear what of was going on. He was very fair, Walter White, was, you look him up He was the Chair of the NAACP. He infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan. You probably heard that history? So all of that was, so that was probably like back in the forties. So also, so we got and knew all of that through, not only through NAACP meetings, and, plus, they had things like the Elks. The Elks. Then, of course, also you still, you had the black universities. There was Howard, there was schools in North Carolina, Tennessee, who really concentrated and had a lot of things, what was happening to the African-American community. So it is there, but you're right, so those things because it's like in Tacoma News Tribune,

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** They never, you didn't see, you go to the press, you look back in the early days, you wouldn't find anything in the Tacoma News Tribune. And of course, here, Seattle also had a newspaper that printed, which was the African press also. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. No, it's something that I love about doing this research and something that's a challenge about doing the research, right? Because you can't just go, "Oh, I'm just going to search, you know, The Seattle Times or The Tacoma News Tribune and find everything." Right. There's no way. That's just not getting covered, right? Or covered in a way that you would hope.

Maybe just to wrap up some of the challenging pieces, wrap up the activism piece, I was hoping you could talk a bit about some of the challenges, maybe besides the time? The challenges of doing that kind of community work and engagement? What are some of the things that have been memorably difficult?

**Senator Franklin:** Challenges of doing? The thing about it, I think in doing this [work] is really getting people, the general, maybe the people that are in your particular group that you might be working with, they understand but getting it out to the general [public], getting the general public [to understand]. And advocacy itself is one that really trying, is bringing the public along because you've got the pull and tugs of the counters saying, "No, it's not so." Those who are embedded in and you are trying to advocate for change. So some of the challenge is winning people over to your point of view.

When you look at the kinds of social changes that have taken place have not really come easily at all. Sometimes you may work on it for years before it finally happens because [of] some of the things that has happened and have taken place. Which now they're trying to take away. You know, like legislation that you worked for in order to change, and then you look and then you get into public office, where whoever makes the decision, who don't think like you or don't believe in, there. You come and they throw it all out. So it's like doing some of the same thing all over again. So that's why vigilance is so important.

What people do not really quite understand is that with those challenges, is that you work hard and you think you had a win but that win does not stay with you if you don't constantly monitor it. It's zero. And that's just the way it works it seems. It's never permanent. It doesn't ever seem to be permanent. And so those challenges, right now, [is that] things that were legislated on national level, public, state level and local levels, then, require the eternal vigilance. Because it seemed to be that there is always someone out there who want to set it back. And people will say, well, like I've heard them say, like during elections, "Well, I elect them to represent me." They don't think, they [think they] don't have to do anything anymore. That you're out there. I've elected you now and you're going to do [it] all but it doesn't exactly work like that.

And so that's true, why, so the question is, "why is it that you have to continually work and monitor that which you thought you had won or accomplished?" But, to me, things change and so it's not written in stone. I don't know. I don't know.

**Ms. Nimura:** What sustains you with that thought? Right? Because some people would say, "What do you mean? I have this win. What do you mean I have to go back to it?"

**Senator Franklin:** Because I see.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, what's this mean to you?

**Senator Franklin:** Because I see, if you live long enough, you'll see [Laughter]... Yeah! Because if you live long enough, you see it or you may not. It may, it may be with it, from the next election. And so what sustains you?

It's like, how should I say? It's like getting a job and you start at the bottom and you say, "I don't, I'm going to stay here. This is fine. I'm not going to ever move. I'm going to carve this out for me." And you think it's [Unintelligible] I'm saying you're at the bottom because some people said, "I don't want to, really. I don't want to go the next step. I'm fine right where I am." But do you realize that all around you changes have taken place? And you're eventually going to. It's not going to be the same. That's life.

So, I think for me, for young people though, when it comes to generations, you have to always be optimistic because without optimism, you just don't make it. And so for our generations, we have to always be optimistic for generations, for the next generation and tell them. You can't tell your kids, you have young kids, you're not going to tell them.... Are you going to make it miserable for them and not tell them to climb and do the best you can? No, you're not going to do that. For me, you have to think of the next generation and, just like my generation for me... And [my elders] were out there and they didn't have the opportunities that I have. So I would fail them if I did not do or appreciate what they did by working so I could leave it better for the next generation.

So for my kids, then, I taught, and we got three, and they have always

been told that it's not me, it is you, and that you speak up, and there's things you don't condone. And but what you say be careful because or what you do, you be careful because it can come back to haunt you. So be careful. Think twice before you speak, my parents said. And so that, like with my family passed on to me, I passed on my kids. And our son doesn't have any children but our daughters do and they pass on and grandma, grandpa is right there to (pounds table) to tell them so, consequently, they will come back, [even if] they've moved on. The youngest, he's had his twentieth birthday and so we've got these two guys and this one daughter and this one daughter. They call her Rosa Number Two and she is, and then our grandson. He's had his moments but he comes back. You saw, you met him [at the MLK Unity Breakfast]. He's right there, "Nana. Nana." You saw him the other day. Then, of course, our youngest. So it's really for the next generation, it is not for you.

And so when you look back, so that's why I'm saying too that history is very important and knowing where you came from. Knowing not only, but knowing your history but you cannot learn when you live in a little glass house. You have to step out of your comfort zone. And so for our kids, they have travelled and for our grandkids, they have not travelled. One has traveled a lot. The second, traveling when he was younger, the oldest has not has travelled as much. But for our kids they went everywhere. And so we teach them.

You expose them to other people and other worlds and, so they can see how, like our oldest grandson, he sees someone out there. He'd come home, he would come to me and say, "Nana." He was working somewhere. He saw this homeless [man], in fact, he didn't even know this man was homeless where he was working and when he found out that he was homeless, he had offered to take [the man] home but he found out he actually, even, he didn't have a home. Uh, uh. He says, "Now what can I do?" So, you know, I'd have to tell you that this is, these are the things you would do in order to help someone who, who was homeless or about the resources and stuff that is there.

That's what we, what we try to pass on to them and, of course, our kids. You know your history. You try to instill in your family, who you're responsible for, what it means in order to treat other people fairly and

hope and pray that they will pass it on and would live that. And so that's all you have to do, there's no assurance. There's no assurance. But the thing about what you have to be able to know, what I find, you have to be able to kind of like people. And I like people. And some people don't like people. You know? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** It's like I saw this article the other, and we had this when I was [in] nursing too, because you always deal with unreasonable people, and it may be true — maybe that's why nursing makes a difference.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, yes.

**Senator Franklin:** You know? Your profession might make a difference because you deal with all kinds of people in,...Was this article the other day about, oh, some workshop about dealing with unreasonable people. I said, "Lord I've been there and done that."

**Ms. Nimura:** Forty-two years in nursing and twenty in politics, yes, you've been...

**Senator Franklin:** Been there and done that. [Laughter] Dealing with unreasonable people. But you can't, you know, what is it? "The customer is always right." [Laughter] The customer is always right. Yeah though, life is, life is great. Life is great. Like I said, we all of us know what's on this side of the divide but nobody has come back from the other side to give a report. [Laughter] So you need to —

**Ms. Nimura:** After you're gone.

**Senator Franklin:** — so you make the best of it. You make the best of it while you're here.

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**Interview 5: February 14, 2019 - Legislature (part 1)**

**Tamiko:** Nimura: All right. Today is February thirteenth, twenty-nineteen. I'm Tamiko Nimura and I'm here with Senator Rosa Franklin. We're at Pacific Lutheran University at the Neeb Center in the snowstorm of 2019! We're going to talk about her time in the Legislature. We left ourselves in the seventies with your community involvement but we especially were going to get to your time volunteering with the Democratic Party, right, being a precinct captain and so on. Can you talk a bit about how you got into that?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh gosh, seems like centuries ago. It was in the last century, wasn't it? Yeah, I started volunteering for different candidates and just doing volunteer work and then the Chair at that time was Pearl Odell. [29th Legislative District Democratic Party Organization Chair] She's now deceased. Who asked me to seek the nomination for precinct committee officer. Then, at that time, you filed and, I think you paid a dollar for a filing fee. Plus we had poll voting so the precinct officers and stuff and others then worked at the polls also, which was really, really kind of fun, because what happens is people like to go to the poll and they sort of meet their neighbors and sort of chit-chat.

And that was, gee, like way back in the 70s when Senator Jackson and Magnuson were our senators. Being the precinct officer or captain, some call it captain, we call it PCOs, precinct committee officers. And you run for election at the time, like every, file for election, every, um, it's at every two years I think it is, it's every two years. And so with so and what the precinct officers really are supposed to do, be the captain of their precinct, they're supposed to really be the voice, the beginning, that's the lowest level of the organization. So it was really, really active, and then you doorbell and you work your precinct, but you [also] work with others.

And not only that, I volunteered on a lot of campaigns. It was one for election, Doc, uh, let's see, I want to say Doc Adams but it wasn't Doc Adams. But the councilman from the Twenty-seventh District at the time, not the councilman, but he was the representative, [A. A. Adams, 27th LD House Rep., chiropractor] and a person who was really, really active

and really strong supporter for Celia Gold. And then she was a precinct committee officer and she lived in the North End, was right off Sixth Avenue. So we became really good friends, working and volunteering during times and not only local races but presidential races and plus the fact whenever the candidates came into town, they'd have different events and you really attend those events.

So like I tell everyone, I never, ever got paid for anything that I did for the Democratic Party, was always volunteer. I never really had a job -- a paid job in the Democratic Party. So you attended conventions, went to state, local conventions. Actually, as a PCO, as I said, it begins, because they have the different levels. And so you become the voice of the person-- of your particular local district. It was fun doing that.

But now, with the all-mail voting, those who have been really involved with the days when we had the poll voting, you could see. You could see the real difference, because if they didn't see each other at that time, they really saw people at the polls and at all... And then not only that, a lot of them would bring their children and show them really what it was about. That was sort of their introduction to that.

**Ms. Nimura:** So later, in the Legislature, when you were against the mail-in ballots, that was part of the reason, right? There was a social and community function?

**Senator Franklin:** It was, yeah. Because if they were not [going], they didn't see each other, you'd go to the polls. So, it was a time that people really said, "Hi" to each other and got to really know their neighbors. And that was one avenue, I think, of people really knowing what their surroundings or their district or the people who lived in their neighborhoods. That was one way of really them really knowing. But now, like we have all-poll-, all-mail ballots so that that that was taken away when they no longer had the poll voting. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. I understand that. I still kind of like the idea of having both, I guess, myself. Right? I like the idea of being able to go to a place but I also like on the convenience for folks who aren't able to make it that particular day.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, there was, when I first started, in regards to

this moving toward full voting and one would say that, “Oh, we wanted to do all-mail voting because to increase the number of voters.” It became that, but then we found that really, it really did not increase it. But there, see, and Pierce County was really one of the last ones who went all-poll voting because we had said that we would give them a choice and we would keep these, a few polls open. So their polls were kept open. And each time when they tried to make it, to close those, and make it all-poll voting.

And while I was there I would resist it so it didn't pass until after I left because I thought if you make a commitment to your community, you should always keep that commitment unless you had a real, real reason. And it was working because people liked to really have that. And then, then it became [an issue of ] the cost. So there were several things that came into it but, making a long story short, selling it as one to increase the number of voters did not pan out that way at all. Because then other things came about in regards to paying for it recently and because if people got their ballots.

And they found that in the beginning, they had mail drops that you could walk and drop it off. But then people would not put a stamp on it or they wouldn't mail it. They wouldn't walk to it, to drop it on the drop box. And that became one too, to notify people, there's a drop box, be sure and put a stamp on. Of course it evolved so now we're at [the] point that the state would pick it up because the voter shouldn't have to do that.

So it's evolved into what it is today but the poll voting, as I said, was really good because we had poll places throughout the county. They were voting. And it was really something that you really pushed and people really went and they really saw. It was very visible, of what was going on. And so that was, that was a plus for that. There are countries where people stand in line now for miles in order to go to the polls in other countries. And we, in turn, make all of the convenience for people to vote but they still don't get out and vote like they should.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, right. It's an ongoing battle isn't it?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Forget, because it, they seem to always find..., some people will say, because I will make, like volunteering, is we call

on Election Day to remind people. And I worked – phone banking.

**Ms. Nimura:** As a precinct captain that's part of what you would do?

**Senator Franklin:** Yes, but anyone who volunteers, yeah, but not just as a precinct captain. There are certain things that we asked that the precinct captains do. And they're, them representing is to really do the volunteer work to support the party so, because if you're a precinct officer you have certain duties that you should do. Not to have it, just to [have] your name there. And that is, you know, you would doorbell your precinct.

You would talk, get to know, because it's partisan, who are the Democrats in your district. Maybe find out what their issues are. Then through your voice, then you would take that to your district, because there's a district organization, to let them know. The people in my precinct, these are what their concerns are. And then the district organization itself who will take that up and they see if their chain – then they will take it to the next level, which would be the county level, and something that they need to work on. Then the county, then work on. Then they take it now to the state level. And once it gets to the state level, if it's something that's affecting, would be for whole state interest. It's like developing a platform. Once you develop a platform. Maybe make that a part of your platform.

So there are a series [of stages], and that's how the Party then is built. And the Party itself depends on those precinct officers and the volunteers, because we say that they're representative of the people and that's what the Democratic Party is supposed to be about, is representing the people, in all voices, regardless of who you are. So as a precinct officer then, you find some time in order — if you're working sure, because people work and they can't — but you find some time in order to commit to that. If you find out that you cannot, then you don't run for the office. And if you, when we have like dozens of precincts like here. This is a part of the 29th Legislative District so there are dozens of precincts and you try to fill them all, have somebody in a precinct office, in there but that, too, becomes very difficult. You can't find people a lot of time to become precinct officers.

And, I tell people, it's really [about] becoming involved. And becoming politically engaged, but you should also become civically engaged. It's

not just politically engaged. I think it's more important that not everything should be, it's all political, that there are civic things that should be done, such as, you know, out there helping the homeless, helping people, working, but your schools, supporting your schools. Knowing what the issues are with your cities, knowing what the issues are as it relates to your county.

What is it that people complain about transportation? What about the roads? So civically engaged meaning that you, and politically, when it becomes political then, but because the, people I think a lot of time become confused between partisan; non-partisan; political; civically engaged, when issues a lot of times they're not partisan. Many issues are not partisan issues at all. They're issues that affect everybody but the political system that's what, how our governance system is made up. So really getting people, too, to understand how it all fits together. Also becomes one of getting people to understand that everything fits together in one way but you can't just cut it off and think, and don't become involved, and know what's going on and decide.

So, because politics, like this good friend of mine told me, "So why do you become engaged?" Because politics affects your life from the time you're born until the time you, you, you die, it's, in some way, in your life but: Knowing your government, that's what it is. So when you speak of government that's when people start becoming all... "Oh, it's all about politics," when it really, really is, shouldn't be that way. But mine is, again, in regards to the PCOs, that's a good way, a good way for people to really start in partisan. Pick the party of your choice which you feel represents you best. And join up with that and, at that level, and you learn and you see and you get a broader view. I tell people, you just don't, even though I'm a Democrat, I just don't listen just to what Democrats say. You have to listen to that and to independents and what other minor parties because I support minor parties also. Because there are not Democrats or Republicans. You've got minor parties. You've got independents. And for so long, but like in Pierce County, a lot of people that I met a long time says, "Well, I vote, um, I vote my conscience." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** So it all sort of ties in. So that level is where to really start. That's my suggestion. They should start at that level. And they have, like the precinct committee officers attend, we have county, you have your district meeting, which is, in the district meetings where you have your precinct committee officers, well, those meetings are open but they, your precinct officers are the ones that makes it, vote on the business of the party and the governance of the party.

So they have meetings like once a month for precinct committee officers and the district and then, on the county level, we have county meetings which the precinct officers attend. And that is, um, I think it's like every other month because we have executive board, you have an executive board, and that meets in between. Like Thursday night, they'll have executive board meeting. Our next general membership, which all precinct committee officers will attend will be in March. So the precinct officers too is one of the things, is to attend those meetings to know what's really going on statewide and also nationwide.

Those levels of governance, really, it's really important because you keep abreast as to what is really going on at all levels from the lowest level, which is the district, not the district. Yeah, from the district to the county to the state and then the national level.

**Ms. Nimura:** What was really rewarding about that work for you? What did you enjoy the most about it?

**Senator Franklin:** It's getting to really know different people, to really be able to exchange ideas, to be able to help to have a voice and developing of the platform because you get elected as delegates to next level and have a voice in that because, as I said, each level. And really getting to really know what the issues are and what they, and having a voice and really formulating those so that they would become a part of the platform. Like we, when we have our conventions to adopt the platform, you having a voice in developing the platform and you go to the state level and you get to serve on various committees, you put your name and or you get appointed or you run to be elected to the various committees. You get a broader knowledge of really what is going on in the world.

**Ms. Nimura:** That's what you liked about it?

**Senator Franklin:** Uh huh. That is really what is really rewarding about it. And of course, you hear a lot of that other stuff that... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. Let's talk about the other stuff. So, so were there some particularly challenging pieces of that work that were a little more difficult?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, of being a precinct officer or serving on those different levels?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Right.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, the thing about it, if there are issues of which you disagree with, and then you have a voice in getting up to speak against it. Within our democratic society, of your voices, you have that. That's why it's so important that everybody have their say. That's what this has all been.

That's what our country should be all about. Our state is all about. Our local levels all about. That all voices are heard. So, and an organizational structure then, when we meet at levels in order to develop issues and platform and it comes to the level to vote on or even as you put it together and issues, you discuss issues, then you put it on the table and maybe you, maybe what you support passes and maybe not but your voice is being heard.

The challenges are not having passed what you want passed [Laughter] but fighting for those issues that you support. And then, of course, what you do, the fun part is, you gather all the people who think like you [Laughter] or supposed [to], and say, "Okay, you know, this is coming up." And so you're gathering all these people so when the vote comes and they call for the vote on the issue, you've got your supporters there. Because you just can't have an issue and think that you yourself it's going to be the one that passes. You have to gather supporters. It's just like having legislation. It's just like having an initiative. It's just like passing laws, you know.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, I'm seeing some previews here, right? So let's push ahead a little bit, by the time that you actually ran for office, officially?

Besides, the work with Democratic Party, you really had got to know your community very well. Right?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh yeah! Because of all of the work that I had done. Not only in the party but, volunteer...

**Ms. Nimura:** Right and the civic engagement.

**Senator Franklin:**... work within the community and not only that, and within my nursing profession, and what I had done with that. So all the work that I had done and as I said, when I ran that first time for the city council, I didn't have a clue of what I was doing but by the time I ran for the House of Representatives I had, it's almost like, when you are in a profession and then you have your practice before and you're out [there], you know. You just don't study for a profession, you have to actually get out there and do the work.

By that time I had done the work and had all of these avenues...that's why I said, you cannot stay in one place and know what is going on, that you have to expand your world in order to have knowledge of going [on]. And I think that is what some people run into, is they would not have the practical experience or have not been exposed to a worldwide view that they have problems and they become very narrow in their thinking. By the time that I had run, I had already gathered a lot of stuff and had a lot of experience.

And that's what I tell people today, if you plan to run for office that you should really start early. You really, go learn your community. Know your neighborhood. Know where you live. Learn about the issues. Listen to other people and be a good listener but not only just go and do something. Because I think that everybody at least should serve once, in a role of some kind dealing with public policy. Let's put it that way. And they will see that it is not as easy as they think it should be because a lot of people, too, think that it should just be my way, like what we're saying at that other place. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** You're talking about the Other Washington, aren't ya? [Laughter] She kind of jerks her thumb back.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Am I pointing it in the right direction? Is

it that?

**Ms. Nimura:** I just know it's the other direction, not this one.

**Senator Franklin:** But really. No, but public policy, it's really great. If you like public policy and you like people and you like to solve issues, problems. But it's not one to go and create more problems, it's to solve problems and develop policy that will be positive or productive not just for one group but for everyone.

So that's why to me, it is so important that you hear all voices — you go there, people go, let's say at your very lowest level, which then is your local government because you have local government, state government and national government, and everybody have their own personal views.

But when you are an elected public official, you do not give up your personal view, however, you are now serving the public. So you have to find some way of how you're going to really resolve and work out those issues where everyone becomes a winner. And I think everybody, and everybody becoming a winner, means it is an art of compromise. And again, the art of compromise is you don't compromise your principles, but everyone comes up a winner. That's what compromise is, everybody gets something. They don't get that one hundred percent but they get something.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Right, something. Well we're going to get back to that, I'm sure, when we get actually into it. I wanted to just talk about you, right now, about that that run for the House of Representatives. And so, what launched it? Who did you have on your team? All of that.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, when I ran in 1990, was one in which, as I have said before, that mine, when I made my team, it was going to be a team of people who, a lot of times people do not ask. They do not participate. They don't know what's going on. A lot of times, people want to be asked or they need to be given the information of how they can become involved but they don't seem to really get that because a lot of people do not do that outreach and they they don't look for inclusiveness.

So what I just said [that I would ask] people who I knew who would be interested but never have been involved or even done any volunteer

work, that I would pull them in. And so that's what my team was made up of. And it was made, also, of people who were working in the Democratic Party. Volunteering. People who were not, it was one who were independents or people who I knew from other occasions.

Oh, I was going to bring that first dollar and I walked off and left it. The Chair of the Party who, my friend who encouraged me, who asked me to run and I said I wouldn't, Rosie [Hargrove], gave me the first dollar. She said, "Here, this is your first dollar for you," and I never spent it. I have it in plastic.

**Ms. Nimura:** Awww. Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** So, she, Judie Fortier, was on my committee, she was my Finance Chair.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, she's deceased. She was, and then we had Beth Zubitis. She's not expired. And for one of my campaigns, she was the chair of my campaign. But then I had, um, boy, I can't think of her name. I had a retired military person. No a retired, um,... Mr. Brown, I can't think of his last name. He was, he was my Treasurer. Oh boy, what? I'll think of his name. He was my Treasurer. There were people who had not, as I said, they might have been in other groups, but they were not a part, politically engaged. Some of them were civically engaged but they were not politically engaged, who were, again, I'd have to go back and look at the names, but those, that was how I put my team together.

Then we met at my house, there was no campaign office, they met, had meetings at my house. Back then, when I ran in 1990, once you put your campaign together and you announce and then, of course, you had your pamphlets designed and then you'd get what we would call our doorbelling piece. My goal was to doorbell every house within the district.

**Ms. Nimura:** Whoa.

**Senator Franklin:** But then we knew that wasn't going to [work]— so you have to plan. So we developed a plan about doorbelling. And when I door, I doorbelled alone or I'd have someone to walk with me but I would then in the morning and then in the afternoon. So there was a time set not to doorbell after a certain hour or maybe not during meal-

time. And I didn't doorbell on Sundays. And then, of course, I'd order my signs and I had someone who, we'd put up signs, doorbelling and fundraising – and I hate to ask for money but I, ugh... But in those days, you know, ten, five dollars or ten dollars in those, that like, seems like eons ago, you know.

And that was, too, when computers were just sort of coming in. It was new. So everything was still traditional writing. And then, of course, someone to design the brochure. The printer was on Pacific Avenue. And then I had signs made in Olympia. We'd go. The firefighters would want [to] put all the stakes on my signs because they supported me. So what we did is, I'd go out. Someone would say, "Hey, Rosa, what are you doing out there putting out signs?" "Hey, I'm spreading out on signs."

Doorbelling was really fun because you really get to meet a lot of really great people and it was fun doing that. It was. I doorbelled a lot. Not just for me. Then, when I ran, when I doorbelled for other people and I put up signs for other people, others who were running for office. In those early days, before so much, so many things have changed. You would file, see who would be the first, who were there first to file for office for where your name would be on the ballot.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh really!

**Senator Franklin:** Or there were times, in early days, too, prior to that, we would go and sleep at the, we would sleep at the, I want to say the Audi —, not the Auditor's. What was it? At the, because everything was first. Boy how time flies! It used to be downtown in those early days and then they built the annex. But downtown, we would go and take all night. It'd be almost like a sleep-over.

**Ms. Nimura:** Like in front of the office? In the vicinity or?

**Senator Franklin:** No, insi — . You can't be ..

**Ms. Nimura:** Inside?!

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, the inside! Early.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really!?! Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** Yes. To see who [Laughter]... Oh, it was, it was re-

ally fun. It was fun. And then early in the morning, and then, of course, there was the newspaper and then the thing would be in print. And it was just where people just got together and then, we see the kind of stuff that goes on now.

Um, when I was Vice Chair and then, oh what's his name? He's a retired judge now. He was Chair and I was Vice Chair and Ben Bettridge was the Chair for the Republican Party and, oh! Why can't I think of his name? As well, he's a good friend, can't even think of his name. He was Chair and I was Vice Chair and we had an office, Democratic offices and stuff was down, was on Broadway at one time. Then the Democratic office was on Broadway and then University of Puget Sound Law School was here. And so, it was working. It was going in but, as I said, back to when I ran the first time, it was when people lined up early or they stayed over, week before then, we would stay over and...

**Ms. Nimura:** Just to file.

**Senator Franklin:** And, yeah... It's nothing like it's compared to now, at all, because when election time came and people were campaigning, it was not just fun but it was people really getting together. It was the social event. We would have picnics in the park and there would be candidates, but my run then, back to me.

I keep going to those old days when we'd have the picnics and people would come and the kids would be out and we would, in that first run I also had to raise money. I did a block party and then I did, I did a block party, and I did other fund raiser. It was not, in 1990, it was not like today where you have the cost of running for office today is like terrible, like terrible. But the big thing was, of campaigning, was the door, was the doorbell. And then, of course, the person who was running for the office as I was, because now, a time that I had been to Olympia was just that, I went that one time.

**Ms. Nimura:** Which time?

**Senator Franklin:** In order to speak...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh.

**Senator Franklin:**... to the person who, P. J. Gallagher, who was not

going to run. And, but, and that had been my, actually, my first trip ever to the Legislature.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! Really?

**Senator Franklin:** No, I had. All the work that I had done politically and volunteering and everything. It was all done here, locally, but it would also be for those who were serving, um,- Oh, I take that back that I hadn't been. No, take it back. Take it back. That's not true. It's because I'm forgetting that I was with the Democratic Women. And then I was a Director for the Region Seven, Democratic Women and we would go to Olympia. I'd had forgotten about that. And so, no. I had been, on other occasions with Democratic women to Olympia. And, but when I ran for office, the person who was my opponent [Gordon Mandt] had his gas station. I was a patron for his gas station and we were friends.

But, what I was going to say, I had never really done any advocacy or visit any legislative office for advocacy or knew, you know, was involved. I was involved with the Women and we were very much involved with also supporting the Democratic Party and working to get Democrats elected. So I was involved, very much involved, with that but with my opponent and he then, in turn, gosh, when he ran I said, "How he could run for office because he's never..." I said, "I've never seen him in the Twenty-..." [Laughing]

But his wife then, was on someone's staff in Olympia and Gordon, Gordon Mandt, was his last name. And he had the, where the gas station now is, right off the freeway on 72nd and I always had bought gas from him. So we were friends. And so but then, then I won the primar —, I don't think there was a primary. I don't quite recall what happened. But when I won, the night of the election we always had watch parties. It would be at a different hotels. Or, like I said, election season was always, it was Party, it was fun. It was doing all the things that brought people together. And so, for that first run, when I won, we had a party. We did have a party watch at the motel. It had a different name. It's right off the freeway on Tacoma Mall Boulevard, right off Seventy-second. It has a different name now, had another name before.

When it came in that I had, I had won I couldn't believe it that I,...

[Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** You couldn't believe it?! Really?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, you know, I know I was working to win but that first win and it comes and it says you won that was really, after so many ballots came in, and it said, it was almost like, you know, you look back and think. It was almost like a daze or something. I don't know. You're working to win but then when you win, it's a whole different story. After you win it's a whole different story. So that was that first night. That 1990, that first run, then everybody was jumping up and down and the person who was there. He was one, he left the Olympia and became our mayor, one time. Oh.

**Ms. Nimura:** Ebersole.

**Senator Franklin:** Ebersole. Yeah. He was, and so after I won, then I went down [to Olympia] and he took me around. And, yeah, showed me the different places, introduced me to different people and then was off from there. But yeah, Brian Ebersole, because at that [time] because he lived, right off Pacific. He lived in the district before and he was one of our representatives.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Can you remember what was going through your mind that, when you, when you arrived in Olympia knowing that you'd been elected?

**Senator Franklin:** I could, you know, after knowing that I was elected and winning and people congratulating, you know, I'm thinking back. I don't think it really sunk in until I went to Olympia. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Until you went to Olympia.

[00:49:59] **Senator Franklin:** Until I went to Olympia. I don't think it really sunk in until I went to Olympia that, that I had won because it, it's, how should I say it? It just... I don't know, probably because I had been, I had lived in the community for so long and I had been involved in some of every, and people then told me, "Well," somebody told me, "Well, we knew you would eventually run for office." I said, "Well you knew more than I did." I didn't. Because I, it never really, it never really

dawned on me that, it was never something that, like people said, “I’m going to run.” “I’m going to do that.”

It was never like that, it wasn’t like that because my, all of my [work] was all about local government. It was never anything about ever going to Olympia because Olympia was just another place. It was always just Pierce County and Tacoma. And, then I knew I had volunteered and supported Wayne Ehlers, there were from the seventies, all the folks from the, back from the seventies, that I had worked with and supported. And people who I knew. And then when we did phone banking, like we would, somebody would, you know, volunteer. We would phone bank from their offices in the afternoon. In the evening, they would loan their office where we would be able to go and phone bank for different candidates. And so, I actually, sort of knew all these people.

Then in Puyallup, I would go, in the 25th [District], we would, there were functions there. People were just really close and really worked together and I just had a lot of friends and a lot of people who really were very, very active. It’s not like it is today. It was more a camaraderie type, affair. People, today, seem so divided and not together. This, from the, up until, even the nineties, that people, and before, when we had poll voting, people were just, they just —, and we worked. We would go to, I would go to Kitsap County and I doorbelled in Kitsap County for a friend who was running.

But, no, when I won that first time around, and people were very, I don’t know, they were more excited, I guess than [Laughter], than I was. By that time, because, see, too, I was still working. And so then I thought, I said I’d take some time after to campaign but I was still really gainfully employed, nursing, which I really loved to do. Then after I started and went to Olympia and saw all the committees and the work that was going to be, it would be involved with that I saw that I could not, it would not be possible for me to do that. But that first run, yeah. And then the time went by so, that two years went by so fast, and the next thing I knew it was...

**Ms. Nimura:** Time to run again?

**Senator Franklin:**... time to run again. So every two years you’re run-

ning for an office.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right. I read this story, I think it was in the News Tribune, about the time that everyone, where they played a prank on you. Do you remember this?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, yeah. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Can you tell me about this?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, was that... [Laughter] With my first bill?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, your first bill, right.

**Senator Franklin:** With my first bill, yeah. It was in the House of Representatives. And usually, when you're a freshman they don't give you any sort of a major bill or anything, you know. It's all in a teaching mode. And I told Brian, when I went, that I don't really want to do any legislation. I just want to learn and I don't want to... So what they will do is they will give you, they'll give freshman bills.

And I can't recall what that bill was, and they always seemed to be thinking of some trick on someone so, anyway, and I'm learning now. And you're a freshman — well, the more seniority you get, the closer you are to the podium, you know, so I'm all way in the back. And then, in the Class of '90, there were, oh, quite a lot of us. There were guys from Eastern Washington that was on it. So it came up, your bill, and I'm, you know, learning the process and here is the, the name of the bill up front. And, of course, when it, call the bill up, and I'm still in a, learning this procedure, and they'll tell you what is going on. So my bill came up, and so I, it was just a little bill, was nothing controversial. And when I made my speech and then I urged them to pass the bill. And then, oh, he was a judge, he, and now he's retired. I talked, sent him a note the other day. He got up and spoke against me. They voted against the bill, got up and voted against the bill. And I turned around and I looked, "They can vote against?" [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** "They can vote against my bill!?"

**Senator Franklin:** I was shocked. I was, you know, and then, of course, they went through the procedure... [Laughter] They had all...

got up and... Huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** They had all voted against your bill at first, right? They all voted against at first, right? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Oh yeah! They all, they all voted against my bill. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** What were you thinking then? Do you remember?

[00:57:39] **Senator Franklin:** I was just shocked. Because I, it was because I was just, this was not a controversial bill. And, and, of course, it was not, it was, I don't know whether if it was a dredge bill. I don't think it was a dredge bill. It was some little bill they had given me and, oh my gosh. Why? I'll think of his name for the next time. He was, he was the head of it. He was funny and we laugh about it still today.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, that is so funny. Oh, let's see, it was...

**Senator Franklin:** Can't even think of...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, it was about liquor establishments.

**Senator Franklin:** What was it?

**Ms. Nimura:** It was about liquor establishments and minors. Like who could go into liquor establishments.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, was that?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, that was it.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, okay. Okay. Did it? He lives in Seattle. He left and ran for judge and became a judge.

**Ms. Nimura:** Mike Heavey.

**Senator Franklin:** Mike Heavey! Yeah! And he'll tell, we called him Mike "Heavy." We'd tease him. Yeah, it was Mike Heavey who was the head of it, who pulled a stunt. [Laughter] He was the head of the one who pulled the stunt. And, yes, and they all voted against and I looked up on, like it's on the wall, over the names, and everyone had voted. And I thought, I don't know, I was shocked I guess. And then, yeah, then they all changed their vote. And it was a big joke. It was. Everybody

thought, they were laughing there. That was really funny. Yeah, that was that first bill. Yeah, but that for, and then, of course, I asked to be on four committees. So I was on four committees. I got the big, got on four committees, because: Housing; Local Government was one; Health Care was one, um, I can't think of the others. Labor, Commerce, Labor and Trade was one. So that's three.

**Ms. Nimura:** That's, no, that's four.

**Senator Franklin:** And there's another. Yeah, so that really and those were committees that would have issues that I would really be concerned with. And so it was a busy first term, but, but it was fun. And then, of course, then Pierce County then had all the leadership. All the leadership was in Pierce County, I think, just about then.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** All right. So committees.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah because over in the Senate, the leadership was from Pierce County and then in the House, leadership was in Pierce County. So Pierce County, it was in a good position.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** It was in a very good position. Yeah, and then came up second run. And then during the interim was when, too, because we were having some of the same, have the same issues today that we had then, housing.

When I looked and I said, well, the state had put a lot of money into housing. However, I didn't see that it had any policy as it related to. And that's why, during the interim, we worked on housing policy and that was the issue. One of my first bills. Then I prime sponsored that. Since I then went to the Senate, they had asked about where the bill, what I wanted to do with the bill. So I wanted the bill to be able to follow me over to the Senate and that's where, because I'd prime sponsored it, it was my House (bill). So that's the bill now that we have, which is the Washington State Housing Policy Act.

Because we were having issues with people who are living in mobile homes. And a lot of the homes were old. And, of course, also they were, the state had been giving money to help people to move. And what has happened? They were buying up these mobile home sites and people had to relocate. So that was an issue and then around the mall, people were living in mobile homes because that was the most reasonable homes. And that's how people, where people were living. So we had a lot of those.

We have them now and a lot were like in, is part of the 29th [District] now, but would have been the Lakewood area. We had in Tacoma and around the mall and also in that area that they've built up, those were low-income homes, and all of those units were taken away. Then, as I doorbelled [unintelligible] for housing, and I'm saying well-- and there were a lot of homes up for sale and vacant in the nineties when I drove it.

Then when I met with the business people, housing, and I says, "Why is it that all these houses are up for sale and empty? Why can't people be living in those?" And then they would say, "Well, because of how, what the process they'd have to go through," and the funding or all of that. And that was in the nineties. And there were all kinds of vacant homes and homes for sale. Which didn't make, it made absolutely no sense. And then, of course, too, with the housing what was happening back then when they de-institutionalized. And then they said that those people who were coming from institutions were going to be cared for in the communities. And then, I remember very clearly, when they did that, when I said, in fact, he was a psychologist and I said, "If the money does not follow the people in need, then there are going to be problems." Which we're having.

So when the de-institutionalization took place before Tacoma had its rebuild. There were housing and homes where these people who were living and then also the Health Department had nurses who would go in and check on them to make sure they were taking their meds. And then there were clinics. There was a clinic up on MLK, which is gone, when the early de-institutionalization and then there were many. There were other services which, in those early days, that they got. Then as things change and we'd start seeing people walking downtown with no shoes, becoming homeless — because those housing then were being taken

away. And they had housing. One hotel downtown was from housing and there were other places.

A lot has taken place since the eighties and the nineties in regards to housing that has really increased the whole problem because then the drugs thing started coming in, with the social issues. First it was amphetamines, where they were, we had issues dealing with the amphetamines, when I first went to Olympia in 1990, where they were cooking them and getting them into the walls and people who had housing would say that you know, it became an issue for them because then they would have to go through the whole process for cleanup. So there's so much that has taken place since the eighties and the nineties and it's really kind of depre — but really we have lost, and, in the housing, which we have lost, they have not regained.

And, of course, Salishan. Now it's the new Salishan, which is, really, a model for what they did, would be a model for the nation, for what they did with Tacoma housing, is, those initial housing then were built [during] World War Two, and, of course, they were supposed to have been gone years ago, and they kept using them for low income housing. And then, in the seventies, right on Yakima [Avenue], they quickly built those housing, threw up some housing, in a sense. So those eventually are gone. And so they're rebuilding with new housing. And when the malls came and all the businesses left from downtown and downtown literally, sort of died, and now it's coming back. With the rebuilding now everything has changed. It's something else. So there's a loss of housing there.

But in regards to social issues and housing people and the issues which now we are facing — when I would speak about housing, and pushing for more, and saying because the state had funding for rebuilding,... they would ask, well, it was a question that the builders and others would usually ask about, you know, where would housing go?

Because you don't put housing on contaminated land because that was another thing, that before we started really dealing with environmental issues, dumps and stuff were all around and then you'd find poor people and people of color in those areas, and so that was an issue. So, dealing with public policy in trying to deal with the issues and being elected and

going there for that first term and dealing with the issues. Now, to look back, and see that we're dealing with some of the same issues.

And my concern is people going in and bringing up stuff we tried to do then that they were against. Because you've got all kinds of things on [the books], mine had always been, is it already on the books? If it's on the books, then is it being implemented? Why create more laws? So when it comes, with housing, I was talking with some people. I said, okay, because there's a projection for growth so if you then implement and plan for the future, your problems would not be as great. So having been there and having worked on housing and having worked on health care and knowing the suggestions and knowing what we dealt with and hearing now that they might be trying to do some of the same things, and you may not have even have the resources anymore.

**Ms. Nimura:** How does that, how does that make you feel? That people are doing some of the same things?

**Senator Franklin:** It's because we set policy but we do not implement them. You do it for a few years but there's no sustainability. We had all kinds of things in Tacoma and Pierce County in order to help people who were looking for employment, who had mental issues, but the institutionalization that, where they would live and people to follow them and see that they took their medicines and having the clinics. And it's all gone.

And because there's the sustainability, because a lot of that is support, supported by taxpayers' money. And the way we pay for services in this state is an issue because we go through the up and down market. We don't have any type of stable funding. And so that becomes the issue of when they says, income tax does not pay for everything but it gives you some stability, and so that's what they say about Washington, no income.

But then they piecemeal and policymakers try to plan for the future but the taxpayer, in turn, a lot, what I say, don't quite understand the budgeting process and where the money comes from and where the money goes and how you get it. We went through the same problem with the education, the same issue dealing with education.

**Ms. Nimura:** So you remember that student that I introduced you to the breakfast? That's my research assistant? I asked her if she had any

questions for you and this is kind of a nice way to insert that because she wanted to know about your long support of a state income tax. You raised it every year for nine years, right, in the Senate. And she wanted to know about its impact on working, working-class families especially, because she didn't quite say it this way but I think she saw this as an additional burden, right? Or, she didn't say unfair, but I think that was the thinking around it. Like how can a state income tax help working-class families?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And see what, how, the bill that I was pushing for years had come out of a study, it wasn't something that just flew up. The committee had taken it and studied and came up with it because so part of the taxes, because the state had taxes, [those] would be cut. Part of the tax that the state has, that part, that would be reduced at the state level. And an income tax then so you wouldn't be having one burden on top of the other.

An income tax, how it would affect everybody because everybody was being paid, taxes based on your income. If you didn't have any income, you wouldn't be paying an income tax. And so that would be, that, then, of course, if you have paid, at that time, now with the change that has taken place, it may not happen, you would have been able to [have] taken that from your state, from your income, from your yearly. When you file your income tax. Your state income tax, you would be able to take that off. And so there it would not have impacted. It would have been a fair tax for all across the board.

And would not, right now, what is unfair for low income and working people, is this consistent tax, tax, tax, tax. A tenth here, a penny here, a penny there. And that person who goes to buy groceries who is low income or whether you are, it doesn't matter because you're going to simply be paying the same amount. You get no reduction. And so right now, with sales tax, which is really one that is a burden for poorer people is because you, locally now, it's just about ten cents. When we lived in Colorado, I didn't even know. You didn't even feel it. You paid, because everybody paid according to their income. And that money brought some stability and would pay for the services. And so, with the way we are,

**Ms. Nimura:** In Washington.

**Senator Franklin:** we are, like we went into recession, it depends on where, who's working and who's not. If the economy is good and you've got a job, then we had, the state has money. But, if the economy's not good, and we don't. And we've gone into several downturns and when we go into those downturns, then that means you do not get, the teachers don't get raise, the education that we said we had to fully fund so we had never really fully funded education.

So you had to, if you, and then if we have a savings, say the state has the savings account, then we have to take in order to, because our law says we have to balance the budget. We cannot put it off, like on the national level, and being indebted. We have to balance the budget, every two years. So, for her question, it would have been, uh, and we had done the study also. That it is one that is, uh, it's rare in the not having it. And the way we fund the government, it becomes an albatross around poor people's necks. But, so why I pushed it, so, with her, it's based on the study and based on how it would even out. And, because some parts of what the state, because you do have, the state has its tax and you have that, so x amount that goes to the state, certain money would, a percentage, would be reduced for that. And I have to go back and look at all of the details but it was through a, it was a study.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right. Was it a bi-partisan study?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Of course it was.

**Senator Franklin:** Everything we do is. Uh huh.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. “[Unintelligible] My taxes.”

**Senator Franklin:** But if you did that, if you had income tax and continue, put the, continue to put the sales tax on top of it. That is where the problem comes. You have to have, it's like your home, your home budget. You need to, have to have some type of stability but if you don't have it. It's just like you when you work, you put some money away, and when hard time comes and you spend it,... then, when you spend that

money, and if you don't have a job or, you know, it, everything goes, pfft,... haywire.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Well, we are at twelve-thirty, so a little so later than break. So let's do a little break. We're at an hour and a half out so let's do a little break, a kind of stretchy kind of break and go from there.

**Senator Franklin:** Funding. State funding.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. That must be the ongoing discussion, all the time, for our state, right? Is funding. I know, I was in California before and we had a state income tax and when I, when we came up here we were like, "Why do we not have a state income tax?" It really, you know, surprised us, right? That we didn't have one.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, like I said, in Colorado, we had, when we lived in Colorado, and never even paid it any attention.

**Ms. Nimura:** You got to go to..., you got to go to the national conventions too, right?

**Senator Franklin:** The national, um, yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** To the DNC?

**Senator Franklin:** Uh, national convention, '73. No. '76. '88 and 2008. I was a delegate but then I went as observer. Los Angeles, San Francisco and, um, oh, there was another one. I went to three. Chicago, I think was the other one.

**Ms. Nimura:** What was the 2008 [convention]? How did that feel?

**Senator Franklin:** 2008 in Denver? Oh that was really, that was, that was awesome.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. The one in '73, '76 with Carter was really great too.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh yeah?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, that one was great. Atlanta! They were all, they were all really good conventions.

**Ms. Nimura:** Is it just get to be around that many folks?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, my gosh. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah but because see, each state, if you like. Washington has its delegation. What they will do is have receptions or parties for different states. So there were all kinds of events that was going on. And then, of course, the meetings. The convention will convene, in the evening.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, because during the daytime they're probably having, like, maybe committee meeting or... So they had, yeah, it was fun. Was worth it. '76 was Jimmy Carter. That was Reagan, because the eighties was Reagan for eight years.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** And then the one, then I went to the one for, as an observer, when Mondale and Ferraro, see? When they were on the ticket and then, uh,...

**Ms. Nimura:** Reverend Jesse Jackson. Right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, and that was Jackson and the Massachusetts governor, Dukakis I think, was during that time. And then, of course, Chicago was Bill.... Bill, um,...

**Ms. Nimura:** Clinton?

**Senator Franklin:** Clinton. The Clintons! Yeah, and then, of course, then the Clintons, [Bill] didn't come but [Hillary] came when he ran for re-election because that, I had just gotten elected, and she came campaigning and was in Tacoma. And we took, yeah, in fact, there were buses. We took bus through Pierce County and went through Kitsap and down to, I can't think of the other because I remember coming back on the train or something. Then the night that Carter got, was defeated, he was here. He was in Seattle for a conference, not conference. He was making that last-minute round. So he came out. And, who else came? Now they sort of pass us by. Maybe it'll start again.

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, let's see. We have some time left so first of all, I

want to think about what made you go from the House to the Senate? And if you remember that whole series of events. What made you make that push? From the House to the Senate?

**Senator Franklin:** From, from the House to the Senate? How was it, you're asking?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, as I had said earlier, that I had said to the leadership that I did not, and to others who were asking me about, because a lot of things, they were having their conversation, and I really wasn't, really paying that much attention to it... I got a call at home that Slim, our Senator, had died. And, which I didn't even know he was [sick], I don't know if anybody [knew], because he was sort of a person to himself and so didn't know even if he might have been sick or anything. And then, of course, in Olympia, that first term and he was there, you know, because everybody say, "Slim! Slim! Slim!"

Slim was such a conservative, they would just, [Laughter] He was really, but he was good. He was the working person, working person's person but I would go over. I'd go over to the Senate and work with him. And in his office, he'd have books stacked high on his desk. Just Slim, Slim. And he had been a mayor, of course, too, at one time. So when they called and said that and then asked me, "What's you...?"

But, as I said to leadership, I would not go over to the Senate unless my primary committee was the Health Care. And, of course, I went back. And, of course, when, then we went because this was just before going in the session. So we went back into session so I had to go back to the House because I had been elected to the House. And so then, a lot of the people, quite a, a few of the people who I had served with in the House, they had run for the Senate so they had won their seat so I joined them as an appointee.

And so they said that, "Yes" that I would be on the Health Care committee. And usually if you are going to fill an unexpired term, what they do, you would be on the committee that that person was on but Slim hadn't been. So then I ended up on, um, not Environmental, Fisheries,

what committee did they call that, it wasn't Local Government. I ended up on some other committees but I did get the Health Care committee.

When I went over and, of course, Lorraine Wojahn, too, had been in. And so, it was funny. So that was the year that the Caucus was controlled by women. That was the year of the woman. That was one in which, it was really, it was fun. So she was the one, of course, when you had to be sworn in and she was the one who, conducted, walked with me down the aisle to be sworn in. And so that was awesome.

And to be in the Senate. Oh, gosh. That was, that was one that I had not expected. So that was fun. And then with colleagues who I had served with in the House who had, also were there. And then Marilyn Rasmussen who also was there. She was in the Senate. Lorraine Wojahn was in the Senate from Pierce County. So that put, three of us from Pierce. Three women. Lorraine, Marilyn, I who were in the Senate. Yeah. Who were Democratic women. And then Shirley Winsley, she was a moderate Republican but I had worked with her. Yeah, so it was fun.

**Ms. Nimura:** [My research assistant] Zandria also wanted to know, and we'll get into this a little bit here and probably a little bit next week, if you experienced discrimination as a woman, as an African-American in the Legislature?

**Senator Franklin:** I didn't really have any of that. Actually I didn't. I did not really deal with that. I wasn't treated any differently than anybody else. At least I didn't see it. I didn't observe it. Like for me, I just approached everybody and I crossed the aisle with everybody else and waving at everybody [Laughter] and in the Caucus and stuff. No.

Like I said, because it was a new environment and, I needed to learn and I needed to know how people really operated. How things were done. Because, too, the Senate is a sort of a different body in itself. They did different, things were different. They were more decorum and stuff in the Senate than it was like in the House, the House itself. The Senate, just to be in the Senate, it's the decorum, is how things are done. It's orderly and, but the leadership was good because the Chair, the, at that not, um, the Majority Leader lived in, um, Puyallup. Oh gosh, what was? I can't think of his name. He left. When he left the Senate, he went to

the Education Department or higher ed or somewhere. I can't. I'll think of his name later on or you can see who the Majority Leader was in nineteen-ninety three.

**Ms. Nimura:** Ok, I can find that.

**Senator Franklin:** And so, it starts with an "m." Why can't I think of his name? I want to say Maxie. Mar-, no.

**Ms. Nimura:** I'll look it up.

**Senator Franklin:** No, but he, it was, and so it was no, there was no different. And everybody was very, they were respectful of each other and serving on committees then...

**Ms. Nimura:** So even being, being one of the few or the only people that were people of color?

**Senator Franklin:** and being in Caucus —, oh and, well, yeah. There was, who was there? Another nurse.

**Ms. Nimura:** This Eileen Cody?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm?

**Ms. Nimura:** Eileen Cody?

**Senator Franklin:** No, no. She, she and I were in the nursing association together. Margarita Prentice and I, we knew each other from WSNA days and she'd been very active in nursing, in the community.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh!

**Senator Franklin:** But when I had questions, I asked questions. And they were all very, very respectful and great. I had, I had really no, I had no issues with that at all.

**Ms. Nimura:** I did find that one thing that seemed to come up when it was another senator, right? who basically said the n-word in a, in a committee meeting or something.

**Senator Franklin:** Right.

**Ms. Nimura:** But then he apologized to you later on, right? Can you

remember that kind of thing?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, he was on the Health Care committee. I think eventually when the Senate flipped, then he became the Chair of the Health Care committee. He was from Yakima.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Eastside, right, yeah, the eastside.

**Senator Franklin:** And oh, it was that tense, and was, and then, of course, in the House of Representatives, Campbell. Tom Campbell.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** He's a chiropractor and he lived out in Pierce County. And I think he was on the Health Care Committee. And I don't remember, because, whether that year, because at one time, no, whether the House had an even split one year and so they had to have co-Chairs but I don't remember if that was one of the years or not, but Campbell, he and Campbell, apparently got into some type of an argument while in a meeting and he mentioned something about a nigger in the wood pile. I had no idea what in the world was going on. So I was in the office and so he came in and was apologizing. I was saying, "What?" about something he'd said.

And so, in fact, he came into the office. I didn't really know what. Things – anything that happens on the campus in Olympia, it spreads like wildfire before you even know it. And so, anyway, I did not really [know] what in the world was really going on. He apologized. Then it went, it blew up. Then there were people who were out in the community calling for his resignation. What it worked out was that he apologized on the floor. I had worked with him and I knew him.

There were other people, Margarita had worked with him and others who had known him to be one who really pushed and worked because she with the farm workers over in eastern Washington. And that was one of the big issues too, dealing with the farm workers and how they were being treated and income and all of that. So Margarita was on Health Care committee and she, of course, had worked with him and they didn't know him, know him to have [been] a racist, or saying anything like that. And so he apologized on the floor about it. I barely remember

that. Yeah, so that that was the only incident that I ever knew anything about or, or anybody ever having said anything or being disrespectful.

Everyone was always really [nice], because to me, was, like I said, everybody, it didn't matter. Whether it was somebody who was out there at night or evening cleaning the floor or vacuuming or the doorman who was there or when I came in, they were all the same to me...even at the gate when I came in to park the car. And so it was, well, maybe because maybe it was me that... [Laughter] and my hair was not exactly white yet! It was still black and gray.

But they were always [great], except there was one. And it was not anything dealing with race. In fact, it was the Congresswoman now from Eastern Washington, who's in Congress, [Cathy] McMorris. Her name was different. I sat on the Health Care committee and I think that at that time, I don't know whether the Republicans controlled the House or not, but we had a joint committee on health and she was Chair and she then, I asked the question and I persisted on whatever the question was and she gaveled me down. Everybody was just really upset. They could not believe that you gaveled the Senator down and she was hurt. And for that, that was, that went like wildfire too, but it was dealing with an issue in a committee hearing that I pressured her on. And I don't, I don't remember what issue was but that was the only other... time that. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay. That's good.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, people, yeah, they always, they, in fact, I was asked that question at a meeting recently, yeah. They said, "You were the only one?" "How was it?" I said,... "They didn't, I wasn't treated any differently." But I guess they, because maybe they figured, well, if I did, she'll probably get back at me. But I always treated everybody with respect and they always treated me with respect. And it was the same in the committee hearings. It was every,

**Ms. Nimura:** On the floor? All of that?

**Senator Franklin:** Um hmm. It was out on the, crossing campus, different functions, it was

**Ms. Nimura:** But did you also feel a certain pressure to speak on and

to African-American issues, right? Like your first resolution, right? was [honoring] Thurgood Marshall?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, my commitment was to social justice and to health care and the ones who had been locked out, shut out, didn't have a voice, African-Americans, Latinos, poor people. And that's the way I saw it. And being, like I tell people, I know who I am. You know? And I know what the issues are, and I've seen it and I've worked with the rich, the poor, with people of all colors. And so with my vision in what I know and what I know we could do better was when I went with. Like when I doorbelled and I looked at people and they would speak of issues. It would be senior citizens, the senior citizen issues. I worked on that for senior housing and so it was social justice. And it's based on the principles of which the country is supposed to have been founded.

And that's what I operate on plus the fact that, as I said earlier, based on my faith and my religion that if you, in turn, says that you are a Christian and you believe in, that you are supposed to treat people or you're supposed, and I don't want to be my brother's keeper or my sister's keeper but I want, in order to treat her, treat him or her fairly and see that they are cared for. And for the least among us, the kids. If the children needs care, if those who are infirmed, if they call it "ill," or need care or if you're without housing. Or are you going to look at me and say, because you are black or you are a woman, you can't come into my clinic? There's no such thing.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. Well that's exactly a good place to stop because it's one o'clock.

**Senator Franklin:** Hey, I know [unintelligible] on the dot. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, twelve fifty-nine but I was like, oh, we can't. We just can't keep going with more questions because we'll just keep going forever. [Laughter] So, I will take pictures of what we've got here and scan those.

**Senator Franklin:** All righty.

**Ms. Nimura:** And, yeah, we'll pick up at the Senate next time and being Senate President Pro Tem.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh yeah. That's the gavel.

**Ms. Nimura:** Our next step. Yeah, the gavel.

**Senator Franklin:** The fast gavel as they called me.

**Ms. Nimura:** Did you like doing the gavel?

**Senator Franklin:** That was fun. Everyone says, the fast gavel.

**Ms. Nimura:** The fast gavel?

**Senator Franklin:** Well I got called by the opponent that, "She brought the gavel down too fast!" [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** "She brought the gavel down too fast?"

**Senator Franklin:** But, because yeah, the President, my, because, but the President of the Senate, he and I were, he, oh, he was so good. The Gov —, Lieutenant Governor, he is just remarkable. That I worked with and under. He, not only was a great tutor but just, and then as I became more, I performed so much more, um, in twenty-,... I left in twenty-ten, in twenty-ten, twenty-nine because at first I was Vice and then I became the President. And then as he became more comfortable with me, I was,... and I'd be whipping out those bills. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, I can't wait to talk about it.

**Senator Franklin:** Oooh, my god, I laugh now but you know, when you, when we have cutoff and the bills have to be after floor by a certain time by five o'clock.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. You got to go, right?

**Senator Franklin:** But not only that then if bills are stuck on the calendar and people want their bills... out and across, sent across the, to the other house.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Right.

**Senator Franklin:** You gotta work fast and they put it in front of me. I don't know how to control it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Would it be helpful for me to bring any of your files from

your Archives on these issues? On the issues that I mentioned. Would that be helpful?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, that would be helpful. That would be great.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay, I'll see what I can do. I'm not positive how, because I'm going to go to Olympia next Wednesday to shadow Jeanne Darneille to see what life is like in session for a little bit. And I will see if I can make some time to go and take some pictures of some of the files that we had going there because one of the things I wanted to know, right? was, uh, you know, what was the insider baseball that you had going. How did you, uh, how did you get some of these things done? Right? So that will be,

**Senator Franklin:** How did I got some of those things?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, how did you get these things done, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, working, yeah, there? In Olympia?

**Ms. Nimura:** That's right.

**Senator Franklin:** Making the first, making the best contacts I can.

**Ms. Nimura:** Ohh, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** No, but really, you can't do it. You have to have supporters on the outside too. You really have to, you have to coordinate it. Yeah, we'll talk about it.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, now there, you know, strategy, right? I'm just, part of the thinking, is that I'm thinking about, part of thinking about with our, our audience here is that, that group of legislators that just joined this year, right? That are the most diverse group our state has had. Right? So I'm thinking about those folks, you know, reading, reading this.

**Senator Franklin:** And a lot of them are new?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. A lot of them got a lot of learning to do.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. I mean, so we've got to help them out, right? That's part of what I'm hoping.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, they got a lot of learning. Oh, my gosh.

**Ms. Nimura:** How's it looking out there?

**Senator Franklin:** Snow.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, yes.

**Senator Franklin:** Covered.

**Senator Franklin:** Maria [Cantwell], I served one term with her.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. You did?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. She left to run for Congress.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh there's two of[?] Rosa Lee. Oh, how interesting.

**Senator Franklin:** And one term with, oh, the lady with the tennis shoes. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Patty Murray.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, she was in the Senate.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, she was?

**Senator Franklin:** Then she left when I was in the House.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. So you served then, under Locke and Gregoire, is that right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah Locke and Gregoire and Gardner...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** And, oh boy, from Seattle. He's deceased now. I served under four governors because Locke was in the House when I went. So it's Locke, Gardner, Gregoire, oh, gosh why can't I think? Names just leave me. So many to remember.

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, you still got a lot to remember.

**Senator Franklin:** He served, also, in Congress. He only served in the House, served for the governorship for one term because someone brought a charge against him.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, I should remember this too. Might have been before me though.

**Senator Franklin:** Then Rosellini was a good governor. He was, I think he was governor when we first came back. He was a great governor. Jay, I served with Jay one term too.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh you did? Inslee.

**Senator Franklin:** Um hmm, before he ran for Congress because he represented eastern Washington.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh really? I think I forgot this.... Wow. Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** That's [pointing to a brochure]... I love that little town. Georgetown [South Carolina]. It's a whole different,

**Ms. Nimura:** Is it different now?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, there, see, as I had mentioned, the stores, the back of them are built over this walkway behind the stores so that you can go into one park and do the walk, walk the water, and walk the walkway to the next and come out at the end at another park.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh nice. You just go from park to park basically?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm?

**Ms. Nimura:** You just go from park to park on this walkway?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh nice.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, it's a, it's nice town. I think it was, my cousin sent me an article recently that it was the most livable place. Is it something that came up that she sent about.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh really?

**Senator Franklin:** Small town. It's old, old, old. If you like history, really.

### **Interview 6: February 21, 2019 - Legislature (part 2)**

**Senator Rosa Franklin:** Yeah. Yeah. And then I was still trying to go back and I said, “If this had not happened, I would not have gone back and looked at all this stuff.”

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeeessss.

**Senator Franklin:** But I, there was a time-line, so I went on back and tried to find, found stuff that I didn’t even, I don’t know how it even got there but it’s uh

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, good. Yeah. Let’s see, all right. Let me do my little voice tag here. Today is February twenty-first, twenty-nineteen. I’m Tamiko Nimura and I’m here with Senator Rosa Franklin. We are at the Neeb Center at Pacific Lutheran University and today we are really going to dive into her career in the Legislature. Yet again. All right. I got to go to session yesterday with Jeannie Darneille.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, did you?! Oh!

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, I got to job-shadow her for the day.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh! Oh, good.

**Ms. Nimura:** It was quite a learning experience.

**Senator Franklin:** I’ll bet. I’ll bet. They had a busy day, huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah! How? How!?!... How do you guys have that energy to go through all of those meetings?! It’s a sprint.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, I don’t think, I don’t know. When I look back, when going through all this stuff, and I said, “I don’t even remember doing this.” [Laughter] I don’t remember even doing some of this stuff.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh my gosh!

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** I came home and I just, pretty much, just laid on the couch and I wasn’t even there for the full day, right. I was there for just maybe seven, six or seven hours. Right.

**Senator Franklin:** And it was committee hear-, it was committee?

**Ms. Nimura:** It was committees, hearings and then some floor actions and caucus. They made me promise not to take notes on anything but I got to go to the caucus and just kind of sit and observe.

**Senator Franklin:** Well good! And observe? Oh, that's good. That's good.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. It was great.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, well, oh gosh, that, it really never stops.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah! This was Jeannie, it was Senator Jeannie Darneille that I was shadowing, right. And she was kind of, you know, "Okay, so we're going to be in two places at once." And so we went to one meeting where she opened it and said, "Okay, I have to go to provide testimony on a bill across the hall and I'll be right back." [Laughter] And so I followed her across the hall and she did her testimony and we came back to the meeting and, you know, I sense that that was kind of what people did all day, right? You just kind of, you're here, then you go here; and you're here, then you go here. It's just so much.

**Senator Franklin:** Especially that they're going into the last days when they have to get bills out and

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, I think

**Senator Franklin:** And if they've got bills, you've got your own bills.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** And you want to get it out.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Yeah, I think it, so, I think this week is, like, way cut-off week?

**Senator Franklin:** Cut-off? Yeah, it is. And if it's not out by five o'clock on a Friday, [Laughter] you're in trouble.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, then it's, then it's done, right?

**Senator Franklin:** It's dead.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Unless it's something, certain bills can go past the cut-off. I think, if it deals with the budget, if I remember correctly.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** But, otherwise, just policy bills.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, yeah. They blitzed through a bunch in executive session. Yeah, I just, I had never seen that whole part of the process, really, up front and that close. But I'll tell you, to see the women, to see how diverse the Senate looked.

**Senator Franklin:** Looks more like it should be looking, huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. Yeah, it kind of did.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, that's great.

**Ms. Nimura:** Made me a little teary, you know? They're so young and so vibrant and you know. When, when I, So Jeannie introduced me and she said a little background. So they said, "Oh, this is this is Tamiko. Rosa Franklin has asked her to write her history," and the room went, "Oooohhh!" They were so, all these faces were so excited to hear it. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** They were, huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, they were and then someone, I don't know who it was [Senator Claire Wilson], but she pointed me to the poem that you had donated to, I guess, it's the Caucus.

**Senator Franklin:** It's still hanging on the wall?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. You read it, she said, on the floor?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I think I, uh, brought that in when we were really going through some... really...

**Ms. Nimura:** Rough times? Oooohh.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And I, I sat, like you're coming in, I guess, yeah, the Caucus Room would still be the same because they're on the west, their caucus is on the west side so when you go into the door and you look straight back, I would sit back by that window, back in that

sort of curved corner, with Marilyn, Marilyn, um, Rasmussen. So, then you met my senator, Steve Conway?

**Ms. Nimura:** Very briefly. [Laughter] I just kind of, you know, they just kind of brought me in and they said, “Can she come and stay?” and, uh, I think it was John McCoy? who had the gavel.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh yes, Senator McCoy.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, yeah, he

**Senator Franklin:** So who chaired the Caucus? Who is Caucus Chair now?

**Ms. Nimura:** Uh, Billig, I want to say. Senator Billig I believe.

**Senator Franklin:** Who?

**Ms. Nimura:** Andy. Andy Billig.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh. Andy. Oh, okay. Yeah, I didn’t know, he wasn’t there when I was there.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right, and then, but John, I believe Senator McCoy had the gavel...

**Senator Franklin:** But McCoy?

**Ms. Nimura:**... in front of him and they, he said, (deeper voice) “Well... it’s irregular.” But nobody objected otherwise so I got to stay. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I’m not, yeah. McCoy, he, he’s from, he’ Tula-, nah, now I don’t. Tulalip, right?

**Ms. Nimura:** I think so.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, he’s, he’s a Native American.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I’m pretty sure. McCoy, if he’s from, around Marysville?

**Ms. Nimura:** Ahhh, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, I don’t want to say the wrong one now.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay. I haven't, I didn't look him up so I...

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, McCoy. He is because he was, I think he was in the House when I was there.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really? Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, because he came over from the House.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, I see.

**Senator Franklin:** And so, and then, of course, Senator Conway took my place.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah... And, well, most of most of my colleagues [when] I was there, most of them are gone. Most of them. Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay. All right. Well, great, let's see. Let's, we have so much to talk about, I'm so excited. Let's see, I thought we would start by talking about how you set your priorities going in as you, as you entered, as you entered the Legislature, how you figured out – or maybe just knew – what you wanted to do, right? What you wanted to focus on?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, really my priorities, as I said, were really the things that I had stressed, as I ran, when I ran for office and it was really dealing with health care. The issues, we were having a lot of issues with cost of health care and people dealing with not really getting coverage or it was too high. And the individual, um, market, because by that time, now being in the Senate, it's now my last, because we're talking now about the nineties and going into two-thousand. And we had passed, of course, the health care act in nineteen ninety-three, Governor Lowry, under Governor Lowry. And so but the issue of healthcare and the cost, high cost and access to getting it, were one of the problems. So that was a priority for me.

Also, the affordable housing issue. Housing was a big issue at that time and dealing also with the children, kids, kids and truancy and issues of, um, kids not being in school when they should be. And then, of course, the, um, so those were some of my, really, priorities. And then, of course,

working, of course, with veterans, because I served on the veterans committee. And so with those going in, then, into the Legislature and really concentrating on those and those, as I said, we're like the committees that I had asked, really, to serve on. So those were my priorities.

But, of course, being not represent, not just the representative of my district, there were issues, really, statewide issues, too, that would be requiring attention. There were issues dealing with, you know, farm issues, Eastern Washington. There were, I think, there were transportation, much as we're having now, dealing with transportation, which would have affected us. And so, um, and in the environment, still, that is an issue still. And some of those same issues that we had we are really having them now.

And as I then became more knowledgeable and listening and learning more and, of course, you can't have just have policy because, once you have those and deal with those, is how are you going to fund them? What is really, how are you going to pay for them? And so really not knowing more about the budget, because we do have three budgets, and that's the general budget; the transportation budget; and the capital budget. So those three budgets. And so really, and I'm not the budget, I'm not the whiz on budget [Laughter] Mine was always dealing with the other end.

But really learning about how you're really [funding] these issues and as, then, because of our funding mechanism of how we pay for these services and becoming more knowledgeable – and then the downturns, because we have the periodic downturns which affect us and, of course, during those span of time, really, we were discussing, how are we really going to pay for these? Because if you do not have the money, if you've got a savings, you've got to take that or you can't fund other policies. So, really, those two became really top issues. And so

**Ms. Nimura:** What helped you learn? Could I ask you how you learned about the budget?

**Senator Franklin:** How? Because in Caucus you discuss those issues in Caucus. You discuss all issues in the Caucus. You deci-, and so you have your Chair of your, who are, budget wizards. Karen Fraser, who was a colleague, she served on capital budget, was there and she's a budget

whiz. And she ran for statewide office about, yeah, what's this? 2019. And she ran in twenty-, for lieutenant governor. She ran for lieutenant governor in our last general election, but she didn't, yeah.

At one period of time, we had Mary Margaret Haugen. And I think she was on Local Government. And then, I can't think of who else. We had chairs of Appropriations. And, of course, now I think, Mary Margaret was really good with Transportation. So we had chairs of these different "money committees" as I say, we'll call them and so those were discussed. Plus, not only hearing from them is really reading.

You get all of this information and so you really have to be alert as to really what is going on and how it's paid for. And then, if you've got policy which is going to re-, because they will ask, when you, when you pass, will, you will have what comes along with it is..., they will ask. I can't define, think of the word. I was going, how we go-, what kind of impact it will be.

**Ms. Nimura:** Fiscal impact.

**Senator Franklin:** Fiscal, yeah, so fiscal note. You always look at the fiscal note of what it's going to cost. And so if I have policy and it's going to cost money, then I have to really be on it to make sure that you're going to really get what you really are advocating for. So learning that. So it's all parallel learning and keeping on board of what is going on. And then, also, I think you have very good staff. And Annette Swillie was my Executive Legislative [Assistant]. And, of course I had others who came from college who would be there during the session. And so you have your staff, and then you've got the committee staff. And so, then if you don't understand, you don't know anything, then you have them to come and you meet and you talk with them. The communication is really so you can have that kind of this understanding of what is going on. Dealing with pennies and dealing with money and shifting of budgets and balancing – and our [State] Constitution is, we have to balance the budget.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** And so, fitting in with my priorities. So some of

the things that, you know, that I was advocating for, most things, cost money, and, so, they were on it. And when it came to, during that period of time, we were having, doing policy dealing with trauma centers. In Tacoma, there were a big sort of conflict between those who were providing the space so, and delivering the services, say the doctors, and with the hospitals. And we were bringing because only our number one trauma center, it's the only one, that's in Seattle, so within Tacoma itself. And that was in the early nineties, if I remember correctly, that there was conflict on the hill because there were two major hospitals on the hill. The doctors didn't feel, some didn't feel as if they were really getting the kind of support that they needed. During this period of time, also, we were having some issues with gang members coming up and, and things happened in a hospital where there was shine [?] that, well, a hospital treats everybody. Well, one hospital didn't want to take this one and the other one...

As that was going on, then, a reporter from the News Tribune called me because they really know that I was this gung-ho person on, Tacoma, on health care. And that had been, of course, a really major issue. So they call and they wanted to know, Well, what did I think? And what would I do about it? And, you know, it was something I said to them that, you know, I really wasn't that involved here. In Olympia, I knew who, what we were going through and what we were setting up in trying to create a statewide system. But what I would do is if they wanted me to become involved, I would talk with the people at the Medical Society, find out what the issues are, really get people to understand what was going on because we did not want to really lose the trauma care system. And there was a shared, between the two, and it was really taking place there. It was working in eastern Washington with the hospitals so why couldn't they really

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. A model.

**Senator Franklin:**... work together here. But I told him that I would really work with the Medical [Society], meet with them. So I did meet with them and so I found out what the issues were. And then I set up meetings within the city and the county. And I said I'd have these meet-

ings and bring people together in order to try to get the issues solved. And then, of course, at that time, we really, always, we had a lot of media coverage. It would be with the Tribune, the reporters with their,... photo...

**Ms. Nimura:** Photographers?

**Senator Franklin:** Photographers. Our photographers. And then there, you would have your news media, written media. And so it was not like today when you get maybe a skinny newspaper, that you have really good reporters. Really, it was an issue that was on the front burner. So I set up these meetings and I had several. And I recall, one was at the Tacoma Public Library. We had one at the Utility Building. And notice went out to the public because the public also was really involved.

I said to them, when we had these meetings, when we have them, that they really would need to leave their baggage on the outside. We really need to find out what the issues were and what they could have, what they already had agreed upon and what was really the problem. The trauma care is really very expensive. It's a very expensive care, as you know. So we went through those and it finally came up that, really, it would be sharing and how people work together, plus the cost of the trauma care and plus the fact the other, knowing that they, some of the hospitals, one hospital didn't really want certain people to come to them.

And then they were trying to say, "Let's, if we have that, then have him go to Seattle." And I said, "Well, with trauma care the earlier, you have to treat that immediately and you're not going to airlift somebody to...". So then I said to them also, "What happens? You travel the freeways. It's getting busy at that time. What happens if it's one of your family or somebody you know? You're not going to do, you want them to go. But so leave, you know, let us talk about what you, what needs, what needs to happen. If you already have agreement or something, we'll leave that out. But leave all that others out but let's come and really have a real discussion." And we had the input. And it became then, so I went to Olympia or what's the problem? Oh, it was cost money.

**[Quietly:]** And I got the problem, the money. And so the trauma system was saved so that is what technically is there. So that was really that was to be able to do those things you have to be able to, you have to have

people in the Legislature supporting you, and you have to have people, not only them supporting, but you have to have support from the outside and people have to really understand issues.

That was one of the early things, along with that one that we had mentioned earlier, is getting have the housing policy act to really happen. Plus, also, again, when you have your committees, you have [great] committees who really understand and know and have the information. And you can really bring people together to really discuss that. So that is, within that, going to the Legislature, and then that.

It really was health care, a priority. And as we then, in turn, moved on into the, uh, into the decade of the 90s, moving on into the 2000 issues continued, I think, during, too, during that period of time, we had an earthquake...

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. Yep. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** We were out of the building, out of the capitol, into that which was the former, I don't know what's that, if that building is still the library and so offices... and then I was moved and shared an office with another colleague and wasn't O'Brien Building, senators' building, our building there. So, there were

**Ms. Nimura:** Cherberg?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm?

**Ms. Nimura:** Cherberg? The Cherberg Building?

**Senator Franklin:** Cherberg, yeah. So we shared space, had to share, until of course we got the capitol all back and all...

**Ms. Nimura:** Were you there when the earthquake actually happened?

**Senator Franklin:** Mmhmm! Yeah. Oh, when, we were in Caucus.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! You were in Caucus?

**Senator Franklin:** We're in the caucus room. When we, this sort of thump! and people, in turn, well, you know, you thought it was something outside and then the building began to... so earthquake.

**Ms. Nimura:** Shake.

**Senator Franklin:** So everybody, so we were under the table. [Laughter] And so what, my coll-, I could hear one of my colleagues members, Mary Margaret. Ha! Praying [Laughter] After that, we were und-. Yeah, we were there. And after that then, of course, we were all evacuated from the building and no, there were no injuries or anything.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wow.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. That was, that was really something. And then, after the earthquake, we were there also when [we] had a very heavy snowfall.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, that's right. That's right.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, at that time. And so we had some really interesting things happen during the thing. And then, of course, the consistent, we're working for social justice and working in order to really [represent]...mine, too, being one that our Legislature doesn't really look like the people that it represents at all. There were things that I felt was not, groups of people were really not being recognized... so social justice was really a big thing for me to make sure.

When we had students, the kids would come from school, which they do now, they make visits, and then the legislators would come out, and talk with them. They'd have the little kids who would come and there were other people who would come. And I would always try to make it a priority because even to slip out, even out of meetings, or to come out from where, to go, to be sure to go in and talk with them. And I would talk with the kids and ask them questions and [tell them] to listen to the teachers, and [ask] what do they want to be?

I always would tell people that this place is yours. You own it, you know. I'm here to represent you but this is your house. This is really the people's house. To make them feel that it is not something that you stand off about. They need to know that this is theirs. This is, it belongs to the people. So my office became one too, where people would always come in. I said, "Come in and have fun." But having people to understand and they'd never been to Olympia. They, a lot of people, just felt they were

just something that really didn't fit them at all.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, well. It's designed to make you feel, kind of, small, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Uh, huh.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right? The architecture itself, right? It's not...

**Senator Franklin:** But the architecture, it is very awesome. In order to know that here, that you are in a historical place. It's really a seat of government. That you now have a really heavy responsibility, for whatever you do is going to affect a lot of people. And so it's not something that you take lightly but then it is not someone, thing, also, that I wanted people to understand just because I'm now your elected official that I am above you. I'm still the same person.

Dave Alger, who was at the Associated Ministries, who would say [to me], "the politician." I'd say, "No, not the politician. I'm always the people's person," [Laughter] I would always say it to him. Working on the issues and, but knowing, too, that even in Olympia and I know that the general public itself who does not really quite understand, do not trust. They trust their own but they do not trust. If I don't represent them, they don't trust me. Being able to build that and make that connection and so getting things done in Olympia means not just your district connecting but you have to connect with other people throughout. In my time there, I had people who would be calling me from eastern Washington.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And people who then had asked me to come over for, if they have a social event and African-Americans but not only African-, there were Latinos. I had a bill, and had worked with them on something. And one day, and I came in to look, and there was this huge thing of flowers. I think it was dealing with contracts and small business, and contracts. And this huge bouquet of flowers was there, in my office.

**Ms. Nimura:** Aww.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah! And notes. I'd always get notes and thank you's and little notes about "Thank you" and "Thank you for your time" on

**Ms. Nimura:** I saw a big file of invitations in your archives. Right? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** So did you go to a lot of those? You went to a lot of those events that you were invited to?

Yeah, if they were public events and people, yeah, I tried to make it. Yeah. I made a lot of them. I tried to make a lot of them in order to, you know, to recognize them. It was, and it was not easy. A lot of them I did not make but I liked that I made a lot. And I went to Eastern Washington for events, went to Vancouver, went to, not Marysville, north of Seattle events. They were, like, all over. Plus the fact, during that time, I was still, you know, go to convention meetings as much as I could. So I'd participate in those also.

When we were, had that earthquake, and, in order to have some fun, I then started the Red Hat Society. I brought in the Red Hat- [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Tell me about this! I don't know what it is.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. I brought in, because there's a Red Hat Society and so I said, Well, let's – and we had more women in the Legislature, in the Senate. And then, of course, they were also in the House. So the first time, so I said, "Let's have, let's do a Red Hat Day." So I think I was there, we did more than one but I don't remember how many there were. But I sort of made a sort of a yearly thing.

When we we're not dealing with issues and we have that break between the cut-off, moving toward it, and then before we picked up, after having those bills coming over from the House: between the break sessions. So with that we got red hats, the women got red hats. And the first one we did, it was '04, was during the earthquake, if I recall. Yeah. And one of the senators, he was ill and was at home with recovery. And, of course, that, by that time, we had brought in the TVW and so we were on TVW and when he saw us and he said and he came in, he looked, he said, "What in the world is going on?!" [Laughter] So we'd have this red [hat society], and then I would, I read the poem in regards to, that went with

**Ms. Nimura:** Ooohh. That red hat?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, with the red and...

**Ms. Nimura:** Did you read it to just to get people through, because of the earthquake? Or were there other political issues going on?

**Senator Franklin:** I thought, [sounding overly serious] “Well, the Senate is too stoic.” [Laughter] You know, how the Senate is supposed to be. Let us really set up a little bit of fun here. And then, of course, before how it had been primarily men. We had more women now and so but, in doing that with earthquake, that even brought in [more tension], because we were in cramped places and cramped spots.

And I think during that time, I think, we had had this police officer [Chief David Brame in Tacoma] who had killed his wife. We’ve got the Center named for her now. [Crystal Judson Family Justice Center] So it continued, and then, we connected with the House and had them [participate]. So we would run around. We had these red, so I had this, really, I had gone down. That was when [JC] Penney’s and stuff they were selling hats. So I had had this hat...It was just a beautiful hat. And then the other women had hats and we did that. And, of course, one of my colleagues bought that hat. I bought another hat and then there’s one hat I know I gave to the Archives.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really? There’s a hat?

[00:34:55] **Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Either at the Archives or the Historical Society one, along with stuff I gave, some stuff I gave them. Then, when we went back into the capitol, I remember having one in the capitol. And then what the men did by this time... [Laughter] They were funny. So they thought they’re going to have Cow Hat Day.

**Ms. Nimura:** Cow Hat Day?

**Senator Franklin:** Cow Hat, or, uh, how? Because when you wear the, um,... cowboy hats.

**Ms. Nimura:** Uh huh. Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** And so then, of course, [Laughter] so cowboy hat day and we would have. So you have this, so we had this sort of fun time in the capitol on the floor when we got up, you know, and people would

... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** You'd wear them on the floor?

**Senator Franklin:** And they're trying to be, the Lt. Governor would go through and we'd try to keep from laughing. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** It was just, it was fun. And there was, the guy who started was, with the, with the cow hats, I think, the cow hats, [Laughter] I call it cow hat because, as I was saying, I have one of the hats, cowboy hats now in my closet. He said, "The women had the red hats so we will have cow hats." [Laughter]

And then one of the last ones that we did, this, there was one guy who put on a red tie and then had a hat then had his picture taken with us in the Senate, on the floor of the Senate. So we had some fun days. There was one of our senators, female senators, "Why would anyone want to...?" They didn't feel as if they wanted to do that. And so I loosened them all up. [Laughter] And my other colleague who was with me, Rosemary, Rosemary McAuliffe, she was just... [Laughter] Let's step around. Let's have some fun. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** The Senate is more formal, right? Than the House, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah. When you're in the Senate. Yes, because in the House, you know, you're a little more... Not so stoic and formal. We had different groups [who] would come, but so there was the Red Hat Society [chapter that came]. So then we recognized them [in the Senate]. I remember one year when [we] had them to come and they sat in the seats and be recognized... there's a unit, I think [that] was from Puyallup or Tacoma. That was some of the fun along with [the serious] because it becomes really stressful and everything. You need to have some type of a break in order to not have all of that to deal with. So that was some of the fun things.

So during the period of policy making, meeting with your constituents, attending to the affairs, I say "the people's work," then in trying to get things passed, that you have to have your connection, with [people] on the outside. So any time that I had issues and we'd track issues or people who had talked to me, we'd make sure that we would notify them even.

Because we did not have a lot of the equipment that we have now. The availability, the technology was just sort of coming in. So we didn't really have all of the technology. So if there were certain bills out, then we would tell them, I'd have staff or there's staff to say this bill is coming up or this is, we're going have to make sure that they [knew]... We always had the hotline because one of the major thing was calling the hotline or calling others, say, back then. And so...

**Ms. Nimura:** So how many hours a day did you devote to that? To responding to constituents?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, I would be the last one leaving a lot of, many nights so it would be, oh, maybe nine o'clock that I would leave. Because, too, I would take [time] to make personal phone calls back for people who would call. Plus, catching up on issues and then, of course, as moving more into the twentieth century, and performing more [as] president pro tem, presiding over the Senate, and there were certain procedures. You have to read bills in, you have someone to read the bills and so then I'd stayed late, then I'd be early in the morning. The lieutenant governor, of course, he had other business or was gone. So then I would perform... Earlier on, I had been, an assistant pro tem, vice. But I wanted too that [this Vice President Pro Tem] would share, have time to preside. So I would share, give him the gavel and let him. And that was Senator... who served with me, because he was from Marysville. He was Asian-American. Why can't I think of his name? Senator... Shin!

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh! Paull Shin.

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm?

**Ms. Nimura:** Paull? Shin?

**Senator Franklin:** Paull Shin, yeah. Senator Shin. Reading in bills, performing. And that was really, and [unintelligible] and as we, like now, that they're going down to the cut off and bills get piled up and, of course, it's a whole process of how the bill reaches the floor, floor for a vote. And the first reading, they decide, they meet, the staff meets, [unintelligible]. Even though bills come out of committee, not every bill is going to reach the floor for a vote.

They go through the process of what the calendar is going to look like and then you, in turn, and performing, once it reaches there, then it comes before me, what bills we are going to come up. And then those bills come up. And then we have to call for the vote on it. And then you have the gavel and... [Laughter] Laugh. As I said one time it seems as if that the bills were coming up so fast and we were going through them and... uh, I got reported. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** You got recorded?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, what I say, reported. One of my colleagues from across the aisle told the Lieutenant Governor that I have to slow down a little bit. [Laughter] And so, Lieutenant Brad [Owen], Brad told me. I said, “Oh, I’m so sorry.” But... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** You just want to get stuff done, right?

**Senator Franklin:** People wanted their, you know, because the clock was really ticking away. But no, you have to really be respect — then I said, [Laughter] They looked at me [Laughter] They said, “What?!” [Laughter] That became, that became really, one of, really, sort of, the funnest joke.

**Ms. Nimura:** Like a running joke? That you were just, you were being really fast with the gavel?

**Senator Franklin:** It become almost like a running joke. [Laughter] Yeah, so then, there were you know, we really, we really had, there were fun moments. Like we’ll say, “My colleague from across the aisle.” [Laughter] But we, and we would have, I didn’t really control what bills were going to come up. There’s another group who decides what bills are coming. And then you have...

**Ms. Nimura:** As president pro tem you’re telling me? This is as president pro tem? You didn’t have control over what was coming?

[00:44:42] **Senator Franklin:** Hmm? No, I have no control over what comes up for a vote. I only have control over the process of getting it through. Presiding over when those bills come up, reading, getting the vote, how the vote comes in, and going through the whole problem, pro-

cedure, and what is next. And so when I preside over the senate in the morning, is, you call the Senate to order. And, of course, when you call the Senate to order then you have to read the names or who's excused and go through, there's a whole process to go through.

If you have a visitor in between, time, it's once I have that gavel, I'm in control of the Senate. So if there is someone who's a guest, who's there and you're going to recognize them, it's up to you if you want that, have that person to speak or not, you can recognize. It's a whole process of going through. And you, follow it, the rules, you know, right by the rules and get there and then you're looking, you're waiting people while, while they count and you're looking and seeing what's in the gavel, and you're really... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you remember when you were first elected President Pro tem? Do you remember getting that news?

**Senator Franklin:** When I got elected? Oh. Yeah, well, what we do after the election, after the general election. Then we have caucus before we go in for the election of new officers. And so you campaign for that office. But, and say oh you're up [?] and you say that you're going to run for this particular one or that. and it's usually... and you get people, you, when we have the caucus, because you have the meeting of your caucus off campus after election to elect new officers and there are people who campaign to be majority leader. And so that is what took place, so with, so I get elected. Your name is put in and they vote on this.

Usually, there wasn't anyone who actually ran against anything because people pretty much know what they going [to] run, how they going to, who they're going to run or how they're going to run or your name is out. Now to be, your majority leader, others, if I remember correctly, I don't want to say the wrong thing, it's like a committee who works on it. And you have people who, in turn, so they get appointed for vice chair, if, these are electing of officers. And it's the same, too, when it comes to whether you're going to a chair a committee or be the vice chair. You may get appointed, like I'd get appointed vice, vice chair. You don't run for those offices, you know. There's a whole process that you go through for that.

But being elected, yeah, being vice, pro tem, in the beginning and

then, of course, then becoming president pro tem. Then, of course, you're senior, there's seniority that is involved in that too. It's really an honor to be able to do that and for your colleagues to be up there, to support you to do that. And, of course, when you go back, then, once you've run, the votes out, they have their caucus and who's going to be their leaders and who they elected. And then you get back, when you go back into session, then, of course, everybody gets sort of gets sworn in into their office. It goes through the whole process again and say this one is elected to the office and then you have sworn in period. And then you have, that day, you know, you have your family and other people you know who come see [you] and they take pictures and leadership...

**Ms. Nimura:** Aww. Do you remember what was going through your mind that day, when you were sworn in?

**Senator Franklin:** That day? Oh gosh, I was going to have my name across the desk. [Laughter] Your name is across the desk. And then, of course, when when I first went to the Senate, we have really only had one African-American Supreme Court judge, and that was Judge Smith. [Justice Charles Z. Smith, first African-American and Hispanic (Cuban) to hold the position.] And, of course, I was sworn in, and I had him to swear me in for...

**Ms. Nimura:** Aww. For President Pro Tem?

**Senator Franklin:** for... For one of my elections. I don't remember which one but, yeah, he was one of the judges that I was sworn in. But, well, until you hold the gavel, you know, it hits you that you now are, and that's what....see, that's what Brad said. He, Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen, who would say -- because, you know, at first, you know, you're kind of timid and you don't bring the gavel. That you've got to really bring the gavel down. Really and hit the desk. And you have a gavel. He had his gavel own and I had my gavel. And he said, "When you bring it down the bill is passed." And then you go through the process of the bill, will be this and this and this. Like I said, he was great. He was a great tutor. He was a great mentor.

**Ms. Nimura:** He was the one that taught you? Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, Brad Owen. And he says, “You gotta bring the gavel down? [Thump on table]

**Ms. Nimura:** Hard. [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** And he said, “You, when you have the gavel,” he says, “You are in control of the Senate. They cannot really do anything.” If they’re out, too have order in the Senate, if I stopped presiding, people will look around and they’ll just stand there until they decide they’re going to be hit in place, he said. I know my first appointment, which was not pro tem, when I was vice, um, let’s see, it was majority leader, and what else did I have?

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh. Majority Leader, Minority Leader,...

**Senator Franklin:** Vice, um,...

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Whip.

**Senator Franklin:** The Whip! Yeah, so I thought, and so I got appointed, didn’t get elected to that, got appointed to that. And, and I said, “The Whip?” And Sid Snyder, I think was, because Mark Gaspard, that was the name that I was trying to remember. When I first went over, Mark Gaspard was Majority Leader and he was from Puyallup. He represented Twenty-fifth District and Sid Snyder, was the, uh, who comes after?

Ok, you have majority leader, and then you have the next person who’s under the, Sid Snyder because after Mark Gaspard left then Sid Snyder was elected the Majority Leader. But I was appointed, Vice, was the Whip. We were in the minority then or it might have been vice something, he said, “Well, the reason,” what he said, [that I was appointed was] because I was always in my seat. I stayed in my seat. There would be members who would be up and going and doing things or talking but I was, then, really near the front now. Going into my last term, Karen Frasier was in front of me and she was right up at the desk and I sat right behind her. That was the last part of, just before I retired, when I ran the last time. But as you as your seniority builds you move

**Ms. Nimura:** Towards the front. Right.

**Senator Franklin:** closer and closer. But when I started out and I got

those positions. They were learning positions and I said, “The Whip.” [Laughter] Well, the Whip is supposed to be, they’re the vote counters, make sure everybody goes into the caucus room, tell them it’s caucus time and your Leader will tell you, “Go and tell them to come in here. It’s time to preside.” So then you move up.

So he said, with that first one that I had for, might have been leadership role, minor leadership, said because I was always there. And so I made sure I was always in my seat because too, then when we started getting laptops, I would notice the the gallery and people, in turn, think if you’re always on your laptop that you really are not paying attention because you’re busy, always on your laptop. And I’m sitting and I’m making sure that I’m following everything and I’m following the whole process and seeing and looking in the gallery and looking, seeing people see looking down. And so I really never, when they started [using laptops], I didn’t

**Ms. Nimura:** You never used your [laptop]?

**Senator Franklin:** No. And they never could really. When I left, I was still using my big committee notebook in committee meetings. [Laughter] And they said they were bound and determined that they were going to change, but I still have my notebook. And I said, “No, I want the hard copy. I want...” [Laughter] So, I was, I was still, I was still an old schooler when I left, so...

**Ms. Nimura:** So when people called you, you know, you never took meetings like in the wings when the senate was in session?

**Senator Franklin:** I never what?

**Ms. Nimura:** You never went out to the wings when the senate was in session?

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, yeah, I went out. Yeah, you could accept those notes or not. And you could tell the Arms, Sergeant-At-Arms that you did not want to receive any notes. Some people, because lobbyists and others who’s standing on the outside, they are consistently maybe sending in notes to speak to you on an issue. And you can say, “I don’t want to.” At least that’s the way it was when I was there, that you don’t want to be there because that takes you then away, and then it’s time to take

a vote, you could miss a vote.

Because they start calling the roll then the Whip, as I said, it's voting time or it's time, and you keep the book open until that senator comes to cast his or her vote and so and that holds up everything. But, no, I would take some notes but otherwise I did not take a lot of them. I said, you know, make them see me [or staff] in the office. And I didn't want [people] to really get the impression that I'm there doing something, because they could get the wrong impression of when you're doing business and looking down, that your senator's not paying any attention. They don't know what you're doing. You could be attending bus — it's just like the phone. Being on the phone while you're conducting business then the observers, and again, looks down, "Well they're not really paying any attention." And so you could still be talking with someone and conduct, but they didn't feel — because they don't really quite understand the process. So I would prefer that I did not do that, and that was my choice, not to do that. And

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you think that comes from being a nurse? That, like, "I want to give my attention" to patients?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm? Yeah, yeah, it, it could be because when you are caring for patients, you take your eyes off too, it's just like playing baseball. You take your eye off the ball, you miss. Right?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, yes.

**Senator Franklin:** It's like I said, you keep your eye on the ball. And so, through that process, then it's up and down, out of your seat, up and down. And then if you sit in the back row, it's not probably too bad but to sit in the middle or the front or whatever. And then you've got the presiding officer, the lieutenant governor presiding, and that, your view, when you're presiding, you have to keep your views cast on everyone to make sure... that that person is there. And then you serve this whole process. And that is so important because what your observers observe of what you are doing, because everything... is being [broadcast]... I know when we spoke of bringing TV camera into the chambers, and that was in the last century. And when they were really upgrading and bringing us and doing the things with the technology. A lot of people did not want a

camera on the floor because it picks up and shows everything it's cast on.

**Ms. Nimura:** Everything.

**Senator Franklin:** I don't think the House was as resistant as the Senate then in regards to that and it, it finally, and, of course, it came. So yeah, you, would not think people – that's why you have to be very, very careful in what you do and what you say. We had, one, my colleague across the aisle, a good friend, we would laugh at him and say. "All right! He's up there now. He's up there because he's on the camera." [Laughter] Aaahhh. He's on the camera.

**Ms. Nimura:** He wanted to be on camera?

**Senator Franklin:** No, yeah, we'd tease him. It was funny. And so, then as we, you know, moved and, and it's not just for, for the legislator, it is not just serving your committees. You've got other committees that is not legislative committees. They're other duties and other committees that you're assigned to. And so you work, you have to work those. And then you have other activities. Like, I guess they still have it, we have the governor's prayer breakfast and you may serve. I served on that committee. Then you have every four years, you have memorial, you have to go through a process, the people who might have expired, that you have a date that you recognize them. But these other committees that you serve, because I was just going through some things the other day. This was not an appointment through the Legislature but a committee, a veterans group, was working on oral history and wanted me to be on their board so I worked on their oral history bit. And of course, we were connected and working with the Legislature in order to get the funds in order to help them develop that oral history.

But there [was] the Association of States, the association for all the states, the Democrats, they'll have [a] meeting of all the states that you were invited to come to that [so] you would learn and share information. And I've gone to those. I've been invited to those or they appoint representatives to go to the different meetings. And I'd also had been asked to come and be on panels, like I went on a panel in Washington, D.C. for certain — . So there are things in between, other than just doing [your] regular legislative duties. [Lieutenant Governor] Brad [Owen]

had, he was very much in working with, with our friends. I think he, what did he do? He worked with a lot of Asian countries and we'd gone and we had meetings in Victoria also. I didn't go, because he'd gone, I think they'd gone, to Japan and China, other places that they go in order to not just help with business for the state, but also create partnerships and friendship with those states, countries, too, that Washington needs and by our state is a, a port state,

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** So there's really a lot in that, a lot of other duties that you do. Now I will not say that every legislator would do that much because, you know, you can have a chance to refuse. But I felt it was an opportunity to be able to learn from others with these meetings and to really be a part of it because you're there now.

And [my] focus was not just being there, but being there to make a difference. A difference in policy and seeing that those things and doing as much as possible but, not only doing that, but to show that it can be done. Because we had to really fight for more women to run for office. Now you have to wait for more women of color that, and you want, like I mentioned with the social issue[s], that you want a government that looks like the people they represent. When you go into Olympia and you don't see anybody that looks like you. And it's the same, like I said, with the staff. You can have a staff that doesn't look like, you know, you have all... That's not, that's not the way it works.

So there's really a lot that you can have the input to help them to make that change but how you do it is really what [makes] that. And you have to really have teaching moments. You mentioned, too, the question is, how do you feel as being the only person of color sitting in a room?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, you know that they're looking at you and thinking what's going to come out of your mouth next? [Laughter] My colleagues. [Laughter] "Now what is your...?" [?] And so, I put on my best! [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** So you put on your best? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:**... No, but, really, as I said earlier, my colleagues were really great. They were really great. But for me, though, it's always to do your best. Because if you are in a leadership role, you are setting an example. And so ,if you're going to set this example for those who want to follow, what kind of example you want to set? So, mine was, that when I got up to speak or if I have something to say, that I pretty well know what I'm going to say. It's not going to be shooting off at the mouth because every word and every action that you do, somebody is recording it. You see. You hide nothing. Even without the smartphones and all the stuff that we have today, it was still happening. So really setting that example. So mine has always been, from childhood on, is that you do your best and you set that example.

That is really what followed me and that is really, and then, too, dealing with the issues, coming back to, again, full circle, of how you fund it? That's where it comes, how did you get the money? Where does the money come from? How do you spend that money? So mine had been, and I would say to my colleagues, people don't understand where the money comes. Why they become resistive is because they don't really know, really, it's very difficult to understand. And what followed me in Olympia was this education funding is not new. And we, and when Dixie Lee Ray was the, um,

**Ms. Nimura:** Governor.

**Senator Franklin:** was the governor. It was one, is defining, what is basic education? See, defining what, what is basic...? And, of course, we're supposed to fully fund education. So, how do you define? So before I went to Olympia and the issue of really funding education. So there was the lottery that was passed in order to fund. And people understood the lottery was supposed to be paying for education. So why do you want to bill me, tax me more for education? So that followed me in Olympia. When I knocked on doors, and then after that, they would come.

Oh, I'd get letters from people, about taxing and raising and why do you want to do it? Well, we passed a lottery and the lottery is supposed to fund it. So when I went to Olympia, I wanted to find out about the lottery and how much and what it was funding and was told by the time

they paid the payouts it would not have. So you cannot really tell people, I'm going to pay, this is what it's going to because it doesn't.

I remember one instance, I said to my colleague, "Let's do an education about this for the general public. So they can really understand what is going on, and where the money comes from." So I think they did an audio or have things in the library at one time, or we would do written, there was written information and stuff that would be given out to everybody, but it's still, people, they don't trust the Legislature and their money.

So, because of the cycles we go through, and that's when the income tax. And I said we need to have a stable source of funding but that stable source of funding is not going to fully fund everything. So we have to come up with some equity of how... You can't get it all in property taxes. We're having problems now and you can't keep taxing... And then I would get mail from seniors. They are on fixed incomes and it keeps going up. And people will say, "I can't even pay." Right now it's going on. The same thing is going on that people can't pay.

So how do we really solve the problem of a stable source of funding? And that's why I kept at it so that we would have more equity because, really, the lower earning folks are paying more in proportion to those who are the high earners. And there is not an equity in funds at all. The bill that I was pushing, that came from a study and a recommendation, people sort of ran away from it. And I said, "Well, you know, that doesn't really..." and "Let's keep trying and putting..." And then they would bring up, "Well, we did that and the Constitution says we can't have an income tax and that..." Yeah, well, they came up with all kinds of...

So my final suggestion and [I] kept running it, is that I said, well, and I told my Caucus, "They don't trust us." Because when we have our discussions, you come back and you discuss constituents. You just don't really have Caucus just to sit there but to bring and to discuss the issues, discuss the bill. You go out in the community, you have your town hall meetings. You bring that back. Just like at the level for working with the precinct committee officers that and, because you go back, and you then, in turn, after we have these town hall meetings and all of that, what you might have learned and you share that with your Caucus. That also

to help them to make better decision in regards to dealing with policy. And mine was that. And that's what I said in the beginning we had those too. They did try to do it before through the written word and putting out papers and all about that but it's nothing like having that and also having someone to make the presentation.

**Senator Franklin:** I said, since they don't trust us, why don't we, let's put together like a committee. And we would have someone like, people trust the League of Women Voters, [they] have been around a long time and other groups who the people trust within their community to have these learning sessions throughout the state. But then you still have to, you're going to have to have the Legislature and others who have the information to take out there and get a better understanding of how we fund and where the money comes from and where the money goes. And then people probably will be more, and then, talk about our funding system and the instability that we would probably not have as much resistance. But you can't just do it one time. It has to be ongoing.

And because we, let's be partisan about it, any time a D [Democrat] mentions it, it's tax and spend. All we want to do is tax and spend. Tax and spend. But it's like your budget. If you handle your budget wisely and you understand, you know where the money comes from and you're more aware of where the money goes, people will be more likely to be less resistant. You won't have the Tim Eymans as much as we have because like the license tabs, thirty dollar license tabs, and it's just going to be thirty dollars but then what happens? You have that but all the fees. They don't want to talk about it. It's not a tax, it's a fee. So you have fee and you have tax and people just get really... So with mine thing ,too, [Laughter]

I tried to sometimes speak some logic but [Laughter]. So that's how, when we went into that last... I had no idea, that we were going to go into that terrible downturn in 2007. And, the next thing it was, the next thing we heard, it was the worst downturn we've had since the Great Depression. We were scrambling to find the money to balance the budget and not as we say, "Robbing Peter to pay Paul." And so those kinds of things in policy making [are] really what you face but it's not just at the state level, because local government can only, they don't have the ability to

do certain things. So they have to get that from the state.

And then, of course, the national government, and I said that, in turn, “we help you, you know, we don’t manufacture money. It’s Washington, D.C. that manufactures money.” So this whole thing of being in public service and government and dealing with business and you try to come to this balance about business and in, and regular and non business, the regular person. How you’re really going to have equity and how you’re going to pay for that?

So this whole dialogue, now that continues on... is mine too, bringing that all in, when we have discussions, is in caucus, having some real discussion about the issues. And how do we really address those issues and how we going to get our colleagues across the aisle to really understand some, because when we passed the health care, Washington healthcare bill. I had to face that out on the campaign trail, that I wanted to have socialized medicine. Just like what’s going on today, when it was not true. You were still going to choose your own but now here, what we passed in 1993, here’s a bill, again, to create a pathway for universal health care, in case it happens in Washington, D.C....

**Senator Franklin:** So we’ve been fighting the same issue for so many years. And so I discussed some of those things in Caucus. That, what are you willing to do? And with your colleagues, what are you willing to do?

That’s what I’m saying in regards to traveling and getting out of your own environment and seeing what other people do. Because when I see, again my major issue, of what happened in Europe and what happened in Canada and I’d post when we were working on this issues, what was happening in Hawai’i was an example, some examples. Why in the world can’t we, because we have all of these resources, why is the cost of health care so high? And why is it that people cannot really access it? I got calls. I went there. “I can’t,... it’s by their own individual policy, I can’t pay for it.” Or “they won’t, because of pre-existing condition, I can’t get in.” So all of those things followed me in Olympia. And so now, here we are. Repeating. So you can’t move forward. So,

**Ms. Nimura:** Does that still frustrate you as, being out of the Legislature?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. That Legis-, what’s frustrating is because

you, you're like, what's the little things that runs around?

**Ms. Nimura:** Hamster. [Laughter] Like that?

**Senator Franklin:** [Laughter] Running around. Really. Because you can't move forward, because you're coming back doing the same thing.

**Ms. Nimura:** I want to make sure that we get to a couple of things that I mentioned, which are ongoing conditions, but the whole issue on racial profiling that happened which was in 2002 when it got enacted [?].

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, the racial profiling issue. There were complaints about being stopped because of the color of their skin, primarily African-Americans and Latinos, was happening in Eastern Washington, and just for little things. It was across the country and, these were universal issues, racial profiling. But it really became a universal issue. And so what I did was I put forward a bill but the original bill became what...what we finally got was one in which the State Patrol, in turn, would collect the data and then make a report back to the Legislature. And we found it wasn't so much like the State Patrol, what was happening within cities, within a lot of the counties or cities or whatever, they were, a lot of those, a lot were resistive to, really, in that they weren't doing it. And so that's when, then, the racial profiling bill was in that regards.

People were saying, just being stopped had for whatever and they really weren't breaking any laws or they couldn't show anything. And so, it was not just, it was a universal issue. And now that's sort of died down.

**Senator Franklin:** But they still deal with the issue of racial profiling when it comes to, now with the marijuana. Just had a meeting the other night too, with them and marijuana itself or drugs. Marijuana is not legal at the national level but, yeah, but I have not really heard that much here in regards to any stopping because, they said they weren't going to do it. They weren't just going to stop just anybody for marijuana or anything but, yeah, I haven't heard anything in this state at all. Yeah, so that was the racial profiling bill. And, of course, they did that study. And then the other one, was in the environmental justice of the placing of waste material within poor and low income neighborhoods. And we found that another thing that I dealt with, kids with lead in water. But when it came

to the placing of, of, um, neighborhoods, oh, near dumps, or where they put poor people, or whatever. We had the big smelter [Asarco] here.

**Ms. Nimura:** In Tacoma, uh huh.

**Senator Franklin:** And with the smelter itself, sent fumes, plumes throughout. But then, of course, it was, money, people had jobs but then people were getting sick. But now, the results of what has happened, you know, has just left a lot of pollution too. But the environmental justice, also, was a universal issue across the country because then they had asked me to serve, because this all came into play when President, um, oh, what was, Clinton

**Ms. Nimura:** Clinton.

**Senator Franklin:** came and was in office. And there was an issue back in Boston, too, when it became, this is just one issue, in Boston where the neighborhood, the plumes, people had been complaining and the pollution that was coming within their area. But people didn't believe it until it started happening to them and saw what was happening. And so out of that then, too, there was a national universal justice team or organization under [President Clinton]. I served on that. I went back to meetings, to the national meetings. And also we did tours of areas, went to North Carolina and saw what was happening on some of the areas, agriculture...

**Ms. Nimura:** This is after you proposed the stuff here? After you did that, after you put forward that bill and it passed here, then you got served, asked to serve on the national level? Is that right?

**Senator Franklin:** In regards to the environmental justice? Um, no. No, that bill came while I was working, was serving on the national.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** I was, because, too, I was, see that's how you learn more of what was going on in the environmental area because [the issue], in turn, was universal. And then we knew here in Tacoma we had big, right on I-5 there was a big waste dump. It's not just for [the sites], it's the plumes and where things are and how and where they put [the

waste] in and how it flows over. We having that issue now and we had it down on the port. Where it would be going and how it affects people.

And so no, while serving on [the national team], I learned more about what was going on and how it really interplayed. And, of course, in Seattle, we had the Duwamish wall. And there was a group that was formed, was an environmental justice, very active group in the Seattle area all and during the nineties. I think they're fading. And I used to attend their meetings.

When I came, by going to these national meetings and learning about others and what was going on, I went to North Carolina. I went to Louisiana. And then I saw, too, at night. Well, with plants, [they] really said that they would have to cut down on the fumes and what was going on. But, at night, they powered it up and were..., Plus the fact the people there, and was on the Mississippi, [they] didn't even have clinics. They would pollute but then didn't even have any [medical assistance]... So a lot was going on in the 90s as in regards to environmental justice.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. I was trying to trying picture, sort of timing around all that.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, the timing. Yeah, it came, was all during that period of time.

**Ms. Nimura:** I see. So it was all kind of at the same time then? But it wasn't like you learned and came back and did the bill.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Right.

**Ms. Nimura:** Or the bill and then you learned. It was all like you were learning...

**Senator Franklin:** Gathering information.

**Ms. Nimura:** and doing the bill. Okay, got it.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And then because too, also, it came with the biking. It came with, this is all into the health area. And it came with when we do construction. It came with building parks. It was how you then have people to get out and walk more, and when you, and when they, prior to that it had been the Growth Management Act, which was

passed. And that was passed in the nineties. Maria Cantwell worked on the Growth Management Act for Pierce County. So a lot was going on in regards to health, in regards to environmental justice, were all tied in during the, during the last part of the twentieth century, first part of the twenty-first century.

With the lead in water for kids, I did that and wanted kids to be [tested]. There was resistance to having kids tested for lead because it would cost too much. I did legislation on that. Which didn't go. So now, recently we were, just today, we said that Tacoma schools still have the lead in the water. And so all of what we did from industry a long time ago still is in the soil. And so it's just so much.

And so those [were] the issues that I really tried to, and looked to concentrate on, that nobody else was paying a lot of attention to. I took on a lot of those issues because if you do not [know], if you're not out there, and it because it's in the health area. And we did not have the [numbers of nurses in the Legislature]....Rosemary was a nurse. Margarita was a nurse. Eileen Cody, was in the House, [she] came later. So people who really were not just in nursing, [they didn't know.] Nursing and social issues go together, where you live, the air you breathe, housing and all of that. There were not a lot of people really working to connect those issues.

Mine, by going and learning and seeing and hearing what other people were doing, was the advantage. So to be able then too, you know it's happening at home but to bring that together and and get information [about] how you can go about getting it done, and to create policy and to bring people in.

There were problems with tires. There would be huge, here — we don't have them now — where people have huge dump piles of tires where they would leave it. And a lot of people would be [affected], and it would be burning for days, burning of the tires, and that fume would be [spreading].

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you feel like your legislative career expanded your idea of health? Or did it only confirm your idea of health care?

**Senator Franklin:** Um,... did it confirm? Well, it expanded it because people only thought about physical. And they didn't think about pre-

ventative health. It was not about really getting out and exercising and staying well and eating right and knowing how things are going to.... Some things were being done but it was not really connecting. What mine did was, in the Legislature, was bring those things together. Like when they did the growth management, when you build, what about parks? Where's it that where people have to walk? Where will the kids play? So it's expanding it not...

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. So that's what you think you did in the Legislature. I was thinking about just, for you personally, right? You're such a lifelong learner. Do you feel like that all of that learning that you did, did it really change your own ideas about health and health care? Or did you kind of say, "Oh, yeah, of course."

**Senator Franklin:** Well, yeah. Well, it expanded my idea because I didn't see if you only connected with physical health in a separate way. In this century, they're bringing behavioral health and everything together, instead of it being physical health. Well, we told, we spoke, and we didn't really do that when I was in the Legislature, about bringing mental health. Even though I was involved with mental health and, of course, had had even worked with Alzheimer's because before they called it Alzheimer's, before they defined it as Alzheimer's, they called it, oh, you're just old. [Laughter] Or it's senility. Yeah. Before there was no definition. Alzheimer's, it's more or less a recent name.

**Ms. Nimura:** Really? Oh my god.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. Yeah, back in the nineties, when I was involved with [seniors], and when I was with Upjohn also. Working with women's health and all the different portions. [It was] expanding but connecting, making connections, for me. And so now in the Legislature, I think that they're beginning to really connect those but I think, we'll see what... Unless you have people in policy making who, in turn, have a broad knowledge of all of this, you will still have people thinking in, in a box. It's like, I say that they've got all of these services but they got all these petitions and so there's no connect, they don't talk to each other.

That is like social services. But your social service fits into your health services also. They have to have a broad way of thinking of how you con-

nect all of these. And I think that's why we keep doing the same thing over and over and can't seem to really, sometimes, move ahead because we have spent a lot of time just on, say, mental health, but not connecting. So now we are saying, with your physical health, it's not maybe physical. You ask them other things. That's why you take a full history. And also too, before the medical, the providers didn't talk to each other.

So a lot of things are now becoming [connected], and so the patient, then, would go from this doctor to this doctor, to this provider or this pharmacy to this pharmacy and so there was no [connection], so... Not even with records. And your records and telling people you can keep your record. Now, yes, they're bringing in a new way of connecting. But, see, when you do that, it's the whole thing of privacy. So we have discussed that, too, when we discussed policy, your invasion of privacy. So people will say now, nothing is private anymore because everything is out there.

**Senator Franklin:** It's a lot. And what you are proud of as a legislator is of having had the opportunity to serve and I would not have done that if it were not for the people in my district and one acquaintance that I knew who said that there's a time for everything. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** It was a good time because, as I said earlier, my hat's off to people who run who have families and responsibilities. I would not have been able, I would not have taken on [the Legislature earlier in my life], and I had colleagues who had families and they had issues and concerns because you have your family and you got growing kids and all that.

For me, I could not see myself having done it [as a working parent]... So all of the background and all the work that I had done really gave me a real broad view and so when I said that I would run and I finally said that I'd run, I said, "I'm running to make a difference." And I know what [my] background and the resumé and what I had had and what I had seen and when I had done, because I'd worked in the public sector and the private sector. I'd worked with people across a broad field, not just in one. That I could take that and use that as a base but once you get to Olympia, it's a whole different story of how you're going to use it,

and that's what, I think, people can't understand.

**Ms. Nimura:** Are you proud of what you were able to do?

**Senator Franklin:** I'm very proud, but why I was proud — well, I am because it wasn't me, because it helped other people, because it was something that really helped others. And so that made a huge difference. And so now I see, because I will walk out and there is, I still see people. I'm trying to hide and they say, "That's you." "Senator Franklin!" "Senator Franklin!" [Laughter] And somebody told me, well, just two years ago, she says, "You probably don't remember but you helped me when I was having problems." And she says, "Now, my son is graduating from high school and he has been accepted at the University of Washington, Tacoma."

**Ms. Nimura:** Ooohh.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And then others who sent notes after, phone calls that say, "You helped." And others will say, "Well, you made me feel comfortable and I could talk with you." It was great. It was. And it was an opportunity, and people trusted me. I tried to do the best that I could that I knew. And I didn't vote the way that some of them wanted me to vote. But then I was able to explain to them why. And so that was one, and see, when it came, when we were dealing with, um,... what was it? With marriage.

**Ms. Nimura:** Same sex marriage?

**Senator Franklin:** Hmm? Same sex marriage, yeah. And it went to court. And so, you know, I'm a member who don't believe in same sex marriage but you know, when there's policy, there's how you look at things. So it's how you really, you're able [to] explain, if people trust you and they've been seeing it, and says, "I don't agree with what you did but I respect you."

**Ms. Nimura:** So that's how you were able to speak on, in favor of, things that would be against discrimination, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, but it was against, what they believed about it was not against what I believe, how people should be treated. Some

said my principles. Some said, you know, you don't compromise your principles because for me, if you are, you know, same sex, gay, trans —, I may not be evil but that person is human. And so that they're human being. They have made their choices. And the Good Book says, I tell them, it says, "Render unto, the things that are God's and unto..." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Right.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And so you have government. You live, you have a government to deal with. And you've got your faith base to deal with. And I can't go out there and push my faith on somebody. I have my principles, that's...

**Ms. Nimura:** Because that would result in unequal treatment, right? That's the part that you have to work with, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, yeah. It's the whole issue of... I can't say it, like, um, President Reagan's, son who...

**Ms. Nimura:** Ron?

**Senator Franklin:** His son.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. Ron, Ron Reagan?

**Senator Franklin:** Ron, yeah. Who doesn't believe, who has no faith. I mean he, so he, what is it? It's, what does he call it? Agnos —, not agnost.

**Ms. Nimura:** Atheist.

**Senator Franklin:** Huh?

**Ms. Nimura:** Atheist or agnostic?

**Senator Franklin:** Atheist, yeah, now I...

**Ms. Nimura:** This is where we're going to have to end because we're almost, we're just about done...

**Senator Franklin:** Oh! We one o'clock!

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, we're almost one o'clock.

**Senator Franklin:** Ooohhh!

**Ms. Nimura:** I know.

**Senator Franklin:** And so, um, we, and so we, that's how we are and my proudest moments and the biggest challenges — is making difference.

**Ms. Nimura:** Making a difference, okay.

**Senator Franklin:** How you'll make a difference. How do you make it work? How does everybody really come out a win-win?

**Ms. Nimura:** Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** And you know you're going to have losers but how does...? [Laughter]

**[End of recording]**

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**Interview 7: February 28, 2019 - Legislature (part 3)**

**Ms. Tamiko Nimura:** Today is February twenty-eighth, believe or not, 2019. And I'm Tamiko Nimura and I'm here, again, with Senator Rosa Franklin. We're at Pacific Lutheran University in the Neeb Conference center. And we're going to do some wrapping up today. Talking about ending the life of the Legislature and some lessons to pass on overall. There are lots of topics that I have but, things to pass on for the next generation, particularly as we've got the most diverse state Legislature that we ever have, right? So that's a very exciting time. And meanwhile, there's lots of things going on in the other. Washington.

**Senator Rosa Franklin:** Yes. Indeed.

**Ms. Nimura:** Indeed. So let's begin. All right, let's see. So I just wanted to give folks a little bit of insight into the life as President Pro Tem, right. My understanding is that you have less of a voice, um, as, sort of directly, you kind of step out of the day to day stuff. But you're in a leadership position, right? But you're still in the caucus, right? What was like being President Pro Tem as opposed to being a senator in a leadership position. What was the difference there?

**Senator Franklin:** I'm still, it's a leadership position.

**Ms. Nimura:** It's a leadership position.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, it's a leadership position. I'm still on my committees that I'm serving on. So yeah, it is a leadership position. And actually serving on the policy committees and serving as President Pro Tem and especially on a day that you preside, it's a busy day. Because you go to your meetings and come back. And then, of course, you take over presiding over the Senate and it can be a long day. But the days are long, usually anyway, without that. And so you work it in.

When bills are then voted out of the policy committee, then you have to read those bills in and then you have to be able to set up the calendar. And you, you have to be there in order to read bills, especially in the days and at a time when you're, uh, what bills, we're ratcheting down, getting to the end when there are bills, people working to get as many bills out as possible. And so it does become a busy day.

During my time there, and, of course, I think with having served and having more experience, I think maybe the Lieutenant Governor, who I've said is Brad Owen, who was really great, I think he gave me the gavel more. It seemed. And so that was also great. And, as I said, I wanted to share that experience, also, with Senator Shin. My last four years then really as serving, which was after the last election, until I retired in 2010 was serving as President Pro tem. But I had been that and Vice before but did not preside as much.

It was a great experience and to know, as I said earlier, that you really have control over the Senate by making sure that they stay in order; that you follow the procedures; that you get the work done. As you move toward that cut off period, time goes by quickly, so you have to really be on it. And the bills just, the bill sheets just keep coming to you. You're presid — [?] because you have to get them out. So, consequently, as I said earlier, at one time, I was presiding I brought the gavel down a bit too faa... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** A bit too fast? [Laughter]

**Senator Franklin:** A bit too fast – but that was, that was the only episode during, I think it was, about six years? Total, that I served. That was quite an experience, and it was a good experience. It was a good experience. And so then we... What else do we do?

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, were there particular challenges that you experienced being president pro tem?

**Senator Franklin:** Um, actually, really no. Because, actually, you have with you, you are there. You're presiding and you've got your attorney on both sides. The party that controls the Senate and, of course, the other party has [an attorney]. So you have on both sides. And so, actually they're really watching each other, make sure that you do the right thing. And so the staff and the attorney and all who, but and so they keep you online, keep you going, keep, because without that, you would not be able to stay in order. And then once all, everyone, you have to make sure.

That's too, where the floor leaders make sure that everyone is there or if they aren't, let them know there's a vote coming up to make sure that

they get on the floor, get on the floor so that they're able to cast their vote. So sometimes people will be casting standing in the doorway, archway of the chambers and said, "I vote 'aye,'" or "Vote 'no.'" And then, of course, you, in turn, with those late voters, then you repeat those that, um, "The senator votes 'Aye.'" "The senator votes 'No.'"

You have to really be on your toes and watch and be very, very careful to make sure. Because you cannot call the total vote until everyone has had [a chance to vote.]... So we keep it open until that happens but it's not gonna be kept open for hours as they, the leaders or the Whip has to find those people and bring them in. And you have to be on the floor. You can't vote over the phone. You can't do any of that. Or vote from your office or anything like that. So those, that is a bit, so everyone is really on their Ps and Qs and especially, again, in those cut off periods.

There were not really any challenges because the challenge, I think, came on floor of those Whip, well, the party Whip making sure that because if they're not there, then they may lose, the opposition may kill their bill, you know. So you really have to be careful.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. And you had served as Whip, right? So you knew all of that process too.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. I had been the Whip before. Yeah, I had served as Whip and had served as, um,... What was the other one? Seemed like there was another office. Can't even think of, but, yeah, I'd served as Whip

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, so you knew all of that already already.

**Senator Franklin:** Um hmm.

**Ms. Nimura:** So what made you decide to retire from politics? There we go.

**Senator Franklin:** What made — ? You know, I might have stayed on another term, but my grandchildren were growing up. And then my oldest grandson was going through his adolescent years, and I felt that I, as a grandparent, that I really needed to be there for him. And because I was there for my kids, when they were going through all, if they're going through their adolescent period, they're growing up and going through,

having all kinds of things coming into their minds.

So, being a grandparent, and I felt, and too, being there, all that, because I ran for office when my oldest [grandchild] had, it was in the primary in September and he had been born in April. So all the time as he was growing, in school and as a student, I had them to come down to Olympia. In fact, the two older ones, Ryan wasn't born yet. He was, he was only down [there] as a baby but that was really one of the drivers for me to really say, "You know, I've been there and I need to really spend that time with him." And attend activities and keep him straight and help his parents to keep him – and he's doing now. He's a great kid. So that was, you know, twenty years was a long time. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes. I just spoke to Eileen Cody yesterday and she's on that same number now. The twenty-year mark and she's [saying,] that is a long time to be there.

[00:10:59] Senator Franklin: Yeah, that is a long... And then, you know, it is not, if you want to really do a good job, and it's not, well, people think that you just serve on your committees and that is, and you're part-time and that is it. And that is not the way it really works because it really becomes a full-time job. And if Eileen is still with, doing her nursing and other people are still having their full-time, they're having their employment, then maybe they get leave or, I don't know how they work it out. But, for me, that's really... That did not work for me.

Everybody have to decide that for themselves but it's more than just what people may think. And so it's take, it's other duties that you have. Plus, if you go to meetings, whether it is here, at home, or whether it is out of state. I look back now and I said, "Did I do that?!" I mean, and you have to be, you're not excused. If you're going to go, I don't know what they're doing now, but when I was there and I think it may still be the same way if you're going to go out of town for a meeting or a workshop, which is really good because you are learning and getting information to broaden your knowledge on issues and how you could be a better policy maker. And those are usually just like three or four days. So if you leave out on a Friday, you will have to be back by Monday unless it's during the summer. And if you go back to the East Coast and that's a flight, a

long flight, then you are, you get there. I would take a flight that would get me there early in the morning and then you, if you have a meeting that day or the next day, then you have to then get on the plane and come back. So that's another long flight. And so it is really a test about your ability to move and think fast. [Laughter] Those were very useful because it really helped me to be a better policy maker and approaching and knowing more about the issues and talking with other people. So I think those are a very important part of serving. After twenty years, I thought, too, with those two things, it was time for me to leave. Let somebody else do it. And I think that people should do that. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** So, did you do this at the beginning of session then, like in the January of the year that you were retiring?

**Senator Franklin:** When you leave unless, it's usually, it doesn't end until the thirty-first of December. So I put in my retirement, in order that I was not running for reelection, it took effect the end of the year.

**Ms. Nimura:** Hmm. I see, I see.

**Senator Franklin:** But then, by that time, it was during the summer. You're still having your meetings. You're doing your work, attending other business, but then you are not in the, um, in the business for the next session that's going to be open, so...

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, I see. Did you make a big announcement? Like a big email? Or... were you on the floor?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, I wrote an email...

**Ms. Nimura:** I see.

**Senator Franklin:**... that it was time to hang it up. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** And do you remember what the response was, after you sent that out?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, the response, yeah. People, you know, the reporters will ask your co-, co-workers how you were and they'll ask other people, "Well, how she is?" Or, "We hate to see her go." Or, "She did her work." Or make those kinds of responses. So they were positive responses. They hated, in summary, they hated to see me go but...

[Laughter]. Yeah, but, so when I made that, um, it was... Oh, gosh, you know, I did have the letter. It was, let's see...The next session, I think, was going to be a short session. I ran across that letter when I was going through some papers but it's, it's there, some-.

**Ms. Nimura:** It's probably in your archives somewhere. I'll find it. Okay.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, there somewhere in the archives. But then then it really was kind of strange when January came. [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** And you had a lot less to do.

**Senator Franklin:** And I, I didn't really watch TV. I didn't do any... I did, sort of, not really looked at anything to see what you were doing or what was taking place or anything. I didn't really, when I left early on. And right now, I don't really turn TVW on or anything. What I'll do, I'll follow bills online and read but so far as watching TVW or any of that...

I've been back on campus but, otherwise, just to sit there and then to watch and see what people are doing or whatever, I haven't really done that. There are a lot of other groups that I follow or participate in and they do a lot of advocacy work. So I get a lot of that information in regards to what they're doing and the bills that they are following. Such as the interfaith community. It would be, oh, health care for all, there's a group. Then you've got the nursing group and there are other social justice group. Being on their lists, and so I get all of that information from them and what they're doing and the types of bills that they're following. Oh, and League of Women Voters because being there, we advocate and support. So when I get that, so the groups that I've joined and they'll send it and ask all their supporters of what's happening. And if you support that, and agree with them, then, of course, you contact your legislators and others in order to ask to support or not support. One of my major ones is the League of Women Voters because I'd been with them and I'd done research and I've worked with them since, so many — I looked at it the other day, I think, it's about thirty years now.

And of course, the interfaith community. I had worked with them. They had formed, they've broadened and a lot of other faith communities, other churches, advocates for social justice and health care and

some of the other things. And the nursing and health care issues that we deal a lot, like, you know, what's going on now with connection between homelessness and health care and ment —, behavioral health, mental health. Those kinds of issues, too, I keep abreast of. And we had, like, the Komen breast cancer, American cancer,...and so many of those groups that I'd supported and had worked with even before going. And the Alzheimer's group. Some of those groups were even just forming when I went to Olympia. And so, now, they have really grown and have gotten a lot of support and have done a lot of research worth and stuff, too.

**Ms. Nimura:** Right. So really, we just kind of slid into what retirement has been like for you, right? So retirement, then, you actually go and you still follow issues. You still go to campus every once in a while, right? So what has retirement been like for you? From politics, that is, right? Because there's so many things.

**Senator Franklin:** Well, actually, retirement has been — really, I had no yearning to go back. Let's put it that way. It has been one that I can control my own time. I don't have to punch the clock. I can really be back because, as I said in my, when I left, when I retired in my letter, that I was going back to my community, in order to work in my community. And so that's essentially what I'm doing. It would not be at the in-depthness as I did before but I still participate in, with the League of Women Voters, as you know. Then I'm in new organizations like with WILLO [Women's Intergenerational Living Legacy Organization Tacoma], and, serve on the advisory board for the Asian Pacific Cultural Center and had been on that for quite a while. I support and attend different functions like with the [Tacoma] Urban League, dealing with education. So it's a variety of things that, plus, you know, I attend to my church. I don't do the teaching at the Sunday School or any, do a lot of... and a lot of that work that I did in my younger days, I said, "It's time for somebody else to take that over now."

A lot of people ask, "Are you traveling?" And I said, "I did a lot of that traveling before." So, like, for some, when they retire, traveling is a big issue but it's not a big thing for me because I did a lot of that before. So I'll go out, you know, we'll, my daughters and I, they said, "Okay

mom!” “All right, we’re going to do this.” So we’ll go to Cannon Beach and spend a weekend.

We’ll go driving, because when they were growing up, we were always traveling. And we took the kids everywhere we went. And then, even when I was working, nursing, every summer we went somewhere. We would go across country, camping. We’ve taken a trailer, gone back East, come back by the way of Florida. So, so it’s really that if I want to do it, I’m going to do it. And if I don’t want to do, and my husband is a golfer so I’ll go too, with him. He’ll play in Las Vegas twice a year but I don’t go all the time. I used to but I don’t play golf so we’ll go down to the ocean or to Canada or, we have a daughter that lives in California. Then, this past fall, I made that road trip with my daughter and her husband where we had to outrun the hurricane. That was in September, we were running from[?]... [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh goodness. Hurricane season and you, huh?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, yeah. I always have liked to travel but then, of course, sometimes when you... I started out doing some volunteer work, serving on the alumni council at the University of Puget Sound. I did that for a while. Then, of course, I hadn’t done that much for PLU but I attend different functions and help them to raise money and, you know, pick and choose. Yeah, so that’s what [retirement] — but one thing, I said I could not sit down and do nothing. People who retire sit down and do nothing, it’s... I can’t do that. No. I can’t do that.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Of course. All right, let’s maybe talk about some of the cros over that you have seen between nursing and legislative work because I think that’s a good way to start to wrap up our time here. What are the crossover skills, experiences that you see between your work as a nurse and your work as a legislator?

**Senator Franklin:** Well, I think it really gave me a great background in order to deal with health policy and, and working with health policy. And not just physical health but would be with mental health, environmental health, because it’s all connected in some way when it affects you, air, the water. And I’d have people, would call me. We were having a problem with molds in their home. And then, of course, I would

be able to, direct them within their local communities or to the health department, who does that. But it was a good background for me to be able to serve because, with that experience, then, it's making policy for something that you really know something about and not somebody else making it for you, who knows nothing about it. So, therefore, it gives you an opportunity to, really, educate, too, your colleagues, and get them on board as to really what issues are.

And being out there — and that was one reason why I didn't really want to just stay in maternity help because working in just in one field did not give me the broad experience that I really wanted to have to see what the whole health arena looks like. And so taking that into Olympia with me and then really broadening my knowledge by talking with others, who might be facing the same. And then with my colleagues, then, because when I went to Olympia, too, there were more nurses in the Legislature. Plus our nurses [unintelligible], who were not because, as I said, prior to that I had served for the Washington State Nursing Association. Plus, I was involved early on with our Ebony Nurses Association, which is a small unit in Tacoma. And also, then, in the Pierce County Nurses Association. So I was involved with all of those. So taking that, then, and using that as a template for helping to solve some of the issues that were affecting health care and the nursing profession itself was very, very helpful. So coordinating that was one in which, too, I think, really gave me the [way to have]people say, "Yeah, she knows what she's talking about." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** Do you think, though, that there are similarities between being a good nurse and a good legislator?

**Senator Franklin:** Are there similarities of being a, what'd you mean? A good nurse and a good legislator?

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. Do you think there are some similarities there?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, and,...I would say an effective legislator. And so far as nursing is being, is, what's the results? You're working for results. And so what kind of results are you going to have? And so, it shows in both. If you are a good nurse, a capable nurse, your patient, along with others, as a team, your outcome will be good. And that means

that the patient, the outcome, you don't want the patient to die. You want the people to live and to improve. So the outcome, what kind of outcome are you going to have? And so, being a legislator, what kind of outcome do you want? Do you want to be effective? What is it that you are really working to change? What are you working to make better?

Being a nurse and being a legislator all came together in order to make me more effective. And, of course, being effective, then, means I can't do it by myself. That means I have to have somebody else working with, collaborating, getting them to understand what the issues are. Because that person may have not a clue about what's happening in the health profession, the nursing profession. Maybe an artist's, now I would say teacher but teachers will know because they deal a lot with students' health so they would have more knowledge about what's happening in that. And so having, bringing other people to the table and getting them to support your issue also. And plus, the people who you represent, who sent you there, who depend on you in order to address issues...getting them on board also is how you become really effective because effectiveness is not a one person deal, at all.

**Ms. Nimura:** Well, this is a great place to go to bipartisanship then, actually, because you can't get your things to pass, right? You can't be effective without some bipartisanship, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, unless you have had a great majority within your side, you will – and even you may have that great majority on your side of the aisle, in order to get it through, however, it can stumble along the way someplace else. So it means that effectiveness come with working across because you may get it out but the lobbyists make kill it,... Also.

**Ms. Nimura:** Ahh, right. Right, so [Laughter]... Are there things you think you learned then, about working in a bipartisan way in your twenty years in the Legislature?

**Senator Franklin:** I think, my learning for working with people across aisles came before I even went to Olympia because in nursing you work with everybody. You really, you work with the rich, with the rich and the poor, the middle. All peop —, unless you are, you've come up in a segregated society where you don't come in, like my early days, where

you don't come in contact with people of other groups or the rich, or the famous or whatever. So, but you learn, in the profession that I'm in, nursing, you learn that because you're working with people of all types, from all walks of life; you're working with doctors; you're working with some of everybody. And so you, it's, you have to be able to because if you don't do that, who gets caught in the middle? So when it comes to policymaking and government, if you don't, who gets caught in the middle? It's the people who you are there to serve and, like what is happening now.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** So, working, you may disagree, and we are going to disagree, and we are going to think differently but you have to have a majority of anything in order to get to where you need to go. Absolutely....

**Ms. Nimura:** Thank you. That's very helpful. So I think, maybe, we could talk a bit about some of the current day skepticism. Although, I know, people have always been skeptical about politics, right?

**Senator Franklin:** Right.

**Ms. Nimura:** People have always been cynical about politics, right? Where do you think your faith in politics came from then?

**Senator Franklin:** Well to, I said, within your email that you sent about cynicism and skepticism where people are not trusting government. They trust the person who they said they elected from their particular area but they don't trust from the next area. And where the cynicism and skepticism or mistrust, let's say, well, people don't trust the government. Because probably that they might have had a bad experience. Or now, with the media, there's so much that is going in the media. And it's not like when you didn't have TV and when you didn't have I-phone. You, you had the newspaper but the newspaper didn't reach everybody. Plus, the fact that people, a lot of time they don't face things with an open mind in order to learn or to listen to both sides. They just get stuck in one thing and it comes now, like I said, all we want to do is just win.

And then, of course, they make promises. When you make promises, go out and make promises while you campaign, "I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that, when I get elected." It's no such thing because

I alone cannot do it. So, and you cannot make these big promises. You can say, “This is what I am committed to try to help to change and I’m going to work with people who are there to see that change takes place.” So that mistrust then, when they made the promise and they don’t come through with it or they, then, they then said, “Oh, my vote doesn’t count.” “Oh, everyone do the same thing.” “Oh, you’re okay but not that person over there.” And so they’re very cynical and they do not, and because, everything before it hits, it’s not like this morning, I read my newspaper. Well, the news is old in the paper.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes.

**Senator Franklin:** Because, if you’re online, you’ve had it. And people today, the readership of newspapers has fallen off. And, of course, the others who look on TV. So you may just look at Fox News and don’t look at anything else. And you’re just sitting there feeding into all of that. So that’s why education is important. Education is very important.

For my family and for me and for many others that I know, especially in Black America, education is very important because they go back historically that, because of the history of the country and slavery, how they kept you from reading and learning...Because if you are able to read, you can think for yourself. And so people today...there was a time where there was cursive writing. You never printed anything. It was always cursive and then printing. Well, they don’t do cursive writing anymore.

Reading the newspaper. Well, they don’t read the newspaper but they’ll look quickly at the smartphone or take a brief news read... And then, of course, now, when people are saying things like, “fake news.” And so it’s just the skepticism and cynicism has grown. Wherein, I would say, even in the last century, like mid-century, people were more...Believed in government more.

But they have to understand the role of government, is another thing. Because the role of government [is] not one for you to become, one of dependency within your life. It’s in order to govern, to set policy, to help you to grow but not to be doing for you all the time. And that’s why civics is so important. So when you have Civics to learn about your government. That’s why, too, while I was in Olympia, we said that the kids, they had

sort of, taken Civics, they were not really paying attention to it. So the League of Women Voters became very much involved in that. And that's when we came with writing a civics book so people would be able to understand. We had a conversation, couple of months ago, when I was telling my League friends at the unit meeting that I had Civics and [one friend] says, "And you went to segregated school in your high school?" And I said, "Yeah. I had Civics." "And all your teachers were Black?" "All my teachers were Black." And then, [Laughing] what I know about my government, and I said I had pictures on the wall in my classroom of who were, uh, who represented us.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah.

**Ms. Nimura:** Wooww.

**Senator Franklin:** I went back to, you know, just to check myself to make sure and when I looked, found my high school, transcript for schools, I had to report it, it was on the desk, Civics was still in [taps the table]. Yeah, but, when you know, people are challenged —, they run around and once things have passed that would help you, have been helpful and because, without structure, they allow you, you know, you have an initiative, and you have, and then they, and then people who are all — cynics. I call them consistent cynics who run around and gather signatures to overturn it. And that also puts more and more fear. And people become fearful of government. But —

**Ms. Nimura:** If you could say something to the skeptics and the cynics, what would you say?

**Senator Franklin:** What I would say to the cynics? Be open-minded and listen to both sides and don't be so... And, then, of course, I could do more with someone who is a skeptic than someone who is a cynic because a cynic is, it's like breaking the walls down. You, it's not building the wall. They are, like, they've built that wall and that wall is never going to come down because they're against everything. That's why, a lot of times, when we talk about people and how they're so resistive to everything. And whatever you bring up, whatever you try to do, they're

very resistant to it.

And so I say to them, well, if people are cynical and they set in their mind about something, they're never going to change until it happens to them. Once it happens to them, then, and I see that now so many times, that it happens to them, all of a sudden, it's "bing." And it's bing, and it's bing, and it's bing... But one who's a skeptic, then, in turn, they said, "Oh, I'll think about it." Or "Talk to me later." Or "Tell me more." Or "I'll check it out." And so you have an opportunity... so what I would say for one who is cynical, is that just leave them alone and say, "I quite understand and I'll go look for the skeptics." [Laughter]

**Ms. Nimura:** "I'll go look for the skeptics." [Laughter] I love it. Well, let's see, I have a couple of things but I want make sure that we have enough time for the overall advice or lessons that you want to pass on. You've got lots of notes there so I wanted to make sure that we've covered anything that's there.

**Senator Franklin:** Oh, that I'd like to pass on to the next generation or somebody who wants to take this on...? Because you're going to always have government with us, is that I would like to mention that people, you've got your own personal opinion and, not only that, it's how you start. Where you start. How you start. Where you get your information. Because it starts from the day you're born, really. And I have people, a lot of times, who, and have read, that, have grown up in a certain atmosphere and once they've gotten into the world and saw that things were so different, is when their minds were changed. Because they were more or less growing up in a glass house and did not really adventure to see what was happening in the world.

And then I've heard other people, too, by growing up in a very protective atmosphere, once they get out into that broad world, well, they're so confused, they don't know what to do. They can't, they can't handle problems. They can't resolve things for themselves. So then it becomes a hindrance. So that I say to people that you, do not live in a glass house. Get out. Mingle. Listen to what other people have to say to you.

But you have your principles and you know that all of us live on this planet and living on it, then, means that it's, it's one of sharing and, caring

for each other. And we all live in society with, for us, with government. And there is a respect but where we live, in America, the greatest thing that we have is that — we change. And we don't overturn. We have never had any overturning of government but you change.

Here, then, is, but not just in our country. You've got to respect people throughout the world. So when you travel, too, get out of-. When I say get out of your glass house or your little environment, it's not just here, in the state of Washington, but go wherever you can out of the country; other groups; other people; other cultures and learn from them. And then, with that, you take and try to take and bring that home and with that, that gives you a broader knowledge of how people can really live together on this planet. That's my view. And then you bring it nearer. Not just on this planet Earth but here at home.

You bring it home. How, then, you can live together here. Not just in your neighborhood, but in your state or in your country. And then be a part of government. You must, in order to be a part of the country and the state that you live, you have to exercise that great thing of voting. People do not vote. We looked, we looked in, when I read, see the news, read the paper and come up with voting in other countries where people, in democratic countries and rising democratic countries, who stand in line. And, of course, the Secretary of State, too, here, I think. And, of course, not only for our Secretary of State, I think, but on the national level, like President Carter and others used to do would go and observe elections to see in rising democratic countries. To see that we, here we've got such a privilege to vote and we don't exercise it.

So we, the government, I always say the government is us. So when you are angry with government, you're angry with yourself.

So we need to also be, to be recognizing of that and become civically engaged. And civically engaged means, one thing you can do, when that ballot shows up, vote every time. But not only when you vote. Try to keep up with what they are doing. And when someone, when a legislator or someone does something good, if you will, have great policy or beneficial, write and thank them. Yeah. And thank them or call and thank them.

And when they don't do what you think is right — Write and give

your reason and give them the reason why and ask for a change or set up a time to meet with them. There's so much that we as citizens can do in order to improve government and, improve, through policy making and sustainability, in order to help others. There's a lot that we can do.

But my final thing, I would say, everybody should do it once. [Laughter] And you can start by, you can start by running. By serving on local boards. Running for local office. And then you can help with the campaigns of your choice. So there are numerous ways that you can become involved in order to improve lives, improve government, make government more open because it's always changing. It's never the same.

The thing about people, too, they look for stability in their lives but when you look back, when I look back, gosh.... As I said, I discovered the other day, when I went to UPS and I was taking my courses under Doctor Gordon, not Gordon...

**Ms. Nimura:** Alcorn.

**Senator Franklin:** Alcorn. I'd call him the Bird Man. He was so... [Laughter] And we, there were, we had a notebook and we had to draw. And I said, "Did I do-? When did I do all of that writing?!" And draw the plants and draw the whatever it was. And then, when I took embryology, I said, and...You had the microscope, but we did not have the technology and look how this... And then I have a printer and typewriter now in my study, the library. That's new because, before long, here we had the computer. And I had this old computer, and that was a 1990 when I... When I worked with Upjohn, the computer [was] coming on and I could remember when we were, when we'd get bills, or people would complain and I said, "Oh, gosh, I am so sorry, this is what happened out of it." He said, "The computer only puts out what you put in." [Laughter] I remember that! And that was in the seventies.

The technology has, and things have changed so rapidly that I think people have not had the time to adjust because, like we went from the industry of the machine age. We came into the machine age into the industrial age, the machine age and the different ages. We went into the time, into the age of technology. It was very rapid. I don't think, that span of adjusting was not like from the age of industrial age. So it's very

rapid. And with [me,] it was early nineties when I was at meetings and people started bringing in their cell phones. And then, of course, when I went to Olympia, we didn't have the computers and stuff on the desk.

So I think, too, with the adjustment of what's taking place and the change, the quick changes and what's happening with education in schools, that people are searching for some type of stability and their lives. And I think the people who can become really upset and all of that, it just blames government because government is the one that's doing all those things to them. Plus the fact, too, from just my observation and thinking and reading and seeing how people act, is that they're just angry and they just want to be angry at someone. And somebody is there in order to lead them on and not to really give them and say, "These are the things that we can do."

I think what leaders can do, and future leaders and future generations, is to really try to bring some stability in the lives of people by being able to bring them together in order to discuss what is really going on in their lives because it's a lot that is going and somebody has to take the blame and it's government and the legislators.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah, well, we're at noon. Thank you so much for this honor. Really. It's been such a pleasure and such an amazing privilege to sit with you on this, on this journey. Really.

**Senator Franklin:** Awwww. This was, well, it was fate or what or someone up there that was watching that brought me to meet you. And to know, because all of this just sort of happened. And it all fell into...

**Ms. Nimura:** Yeah. But, really though, this will be my first large project like this. So I'm mindful that you didn't pick the experienced person, necessarily, but there was something that connected with you, right? And that was what you wanted to...

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah because it was when when I heard you [at WILLO Storytelling Festival, October 2018], and when you did your story and what you had done, and you had connected with people that I know, like Doctor [George] Tanbara, and his name keeps coming up, and the work that you were doing and my having, also with Upjohn, knowing about what had happened with the Japanese [language] school because

they did a photo shoot as sort of a proof, back when it was Upjohn.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, really?

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah. And, because we were in health, somebody had to be on the premises while they were doing that.

**Ms. Nimura:** Oh, I see.

**Senator Franklin:** Yeah, and so that connection plus what you were, and then, when I had been contacted in regards to them looking for someone to do the [project], and asked if I had any suggestions and I said, “Well, let me see. I don’t know.” Because they had sent me some names. And then I met you, and then I heard you and I said, let me send you, and I sent your name for the Senate and it’s worked out really great.

**Ms. Nimura:** Yes, I think so too. Thank you so much. [Laughter]

**[End of recording]**

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## ABOUT TAMIKO NIMURA

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Tamiko Nimura, a third-generation Japanese American and second-generation Filipina American, is an essayist, community journalist, and public historian. Her academic training in literature and American ethnic studies prepared her for her current projects in the arts and social justice. She lives with her composer husband Josh Parmenter and their two daughters in Tacoma, Washington.







**Representative Rosa Franklin  
being sworn in.**



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