

Oral history interview with Ceta Ramkhalawansingh conducted by Ruth Belay and Daniela Ansovini

16 December 2019

00:00:01 **Ruth Belay**

Thank you so much for agreeing to sit down with us. If you wouldn't mind stating your name and the year that you graduated from U of T.

00:00:08 **Ceta Ramkhalawansingh**

My name is Ceta Ramkhalawansingh and I have several graduation dates, but I actually never graduated, I never went to a convocation. I finished my first BA course work in '72 from Arts and Science, and then I went to the Institute of Child Study for a graduate diploma in Assessment and Counseling, and I think I finished that in '74. And then, I took some time off and then I went back to the Institute, did another diploma. So, I would've finished that in '76 or '77, I don't remember. And then, I went to OISE and did an MA, which I completed in 1980, and enrolled in the PhD program, I think in '78 or '79, probably '79, and I finished all of my course work in '81. But, like many people, I am ABD [all but dissertation].

00:01:25 **Ruth**

[Chuckles] And, if you wouldn't mind giving us a little bit of your background and your life before going to U of T.

00:01:30 **Ceta**

Okay. So, I was born in Trinidad and Tobago. And I went to St. Augustine Girls' High School in 1962 - well, I went to an elementary school there before and then to an all-girl high school. And, our family left Trinidad in 1967, my father, my mother, my two siblings and myself, and we came to Toronto. And, I only spent one year in high school at Riverdale Collegiate, on the east end of the city, and enrolled in the University of Toronto in 1968.

00:02:19 **Ruth**

Why did you pick the University of Toronto?

00:02:21 **Ceta**

Well, it was in Toronto [laughs]. Many of my friends at high school were going there and when, you know, you've moved away from a faraway country, to then move to some other place where you wouldn't see your family just didn't make sense. But, I think basically because it was in the city, and the family was here, and I could live at home and all of that.

00:02:57 **Ruth**

And then what were your first impressions, I guess, of U of T?

00:03:02 **Ceta**

Okay, so I have two stories to tell. When I was in high school at Riverdale, we had a field trip to visit the campus and I have this distinct memory of part of

our tour being in the engineering school, and talking to some of the young men in the Faculty of Engineering / Science, that division, and I asked them how many women were in their program? And they said, "not many," and they made sure that the women didn't succeed, and the way in which they did that was to take turns dating them every night of the week so they wouldn't have a chance to do their homework. And I was really horrified by that attitude, so I knew that the Faculty of Engineering was not one place I was going to go [laughs]. What was your question again?

00:04:10 **Ruth**

What was your first impression of U of T [laughs]?

00:04:12 **Ceta**

Well, that WAS my first impression [laughs], was that this was not the place - I mean, that particular school - was not the place for me. I had studied sciences all the way through high school and also, all the way through high school, so my intention was to enroll in a science degree. And, I hated the first year. It was tedious and all that, and I was bored, because if you've been through a British education system, we were, you know, some of this stuff I found that I was repeating not once but twice. So, I sort of muddled through the first year and got very heavily involved in university politics and student politics, and I - it was more interesting to me, rather than sitting in a lab doing experiments, I learnt that fairly quickly.

In the fall of 1968, I have this recollection of walking down the corridors of Hart House. And I was going to a meeting about the fact that women were required to take phys ed on a compulsory basis and if they didn't in their first year they couldn't graduate or go on, and the men didn't have to do that. And the reason being, that was given, was that women had access to facilities - to Benson Building - and men didn't. So, I was on my way to a meeting to discuss opposing that particular requirement for women. So, yeah it was - those were some of my earliest recollections of being on the campus.

00:06:19 **Ruth**

And then, I guess, from that experience, what other activities did you get involved in?

00:06:23 **Ceta**

Well, I got - I ran for student council that first year. So, in the spring of '69, I would've been elected to SAC, Students Administrative Council. And that was a period of time when students were advocating around participation and governance, setting up course unions, course evaluations were brand new ideas. The student government - you know, that was all of the discussion around that time about, you know the beginnings of the discussion about changing the University from a bicameral system of government - with a senate and a board of governors - to a unicameral system. So, there had been a commission on university governance - so I was very intrigued by all of that. I did a little bit of writing for the Varsity, and so on. And then, you know,

the more I got involved in the political life of the campus, I - that summer, I can't remember what month it was, it might've been April or May, students' council paid for a bus so that anybody who wanted to from Toronto could go participate in the Abortion Caravan.

As a matter of routine for a few years before I got there they would buy 10,000 birth-control handbooks every year and distribute them to all first-year students. So, it was a very radical student government and it sort of opened my eyes to the relationship between the University and the community and social responsibility and all of those kinds of ideas. SAC, for example, provided some funding to a project called The Varsity Downtown Education Project, which was a tutoring project in Regent Park. There was also a health clinic that they founded, so there were all of these kinds of things that they were doing. And then they also took a look at the student council budget, and stripped some things from it, like funding for the Toike Oike [engineering newspaper] the football banquet, cheerleaders' uniforms. I mean, those things just did not fit in with the attitude and the interests of the student government at that time.

So that was the context in which I became more actively involved in politics. And then I was sitting on a couple of committees, this would have been in the Fall of '70, in my newly incarnated self, not as a Science student but as an Arts and Science student, interested in political science, and economics, history, and urban geography and all of that kind of stuff. I became a member of the Interdisciplinary Studies Department Committee, and that was a program, a brand new program set up by the Dean's Office of Arts and Science, and they were looking at ways of transforming the rigid credit program of the undergraduate degrees in that faculty to something that was a bit more open and so on.

Interdisciplinary Studies was set up, the department head was a philosopher, Geoffrey Payzant, who also happened to be the Glenn Gould Scholar, he was a very interesting person. Among the other programs that I can recall that were part of that department was environmental studies, and I can't remember if film studies or other studies might've been part of that program. This was the fall of 1970. So, they convened a meeting, we convened a meeting about the directions of the department, and what other things we could be doing, and a group of students came to that meeting and said we need to do something around the study of women, introducing women's studies. And from that, the department - I remember - hosted a public lecture later on that fall, with some, a women professor, I think she might've been from Barnard College in the States, I don't remember her name, and she talked about that, and the wheels got put into motion for a course to be set up, and I was very heavily involved in the development of that course.

00:11:56 **Ruth**

Do you remember the names and the champions of some of the students who presented, I guess?

00:12:02 **Ceta**

Yeah, well one was Charnie Guettel, Charnie Cunningham was her name. There's a chapter in Margrit Eichler's book "Hearts and Minds" [*Minds of Our Own: Inventing Feminist Scholarship in Canada and Québec, 1966 - 1976*] in which I talk about the establishment of that course, and some of the issues around it, and who some of the first teachers were. So, what was very clear was that not only was there a dearth of study of women - or if they were studying women, you know it would be sociology of the family, or anthropology which looked at sex roles and so on. But there was nothing that really sort of talked about women as a subject of study and as a method of study, certainly not as a method of study.

There was also a dearth of analytical materials. There were certainly - so part of what we had to do as a teaching group, there were a group of us who came together to begin the planning for such a course, and what would that look like, what would the curriculum be like? And most - nearly everybody - was a graduate student except me, I was an undergraduate, but they were from various disciplines: they were from history, they were from political science, we were from English. People were beginning to, from their areas of expertise and background, we developed some curriculum, and reading lists which focused on some of those issues. So of course, the literature reading lists were always the longest [laughs] because there were so many books written by women, not necessarily from a feminist perspective, but certainly gave a different kind of perspective. And at that time, you may recall - no, you wouldn't recall you probably weren't born yet [laughs] - that there was a lot of literature beginning to be published out of the state: Robin Morgan's book "Sisterhood is Powerful", you know, there were certainly Betty Friedan's book, some of Kate Millett's stuff started to emerge during that period of time. So, there were certainly some things to draw from. And in Canada, there are a couple of things that we could look at: one was the emergence of the Canadian Women's Educational Press, which became the Women's Press. And they were trying to get an anthology published and they couldn't find a publisher, which is why they set up this thing called the Canadian Women's Educational Press, and some people were hired on a LIP grant (Local Initiatives Program) in order to do so some research around that work.

I became involved with a group called the Labor History Collective, and we put together a book, which was published in 1974 called "Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930" so there's a whole string of essays in there around labour history, and it was one of the first labour histories of women in North America, and it actually won the City of Toronto Book Award in 1975. So, there are essays in there on prostitution, nursing, teaching, domestic work, some political history. I wrote a chapter on the war and on labour market standards and protective legislation, because that's what legislation for women was called at the time "protective legislation" to protect women from exploitation, but to also protect men from the impact women entering the workforce would have on them and so. So, there were all of these parallel things going on. So, we

began the work of preparing that course and then at the same time Professor Jill Conway and Natalie Davis were also developing a parallel course in History. So, their course was also offered in the fall of 1971, it was offered for 1 year. There is a chapter written by Natalie, I think, in that same book edited by Margrit Eichler and a number of other women on women's studies across Canada. It's quite an incredible book because it links the thought process that was going on, and the initiation of work right across the country and across universities.

So, that's kind of how I entered into the politics of women's studies on the campus. We were quite - we had trouble getting the course set up because the University required that a faculty member be in charge of the course, and we were trying to operate as a collective. We could not find a woman faculty member to supervise the course. I think that when you think about the period, 1970-71, women certainly would not want to - the number of women faculty on campus was so tiny, probably less than 5% of people teaching, and this would certainly not be in the senior ranks of the University. They would not want to jeopardize their careers or what they needed to do in order to do that. So, we finally found somebody at Scarborough College, away from the downtown, who was a literature professor, had an interest in film, she was an American, so she had a different kind of sensibility to the work. So, Barbara Martineau agreed to be the Faculty Advisor the first year and she taught a section. So, there were ten sections of the course - I think there were ten - and parallel to the course, the title of the course was FSW, Faculty Studies Women, because it came out of the Dean's Office. And the title of the course was "Women in the 20th Century". Now, how tame could you possibly be [laughs]? And, then a couple of years later the title of the course transitioned into "Women, Oppression, and Liberation". And, then the course had a very different trajectory, there was a 3rd year course added and then, I think were in Interdisciplinary Studies, maybe for two or three years and then we moved to Innis College for 2 or 3 years, and then finally to New College.

The University - we had over 200 students in the course and one of the things that we did was because of our own politics and our own interests, we ran a public lecture series in parallel to the course. So, we had people like, you know, Maryon Kantaroff, sculptor, June Callwood, who was a social activist, Donna Cherniak, who was very involved in the McGill Birth Control Handbook, Judith Ramirez who was involved in the Domestic Workers Intercede in the Immigrant Women's Centre. And I've been looking through my own records trying to find some early materials. I gave the library at New College a bunch of things from that early year, and they had a big flood and a lot of stuff got destroyed. But, I did come across a box, which had some materials, so that some of the people who also gave lectures in the very first year of the course in January in 1972: Margaret Atwood gave a lecture on power politics, because she was then a visiting professor and visiting writer and residence at Victoria College. We had Rosalie Abella give a lecture in 1974, I believe it was, and these lectures were attracting 2, 3, 400 people. So, the University was, I think, starting to take notice about what was going on. We didn't have money to

do that, but I was on SAC during some of that period of time. So we got a small grant which helped pay for the poster and the printing and some of the advertising and the Varsity of course was very helpful, because the Varsity during that period of time was run by some very radical editors. People like Brian Johnson, later on Tom Walkom, Linda McQuaig, you know, folks like that who were willing to take on the status quo.

At some point, I think it was in '73 or '74, Kay Armatage and I, I worked very closely with Kay on some of these things and she and I continue to be life-long friends. Kay and I decided we should demonstrate that it was possible to have a women's studies program. So, we went through the Arts and Sciences' bulletin/calendar and we cut and pasted all the courses that could possibly constitute a program. We put it together in a booklet, the preface to that calendar was written in - was not written in gender-neutral language, everything was "his", the student "he", blah, blah, blah. So, every time it was mentioned we would circle it and this was our preface to the calendar. So, we printed that as a calendar, with the University logo with a head that said "Women's Studies Program". The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences freaked out and called Kay into his office, and Kay was doing her PhD at the time, I was still an undergraduate egging everybody on, but Kay insisted that I'm the one who put the calendar together. I mean, she helped me do it. And the Dean said to her that, "we didn't do things like that at the University. We set up committees." So, Kay said, "let's have a committee," and so we had a committee. And that lead to the formalization of the program. So, the program got formalized, I think in 1974. You know, it was still very tiny, but it was a recognition that it would be a program. And then they set up hiring criteria for the new courses that none of the existing people who were teaching could possibly meet. They wanted, you know, PhD or they wanted, you know, very close to being finished - any way. So, there was some pushback around that but you know, eventually, there were some women who were coming out of the woodwork, so to speak. You know, people like: Chaviva Hošek, people like, you know, Sylvia Van Kirk, Kathryn Morgan, you know, people like that who were - Lorene Clark [later Lorene Smith] was also on the force. She was in the Philosophy Department and very active with the Daycare strike and sit-in that happened on the campus in 1972, I believe that it was, so you know so, there were a lot of allies around. Then, when Kay finished her degree, and she was teaching - she was also involved in setting up Cinema Studies. Actually, a good chunk of our curriculum, too, we showed film because we often thought that they provided a backdrop to the kinds of issues that we wanted to discuss. So, Kay became involved in teaching. She continued on consecutively teaching in the program.

I had, at some point, you know, when I was talking about going to back to school, I had, at some point, skipped off to do graduate work and other work. I might've taught up until '75 or '76, I don't really remember, and you know, sometime towards the early 80's, Kay became the director of what they called "the Graduate Collaborative Program" in Women's Studies so she was the director of it, and it was all located in New College at that point in time. By

this point in time, you know, you had the Royal Commission on the Status of Women reporting in the 70's, a lot of action was starting to happen everywhere. So, in the early 80's I was by then working at City Hall, I helped them complete a study - well, in '75, '74 - '7, I worked at the Toronto School Board. I was not in school then, I was working on the big trustee report on multi-cultural programs which dealt with race relations, heritage languages, you know, funding formula, school community relations and so on and... So, I worked on that piece of work and then I went back to school and, so, I became very involved in issues around race and ethnicity and all of that politics, and then in 1980-81, while I was in graduate school, you know, my work, my Master's work, was on pay equity and on economic theory and on feminist theory, and Margrit Eichler was my thesis advisory and Mary O'Brien was on my committee. And I was asked - I did a little bit of consulting work for City Hall on a utilization study and began the work around the measurement of and participation of racial minorities in the civic workforce at City Hall. So, I prepared that study, and then did a parallel study, sort of estimating the representation rates of minorities and ethnic groups in the population pulling together all sorts of census data. So, the City, then, adopted that report and then developed a plan around - they had already established an equal opportunity program for women, but they were using this as a way of expanding that work to include other misrepresented / underrepresented groups in the civic workforce. So that program, that policy would've been passed in '81 and I started to work there shortly after that. So, you know, that's the women's stuff. So around '85, when the University - then Kay was in her role - was celebrating its 100th anniversary of women being admitted as students, and I don't know if you're familiar with Anne Rochon Ford's book "A Path Not Strewn with Roses" because I gave Anne a whole bunch of my stuff and I said I want it back and she never returned it - so we still have to find the posters that we developed. She said to me later, "oh, I gave it to the UofT Archives," so I don't know if they're with the materials for her book...

00:30:56 **Daniela Ansovini**

Not that I've seen, but I can check.

00:30:59 **Ceta**

That would be great if you looked! [Daniela: yes] But there are images of the posters, because they were all in her book, because they were all silk-screened, hand-done posters, you know with various colors, it was sort of the women are rising. Anyway, so Kay and I were talking about, "how could we possibly commemorate this from a municipal point of view?" I remember saying to her, "so, how many scholarships do you have in the program?" And she said, "we have one. We have a \$60 book prize," and I said, "that's not good enough." [Laughs]. So, I talked to the budget chief at the time who was June Rowlands, who eventually became mayor. And, June was very active in the Association of Women Electors and a lot of social advocacy work, even though she gets a bad rap for being a conservative, she actually fixed the funding for daycares in the City. She was really not the person people made her out to be. She was nervous about gay rights and about proclaiming Pride,

but we're talking about 1985, we're talking about an older, white woman from a whole other generation.

Anyway, June said to me, "that's a great idea! But I'm the Budget Chief, I can't do it, so you have to go find - you need to go and talk to Anne Johnston," who was another important ally in gender issues and who was the one, when she was the Chair of the Board of Health, insisted on curb cuts for all of the streets so people – women could have strollers, and she was chair of the Advocacy Committee for People with Disabilities. So, Anne was more than willing to champion this.

So, we got a five-thousand-dollar undergraduate scholarship set up in 1985, which was, you know, unheard of. The way in which that operated was that the City retained a reserve fund, so we would write a check for five grand every year to the University to cover the cost of the scholarship, and in 1997 when Harris imposed an amalgamation on the City we became very concerned that all of these reserve funds, because there was a string of other scholarships that were subsequently set up, one for women in mathematics, that June insisted on, when the Fields Institute was built in the late 1990's, and there was one for Aboriginal students in health, and there was one for public health, which Anne was very instrumental in getting set up. Anyway, I, then, talked to the powers that be at City Hall and said that we have to do something about these monies, we should transfer them all to the University, and at that point in time the University had matching funding program from the government. So, we got a triple match by transferring over all the money to the University and entering into agreements, and with those additional funds we were able to set up a graduate scholarship in Women's Studies.

So, 2020 will be the 35th anniversary [laughs] of the City's scholarship in Women's Studies. So, every year for the last 35 years there has been a scholar funded by that - an undergraduate student – funded by that, and a graduate student since 1998. So, there's quite a legacy, in what I think I was able to help advance feminist studies on campus, so. Throughout all of that time I moved into this neighborhood, I moved into a house, two houses up on Beverley Street, a house that was owned by the wealthiest family and other blocks around here, were owned by the wealthiest family in the country. I'm now getting into my urban studies, neighborhood, activism work. And, they were trying to assemble nine blocks for demolition and many of the houses were decrepit, and they were falling down and not maintaining them, so we said to the property managers, who were then Canada Trust, we said to them, "well, if you're not going to maintain the properties, why don't you just sell them to us?" And to make a long story short, we then began the process of setting up a non-profit co-op, got some money from CMHC [Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation], hired architects and development advisors, and made a string of offers to the Westons, because it was the Westons who owned the property, and they would not accept any of our offers, because we were a co-op, we were clearly a bunch of communists. They were not interested in us, absolutely not interested in us. We had in the windows – you

know, because they owned Loblaws, and all of that – we made posters, and the posters were on the same yellow that Loblaws used, and we made two sets of signs, one said “HELL NO, WE WON’T GO!” using the Helvetica lettering that they used on their marketing material [laughs], and our second posters was a take-off [phone rings] on their slogan, the slogan was “more than our price is right” because their slogan was “more than the price is right.”

00:37:52 [Interruption, Ceta receives a phone call]

00:37:59 **Ceta** [resumes]

So, we were talking about the Loblaws signage, and as I said before their slogan was “more than THE price is right”, so our slogan was “more than OUR price is right”, in the same yellow paper and the same Helvetica lettering that they used [laughs].

00:38:24 **Daniela**

What year is this?

00:38:26 **Ceta**

Around 1979, '77-'79. Because we had made several offers- I think we incorporated the co-op maybe 1974-75, because in order to get the money from CHMC we had to be incorporated and all of that. And so, I think we might've done that in '74 - '75, I mean, I probably have it somewhere in some documents. Part of this block was owned by the Government of Canada. The building behind this house was the RCMP headquarters for narcotics, security, and fraud. And, the RCMP were in there for a long time and behind it was a very large parking lot and on it would've been the site of the original Weston cookie factory, because you know they did have ties to this neighborhood and did live here back in the old days before they became very wealthy, and then further west was the drill hall where the draft dodgers used to hang out. So, this was very much – we used to be referred to by the lingo as the red-belt especially along Sullivan Street, a friend of mine used to joke and say things like, “oh, your creeping-along crazies live along Sullivan street,” referring to some of the extreme left-wing groups. Anyway, we made, as I was saying earlier, a number of offers to the Westons and they were not budging.

I was very involved at that time, with what was called The South East Spadina Planning Process for the area. So, we were examining the area between University, Spadina, Queen and College, because there were a lot of land assemblies going on. McCaul St. was as site, there were others further up McCaul St. There were a lot of evictions. There was also the hydro block that was bordered up for many for years for the hydro transformer station, and that was the block that the East side of Beverley street from Cecil down to Baldwin, that whole block, it was going to be a hydro transformer station. And then further south, at Dundas and Beverley opposite the Italian Consulate, the number 52 Division was going to go there. So, there was a lot neighborhood activism about, and engagement in, the planning process for the neighborhood. There was also a big concern about protecting rental housing,

building more rental housing. So, I was very involved in all of those meetings that went on developing a secondary plan for the area, and putting in height limits and all of that.

So, I became very steeped in all of that work. So, part of what was determined for the site was housing, and the vacant parking lot would be medium density. So, we were putting together numbers in order to be able to buy the whole block, and part of the formula was that RCMP building would be given for free to the Co-Op in order to provide housing because we were planning to build 270 units of housing on this site. The row with the RC – with the feds went on for, I don't know, 10 years with what would happen to the site, and they finally agreed that – well, and at some point they declared it surplus and we got the City to buy it, and we got the City to agree to lease it to our co-op and we started to develop numbers but at that point in time the maximum unit pricing set by CMHC for social housing was so low that you couldn't build anything in Toronto. So, we had our own campaign going on a weekly basis, we would bug whichever federal minister was involved to increase our maximum unit price so that you could actually build affordable housing.

When people talk about affordability in the City, this has been going on for 50 years! So finally, we realized that couldn't work, you know, we had plans and everything. The City then agreed that they would do it as a separate city housing project. In the meantime, the old man died [interviewer sneezes and apologizes], Garfield Weston, I guess died, and the blocks were part of the family holdings, not part of the corporate entity, so they decided that they would sell it. So, they sold it, at some point, to a developer, but that developer was going to put in a four-story slab rectangular building, and they would operate it as a charity. So, they were bidding against us. It was a fake charity, we referred to it as a fake charity. But their offer was conditional upon re-zoning in place in six months, so needless to say no re-zoning process that I know happens in six months. It's usually a year to two years. So, that fell through, and then they offered the site to another developer who out-bid us, as I said we made four separate offers, he out-bid us by \$100,000. We offered 2.8 million, they sold it for \$2.9M to him, and it was clear that they were not going to sell it to people who lived here.

So, we said to that developer, "you've just inherited 44 houses and people – and I'm sure you've seen the signs in our windows we are not going anywhere, so let's talk about what's possible." And we proposed – and you can imagine, you know, much discussion about what would happen, what should happen, there were some people who lived – who were involved with the co-op proposal who thought that the state should provide housing to everybody and we shouldn't be involved in a co-op, it should be run by the City or the government and there were other people with different views on the subject.

So, we basically said to the new developer, Murray Goldman was his name, the firm was Mastway. They had never done anything in the downtown and

we said to them, “well, here’s our proposal: the City’s acquired 11 Sullivan, they’re going to put in housing there. There’s two acres of vacant land back there, which is the parking lot, and there are 44 houses full of people, so our proposal is that –,” and we had of course did market surveys so we knew what the cost was, we knew how much he paid for the houses – so, we said to him that, “anybody who wanted to buy their house, should be able to buy it at a market price that we determined what was applicable. Anybody who was moving into that building should be able to stay in their house until it was possible. And, he should proceed immediately with the re-development of the vacant land and the rest of it should follow.” So, we were aiming for no-displacement.

So, about ten houses were bought privately by people who lived on the block. I was able, through my family, to put together enough money to buy this house, because I tell you, after 12 years of organizing my housing, the last thing I wanted to do was spend my lifetime organizing my housing [laughs]. So, enough with all of the committee meetings. So, I feel very fortunate in that regard. And then on the vacant land, as I said before the previous developer who out-bid us, had this plan for this four-story square rectangular thing, we then worked with the City right after that to develop design guidelines for that site. So, the design guidelines included things which were: narrow with house-form buildings, with Victorian fenestration, with a back-laneway, because we didn’t want driveways from the front of the house, which we thought were just suburban and wouldn’t fit, garages in the back, not in the front, and so he was just stuck with those design guidelines. So, when you walk along Phoebe Street now you cannot tell, because this would’ve been 1981-82-83, you cannot tell that those houses weren’t part of the whole design for the whole block.

So, there were all those kinds of fights, we were involved with. And then in the 70’s – 74, 75 – we got involved with another brawl with the art gallery [Art Gallery of Ontario] over their expansion plans¹, and then that went on, and then in ‘79 they came for it with another scheme which involved building that little 4-story red brick thing at the southwest corner, so they were building over half an acre of parkland, so we opposed that. And that fight went on for a long time. And then they came back again in the early 80’s with yet another expansion plan, which, “you said in ‘79 that you were never going to expand again.” You know? When is this going to end?

¹ Note added by Ceta: There were three separate episodes where community members in the Grange neighborhood resisted the AGO’s phased expansion projects. The first took place in the late 1970’s ending in a 1979 agreement which residents understood to mean that no further expansion would take place; the second was from 1986-89 in response to the addition designed by Barton Myers and KPMB: the red brick “bus station” which was ripped down by the next expansion; and the third was the Frank Gehry / Ken Thomson project from approx. 2002-2005. The settlement agreement in 2005 resulted in a commitment to work together on the revitalization of Grange Park, a project which was completed in 2014. There is now a community management model in place for park oversight.

So, our last brawl with them was over the Frank Gehry project. In our previous fight with them, there were about 23 things we identified that they needed to fix. Some of which they agreed to do. There was a working committee set up, [Councillor] Jack Layton was chair of that working group, I can't remember the exact dates, but I have all of those documents. The outcome, anyway, of our fight with them - every single time we would of course file appeals at the OMB [Ontario Municipal Board] in order to bring them to the table, because their line was, "we are a big art gallery we're going to do exactly what we want". I remember one year we organized a picket line in front of the gallery and they were having this huge fundraising gala, but their guests wouldn't cross the picket line to go into the building [laughs]. So, you could see them tottering down the streets in their ball gowns and high-heels, sort of being dropped off - they were coming from a block away from where they parked to go into the building.

We always had fun in our various demonstrations. One of our demonstrations against the Westons was in front of their - when they wouldn't sell to us - was in front of their corporate headquarters at Yonge and St. Clair. When Ken Thomson announced that he was going to give the Gallery his collection at seventy-three million dollars, you know, we revved up the neighborhood machine [laughs] again and put together another coalition to fight the gallery over the expansion, because essentially it involved ripping down the previous expansion and building over it.

We had a bunch of people who signed appeals, so we had to fundraise all the money for that, fundraise for an OMB fight, none of us wanted to have an OMB fight but we were willing to do it but we --. The OMB appeal was slated for 2005, the hearing, and we weren't getting any help from our councillor, who was Olivia Chow, and I don't think Olivia really appreciated land use, and the impact it has on people's daily lives. Fortunately, prior to her being our councillor, we had John Sewell, Alan Sparrow, we had Dan Heap [Ceta's addition: and also my University chum Dan Leckie]. Alan Sparrow was absolutely brilliant in all our - we had Jack for a while, Jack Layton. And Jack was very attuned to the neighborhood organizing and we were able to get a whole lot of social housing built in the neighborhood. So, that Hydro block site became housing, the Dundas-Beverley site became housing, the corner of John and Stephanie became housing, the corner of McCaul and Stephanie became housing.

So, if you look around this neighborhood we've identified there's over twenty social housing sites, but you can't tell them because they're so woven into the fabric of the neighborhood which is what you want to have, and there's no distinction between poor doors and rich doors. For example, the Regent Park revitalization, there's poor buildings and the rich buildings. So, we have a lot of criticism about Regent Park, the revitalization, I don't think - because they didn't put in more social housing units than they had before, it's less! And there was a third displacement of people. So, when Alexandra Park was

happening, that revitalization, all of those lessons were applied to that site, but I digress, let me just finish the art gallery row.

We said to the Gallery, we knew that they didn't have an appetite for going to the Board. We knew it was going to get approved, so what could we get out of this? Matthew Teitelbaum, was then director of the Gallery, who, Olivia was on the board but she was not much help. On the board you had real allies like, Avie Bennett, who had got McClelland & Stewart and saved Canadian publishing, and we had a journalist at City Hall, at CityTV, Adam Vaughan, the Gallery had a lawyer who was Steve Diamond, who is now the head of Waterfront Toronto Board and has his own development company now, but at one point in time he was the top development lawyer in the city. We knew that we could get along with Steve. We knew that the Gallery liked Adam. We knew that Adam could work out something with Steve. So, we went to Adam and said, "do you think you could approach Steve and organize some sort of resolution to this fight?" They've got seven appeals at the Board, it's going to cost them \$2-300 grand, everything we do is pro-bono, is on the cheap because we don't have the money to hire lawyers. We did hire lawyers at various places along the way and fundraised for it, but, you know. Anyway, we were able to affect a resolution with the Gallery, where they made a bunch of changes. And the one thing they agreed to do was work with us on a revitalization of Grange Park. And we began that discussion in 2005, right around the time – so that sort of took a whole long period of time around planning, the money, and whatever.

Anyway, in 2006, that municipal election, Adam Vaughan was elected and we then set up – the park was left in perpetuity by the Bolton Family for use as a park. During one of the earlier proposals, the Gallery wanted to dig up the park and dig up a parking lot garage. So, you can imagine how well that went down in the neighborhood, and how – of course you could do that, and still have a park and call it a park, it would still be a park in perpetuity, but the notion of these original chestnut trees being killed, and removed just wasn't going to go down. So, part of the 1911 agreement around the maintenance of the park required that the City maintain it in perpetuity, not the Gallery but the City. So, we were – we had been talking about setting about a park conservancy, creating a whole different management model for the park. Now, after having spent several hundred million dollars on the Gallery and the Gehry project, they were now looking at a very tattered park, so they were very motivated to talk to us. We agreed to participate in the process with them, so we hammered out terms of reference, composition of the working committee, who would chair it, all of that kind of stuff and then those discussions took about a year, and the proviso was that Adam chair it because he was the councillor. He has on the board of the art gallery and he understood our concerns and we trusted him and he's a good friend, and he knew that if he wanted to be re-elected he had to pay attention to what the neighborhood needed. So, to make a long story short, he managed to put together 10 million – several million dollars for the revitalization project. I think five came from the Gallery – or six or something. But the entire process was

driven by this planning committee. So, the park was re-opened in 2014, but there were many iterations about what happened, but that was an example of one of the big rows we had.

The other row that we had was with Canada Life, at the corner of Queen and University. They owned a property right beside to the Rex Hotel, and they had received approval for a 10-story hotel, which was not in keeping with the zoning along Queen Street, which is limited to 4-stories. But we figured a small hotel at 10-stories, you're not going to have a lot of traffic; you're actually going to create a lot of jobs. It wouldn't harm the neighborhood, it was the main commercial strip, so they had that recently approved for about 5 years, and then they came back and said, "oh, by the way, we want to put in and approval for a 25-story building because we had the opportunity to bid on the federal courts." So, they would have a guaranteed client in the building. We were very concerned that the moment a 25-story building got built there the rest of Queen street would just – become a wall of buildings. So, that was another OMB row, which ended up with, again a settlement, but it's a settlement in which I played a major role in negotiating. So, we got close to a million dollars from them, of section 37 money. About half of that went towards providing artists housing, because we figured they would be the group most affected by Queen Street as a cultural strip. So, eventually some of that money went to Artscape as part of the 210 Simcoe Street development. 210 Simcoe street was built by Diamond Corp. Steve Diamond's development company. Steve Diamond was also the lawyer for Canada Life. So, Steve was used to dealing with us – he was the lawyer for the Art Gallery, he was the lawyer for Canada Life – so he was quite happy to settle. And then we got 150 thousand or maybe more as part of that envelope for the Beaver Hall Co-op, because they were falling apart, so they got a whole chunk of money for renovation and restoration of that building. That's the little 29-unit co-op on McCaul Street, just south of Stephanie. And then the balance of the money went to the preparation of the heritage conservation district on Queen Street from University to Bathurst.

So, it was the first heritage conservation district [HDC] – commercial district in the city, probably in the Province. And the City hired – and this emerged out of our lobbying and our work – the City hired Jennifer Keesmaat, who was then working, as a private consultant to do the study, so there's a really interesting big study, which documented every single building. The thing about heritage conservation districts is that you can't approve anything in excess of that, without unraveling the entire city – you probably know this from your work in planning. So, there were a couple of tall buildings. The Canada Life building, was not, needless to say because this was done after, but the building across the street at the corner of Simcoe and Queen, there's a tall building and it got exempt from the study because the City fucked up on a notification, so the owner of the property didn't get notified that this plan was going to be at the OMB so we had many – Adam was the councilor at the time, so we had long discussion about, well, do we try to save the HCD, so we

had – the compromise was to exclude that site from the HCD in order to make sure the HCD went forward.

So, if you go along Queen Street now all of the high-rises is south, and part of that is to protect the sunlight on the sidewalks on Queen Street, and nobody can build anything taller than three or four stories. So, when MEC [Mountain Equipment Co-op] came a long and purchased that site, they had to conform to the HCD, which is why that building is only 3-stories, it's ugly as hell, it doesn't fit in, architecturally, but it meant we wouldn't be facing a huge row, also they would be putting in a 50-space daycare center, so there were some amenities for the neighborhood. Part of our motto, all the way through, all of these fights, was "you win some, you lose some." "You take what you can get." "You just do what you have to." As one city planner used to say to other developers, "even when they lose they win." And, "it's all for the neighborhood." So, that's kind of the backdrop to some of the planning stuff in the neighborhood.

01:07:03 **Ruth**

A question that I had within that, working at U of T, to, I guess, a lot of the planning issues is, I know, during that time period there was a lot of housing issues that students had: finding housing, rent, affordability. Was there a lot of student involvement in a lot of stuff going in this neighborhood?

01:07:21 **Ceta**

There was some. There's a beast called a Community Liaison Committee, which is a committee that City and the University and the neighborhood set up in the 1990's, when Claude Bissell was president, that's how far back it goes [laughs]. And it's chaired by the city councillor. Students are represented on that committee, and they have – they mouth off a bit at those meetings. We meet quarterly. Discussions come up about the fact that the University will not properly deal with rooming house landlords. That they post- They allow them to advertise on their site without doing proper inspections. So, we got heavily involved around that. We got heavily involved around the frat house issues, and finally the University came to the table and wrote a letter saying that the behavior and the conduct of frat houses are – and then they supported the amendments to the by-law regulating rooming houses, because frats were specifically exempted, so they got rolled into that protection. That only happened a couple of years ago. And then the other big row we had the University was over their abominable behavior at 245 College Street, that was sort of one of the most shocking displays of institutional arrogance, if ever there was.

01:09:12 **Daniela**

Which building is that, sorry?

01:09:14 **Ceta**

Campus One, it's known as now, just west of Lillian Smith Library [Daniela: oh yes okay]. That building [laughs]. We were the OMB on that. And I don't know

if you know the story on that. The University had – there was a little strip property that the University was renting and they had the first right of refusal on it, on part of that site. And, somebody bought the property adjacent to it, the Lehberg Family, Knightsbridge or Knightstone [Knightstone Capital Management] I think, this is 7 years ago – 10 years ago. Once they bought it, the University promptly exercised their first right of refusal to buy the land beside it. They bought it and they promptly declared it surplus, so they did all of this as a real-estate deal. They did this in-camera, at Governing Council, so nobody knew what the hell was going on, we didn't know. And then they entered into a lease with Knightstone. So, the university still owns part of the site, Knightstone owns the rest of it. And the whole thing was, "we need student housing! We need student housing! We need student housing!"

Then, there's concern with the size, the height, and the impact on the neighborhood to the south. And then when they had an opportunity they bought some more real estate to the west but instead of using that to produce the height, they used it to expand a number of beds that are in that building. There's close to 7 to 800 beds in that building. So, all of the University's student bodies supported us, came to the OMB hearings, we raised a lot of money to fight the University. There were a couple of people who said to me, "I was going to donate all this money to the University, but I hate what they're doing so I'm giving it to you to fight them." And there were a lot of University alumni – we managed to raise eighty thousand dollars towards our legal and planning fees so we could participate in the hearing. I remember saying to the Chair of the Governing Council at the time, after we lost a hearing, you know, we tried to talk to the University, the Councillor tried to talk to the University. But they were just – the president was Naylor at the time and Naylor would just say things like, "were just a bunch of nimbies," he would say things like, "he would look forward to the day when the University would be ringed by verticals," – tall buildings. We had to file an FOI, freedom of information, to get a copy of the lease arrangement between the University, and we eventually got it, but the day they were force to release it, Naylor issued a press release denouncing the neighbors and the residents, the University was more important than the City, it was just really hostile towards the community.

So, when Meric Gertler became president, he had a job to do [laughs] to restore relationships, because one of the things happened was that when Naylor said, "he looked forward to the day when the University would be ringed by verticals," he managed to glue together the Harbord Village Residents Association, the Grange residents, the Annex residents, and the Huron-Sussex residents. So, when we were at the OBM all the residents' groups were there fighting the University and fighting this development. And certainly, when the university came back a couple of years ago with the Spadina / Sussex project we were there at the table, another hearing process! I mean, that one got mediated. But, they're finally going to start construction, this summer, I think, but at least they're putting in geothermal under the Robert's Street field in order to – I mean, so, we got a bunch of things out of it, like a long-term --. Because, there were tenants in the Bookstore at the corner of

Spadina / Sussex, so we managed to secure permanent rental accommodations for them. We got arrangements for temporary housing for them through Daniels or through Huron-Sussex, you know. So, the Daniels people were also motivated to look good because they claimed to be a progressive developer after having done Regent Park [laughs].

But, you know, we're never been seduced by that. We've just been at this game for too - we don't buy the marketing, we just don't. So, students, yes, we've had a pretty good relationship with them, and have worked with them over things like noise abatement during Frosh Week. I know Adam worked closely with them over the closing of Willcocks Street, and I know I've had lots of conversations with them, certainly with Innis College people over getting some sort of crosswalk or something at the corner of Sussex and St. George. So, you know, it's fun to have the students along for the ride.

01:16:06 **Ruth**

Well, that sounds amazing! It's interesting, how - I think this is more a question for me - I know U of T develops plans, secondary plans that they have for their own expansion. Do they consult with the different resident groups?

01:16:20 **Ceta**

Oh yeah, well, we're all part of the CLC, the liaison committee, so that plan is there. So, our mantra with Meric Gertler all along, and every time we meet with him, we have an annual meeting with him and we say to him, "the University has a bunch of development sites on its main campus, why are you exporting your heights to the neighborhood? You want things on your site to be 10-stories, 12-stories, 8-stories. Why do you want 20-stories in the neighborhoods?" So, you know, they're quite willing to protect their own property. So, there's a big brawl happening over the planetarium site. But the residents at the north end, the Annex residents and condo owners there are leading that fight.

01:17:24 **Ruth**

And then another question was about the concept of the teaching collective [Ceta interjects: "Oh yeah!"] so could you tell us a little bit more about the way that, I guess, the curriculum was developed and then the level of engagement from students - as getting feedback from them and then trying to integrate that into further curriculum developments?

01:17:44 **Ceta**

Students weren't as involved, then, in the curriculum development. I mean, the students in the courses weren't as involved. This was brand new territory, we were learning as we were doing. We were bringing our own knowledge to the table and developing materials, so we developed the course into various sections, there were a set of themes and would identify literature - core literature, core reading materials for it. We did ask the students to keep a journal. We did ask them to become involved in action projects within the

community - very much the precursor to um, what's the name? They call it something.

01:18:37 **Ruth**

Community service learning?

01:18:38 **Ceta**

Community - right, it's now called that. So, that was the kind of feedback we were getting from the students. But, you know, we were making it up as we went.

01:19:00 **Daniela**

I was curious, sort of similarly, probably a lot of the people who came to - or maybe not, but - the kind of political consciousness or kind of familiarity with feminist thought and how that worked in the class itself that was---

01:19:21 **Ceta**

I noticed, for example, a real difference in the opinions of the young undergraduates and the older students because there were evening sessions to the course. So, the people who were taking the 4-6pm and certainly the people who were attending the lectures. I found that there was, what the Marxists refer to as, "false consciousness" among some of the younger students. Because, you know, there would've been so many changes that would've taken place that they would not have experienced the same sort of barriers, so that there was a feeling that, among some of the younger students, that, "we're not going to experience discrimination in the workplace, everything will be fixed, there's equal pay, there's..." It's the thing that happens with teenagers, "the world is before us!" Whereas the older students, who had been in the workforce, had a different set of experiences, so it was a really interesting dynamic when you had a mixture of student ages in the sessions. Of course, the daytime sessions tended to be undergraduate students, so you wouldn't've had that kind of opportunity for that kind of learning from experience. That's kind of the observation. I don't know if I sent this to you but, Myrna Kostash, a really fine author, she was a journalist, and she wrote - she sat in on the course. So, we had these big conversations about whether or not we'd let a journalist sit in on the course and write about it. So, she published two articles in Chatelaine about the course. Did I...?

01:21:39 **Daniela**

You did! And it's amazing to see, how detailed it is too in working out what you're going to discuss, I think it starts out with related discussions about family and parenthood and what that means. it's an amazing document.

01:21:58 **Ceta**

Yes! There are two, it's in two parts. Because it was too big to send as one document [laughs]. You might want to take a look at that, Ruth. There were - that I think is the article that really kind of gives a sense of what it was like to be in the room.

01:22:32 **Ruth**

I guess, is there anybody else that you think we should speak to for the project as we proceed with our interviews?

01:22:40 **Ceta**

Well, what is your focus of the project?

01:22:42 **Ruth**

We're focused on BIPOC communities, so Black, Indigenous, POC [person of colour], as well as women, and LGBTQ+ student activism.

01:23:00 **Ceta**

Well, issues of gender, LGBTQ issues were not... It was a lot of discussion of sexuality and women's sexuality. We did invite Jill Johnston to come and Kay Armatage had made a film about Jill Johnston, so we did show that at some point. We showed her film, but later on Kay made a film about Jill Johnston. I don't recall outside of that a lot of discussion about sexuality, I mean, about LGBTQ issues. And, there was a lot of discussion about other countries, because there was a woman [Karen Webster] who was in the course who lived in Nigeria, I believe, so there was a good chunk our work where we looked at, you know, China, and the Chinese Revolution and how women were treated. We looked at stuff out of Russia and all of that comparative material. It was a survey course, it was not... We covered everything at this level and it was sort of not until later years that I think that you could go deeper into some of those issues. That's, I think, the value of now having an institute where there is now some ideas around feminist methodology, as well as more detailed study of subject areas and content areas.

01:25:05 **Daniela**

Can I ask, just a more a global question: It seems like the work that you did at U of T as a student fed also into a lot of your work and career as a whole, but you've also maintained a relationship with the University and I'm curious how you see student activism at the University now, or how that time shaped your relationship with the University itself?

01:25:42 **Ceta**

I partly maintain my relationship through Women's Studies and then, again, when - you know, partly because Kay was there, and she and I are sort of lifelong friends. And I maintained a connection with the scholarship because I insisted on being involved in the selection process every year. But, I think the University is changing how they're doing their scholarship selections. And then at some point, Yves Roberge, who was Principal at New College, asked if I would represent the College as an alumni on the College of Electors, and that's the college that picks the Chancellor, so I had that connection for a while. And then when Kay was Acting Principal at Innis College, she asked if I would be a Principal's Appointee to the College Council and I agreed to do that. And then Janet Paterson, when she returned, asked if me I would stay

on, and then Charlie Keil, the current principal, asked if I would stay on, and then we got involved in discussions about the Harold Innis Foundation, and they reinvigorated it, and I'm the chair of that foundation. So, certainly when I retired from the City in 2010, I deepened some of my connections with some projects. Because, you know, I'm also the National Chair of Word on the Street, so I do that work. When I was a City Councillor, when I went back in 2014, one of the projects that I worked on was the creation of a book garden, done at Harbourfront where we would have pavers for the City of Toronto Book Award, the recipients. So, you know, these were all opportunities that happened and I would sort of jump on them.

And certainly, because my interest in heritage issues and so on, that five-month period that I was in City Council, I became involved with the work around the El Mocambo, the Silver Dollar. Because the Heritage staff were fussing about issues around whether or not the buildings itself had heritage value, and I was arguing for a more - for the uses, as also having heritage uses. So, they were dithering for example around Silver Dollar, so I went in on get my own heritage expert to write me a letter [laughs] which I then filed with the committee. Are they going to object? Are they going to say this person - who is THE heritage architectural expert in the city - they're not going to ignore what Michael McLelland has to say. Toronto's a small place, you work in planning, you work in heritage, you work in neighborhood advocacy, you do wind up having connections all the time with people. And when things happen also...

One of the main guys I worked with in our community association, he has become such an expert on the OMB process that Max advises the Garment District Workers, the Queen West Residents, so we have our own network that we're involved with... You know? I live two blocks away from the University, so it's just kind of the things that interest me are on campus. I mean, if I lived in another place, it's hard to say whether I'd have those connections. It's about people and place, just as much as it is anything. Are you bored yet? [laughs]

01:30:41 **Ruth**

Never [laughs], I find this so interesting. I guess, I would just close it off by asking if there's anything else you'd like add? Anything that you missed you out, that you wanted to highlight, to include?

01:30:57 **Ceta**

I can't really think of anything off-hand. What I've tried to do was canvas for you my connections with all of this work. I've also done work on the international level, because I was on the board of MATCH International Centre [later to become the MATCH International Women's Fund and again, renamed the Equality Fund] for 10 years, and it has now evolved into the Equality Fund [phone rings]...

MATCH was set up, I forget what year, I think in the early 70's. I think it was as a result of the Copenhagen Conference. It was set up to fundraise in Canada,

to provide the money to women's organizations overseas. So, I got the chance to work with Rosemary Brown, and a whole bunch women like that. Molly Johnson's mum was one of the co-founders, Suzanne Johnson. So, I was on that board for a number of years and one of the really nice things that we did, was we lobbied for the establishment for a Commonwealth Women's Network to act as advocates for women at heads of government meetings - The CHOGM [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting] and the Status of Women Ministers, so I got to be part of the official city delegation to Cyprus in 1993 and 1996. Hedy Fry was in the Minister in '96 and Mary Collins was the minister in 1993. So that was kind of interesting to be a part of the official delegation because we got treated so well [laughs], and a lot of red tape gets eliminated around participation. And, then the other program- project, committee that I was involved in was in 1983, as a result of my research work in pay equity and employment equity and all of that work. I was appointed by the Bill Davis government to be on the Ontario Advisory Council of Women's Issues. So, we did a lot of work on employment standards, domestic workers, and on prostitution, and so some of those early studies are some of those papers that I have that - I want somebody to have them, not me [laughs]. So, I was on that council for five years, and did a lot of public policy advocacy work, and I was re-appointed by the McGuinty government in '85 [correction, David Peterson's government].

So, I was on it from 83-88. So even though there was a government body, we were able to use our resources and to have a progressive line on some of these issues. It was interesting to do that but, you know... You got to do what you got to do [laughs]! Those are some of the gender-related things I worked on, in addition to fighting all of the developers around here [laughs], and being at City Hall.

At some point, I suppose I can talk to you about the work we did at City Hall. Some of the ground-breaking pieces of work that we did at City Hall in 1981. I just started working at City Hall. We prepared briefs for the mayor, Eggleton was mayor at the time, to present to the Province around amending the Ontario Human Rights Code to include sexual orientation. I think it was Bill 7. Then, shortly after that, through the work of the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations we set up a task force on contract compliance. And that was a task force that extended the definition of "anti-discrimination" to include sexual orientation, immigrant status, literacy, and all of those things. And what was the really interesting outcome of that was that we also required all the civic agencies and all our boards and commissions to adopt anti-discrimination policies that were similar - no, not similar, consistent with that of City Council. So, the wording could be different, but the goals had to be consistent with that of City Council. We required anybody who got a grant from the City to adopt the policy of non-discrimination as a condition of City funding which is why we got into that big fight QAIA, Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, a few years ago when some people were trying to cancel their grants. And we had to keep reminding them that our anti-discrimination policy says we protect LGBT rights.

And then the third thing, which is actually a short-term policy, was over a couple of years there was a requirement that any contractor that had a City grant had to conduct workforce audits and file that with the City as a condition of doing business with the City. So, we were able to research on the profile of those workforces who were contractors. That only lasted a couple of years because by then, at some point, there was the federal employment equity legislation, and there was the provincial legislation and businesses were going on and on about duplication of requirements even though we had much higher standards than everybody else. So, there was very interesting research that emerged out of that. What was clear was that data, before we imposed the policy and after we had the policy, that there was a clear increase in the representation in designated groups among City suppliers.

Once the Federal employment equity act came in and the provincial too, we just did not have that requirement anymore around filing data, because it was a paper avalanche! When you have data filed from several thousand firms [laughs], it's a bit of a nightmare. And then, we had to do things like - and this was the fun part of it. They can get their bid and if they didn't file their data within 90 days they were suspended from doing further business with the City. So, The Sun would write editorials calling this program the "bill of wrongs"... [laughs]. You know, there were cartoons about it. I was managing that program as part of our equity efforts. We did other interesting things like ban beauty contests from Nathan Phillips Square, because they were just bikini contests, put into place guidelines for the use of Nathan Phillips Square. We really seized the opportunities in front of us to take charge of the apparatus of government to advance equity issues.

This was all during the period of time where we were funding the scholarships, having a very rigorous race relations committee. And then when amalgamation hit in '98 we - in '95, we introduced a workplace human rights and harassment policy which set up a whole system for investigating complaints.

One of the things that we did during that time was that we did mandatory training for every single fire hall in the City. And they tried to sabotage it, but the Fire Chief got very tired for the human rights complaints that were coming forward, particularly around harassment of women and harassment around LGBTQ issues, so he ordered mandatory training. It took us about six weeks to train everybody. So, he would take several trucks out of service everyday to do training down at the Fire Academy. And Some of those trucks, in order to get everybody in, some of the training would happen at two in the morning, because that's when the shifts were on and they would think that we wouldn't turn up. But I had a crew - there were four of us - and we team taught those with one of their people who was in uniform, so they knew that this was going on. Everything has gone into complete decline since there's none of this rigorous kind of enforcement or investigation. Once we started doing the mandatory training across the City, the complaints just dropped!

The other thing that we did was mandatory - they don't do this anymore. The Equity Office had mandatory right to monitor all the hiring process, so we could sit in on any hiring process. And we would decide based on the representation rate of the groups within that particular unit, the pattern of complaint in that particular unit - we would just do it at random. It upset a lot of people [laughs]. Someone would phone up and say, "I'm applying to this job and there's this pattern..." and we would then decide whether or not we would monitor the hiring process then. So, we would get to vet the questions, the process, how they shortlisted applications. It was fun, it was fun [laughs] being able to wade into, but post-amalgamation, they don't do any of that anymore. It was the best of times [laughs], it's all downhill every since [laughs]... So those are some of the kind of things we did during that, absurdly, certainly last round of equity work with the City.

01:42:58 **Ruth**

Well, thank you so much. It's been an amazing interview.

01:43:00 **Ceta**

You're welcome! So, all of the things I've talked about are things I have boxes of paper on.