

LISA LISSIMORE

Narrator

KIM HEIKKILA

Interviewer

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TRANSCRIPT – LISA LISSIMORE

Interviewee: Lisa Lissimore
Interviewer: Kim Heikkila
Interview Date: February, 26, 2025
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[START OF INTERVIEW]

Kim Heikkila: This is an interview for the Oxford Community Center Oral History Project. It is Wednesday, February 26, 2025, and I'm here at the Minnesota History Center with Lisa Lissimore. My name is Kim Heikkila. Today I'll be talking to Lisa about her involvement at Oxford over many years, from when she was a girl to today. I just want to acknowledge that this is the second interview that Lisa and I have done, the first one being for another project, but where we talked about Oxford quite a bit as well. And want to acknowledge, too, that that previous interview kind of inspired this whole Oxford research project that you and Frank and Bill and I are all working on. So thank you so much for that interview, for being here today again, and for just all your support and your work on this project.

Lisa Lissimore: I appreciate it, Kim, and it's a fabulous project to be a part of. Happy to be able to share the story about the role that Oxford playground played in my development.

KH: Excellent. Okay, so I'm just going to ask this opening question that you can answer pretty briefly, because the actual answer to it will be quite extensive. But you can just answer it briefly now, and then we'll back up and we'll let it expand as it goes. So what is your connection

to Oxford? You can think even in terms of the form I sent you, like, how were you involved at Oxford?

[00:01:35]

LL: How was I involved at Oxford? Like most youth who grew up in the Rondo community who lived south of 94, and my family moved over to Hague Avenue, and I transferred to a new school called J.J. Hill. J.J. Hill was, I guess it would be up the road from Oxford, but most of the kids who attended J.J. Hill also attended Oxford Recreation Center to take part in their after school activities. Sometimes those activities included projects in the art room that was there and was led by a wonderful woman by the name of Pat Gaustad, I believe her last name is, I could be wrong on that. Pat was great at providing activities for us to partake in, whether it was painting or building some type of pottery or what have you. But again, another opportunity that we didn't necessarily receive during the school day. We also had opportunities to play different sports or do different things utilizing the gym.

However, Oxford had organized sports programs for both girls and boys, and so when I first attended Oxford, I did so at the request of one of my classmates. They were looking for another person to play on their football team, and it was a girls flag football team. I had no idea what football was. Really no idea whatsoever. And so I said, "What is football?" They just gave me a description of what it was. And I said, "Well, where do you play this at?" And they said, "Well, Oxford." And I had no idea where Oxford was. I knew it was a recreation center, but I had no idea where it was located. So I said, "Gosh, you have to come home with me and share all this information with my mother," because I could not provide the details that I knew she would have wanted. And so that's what took place. We ended up going to my home. My friend explained things to my mother, and my mother agreed that I could try it as long as I was back home before

it got dark, because Oxford was a little bit of a jaunt from where I lived. And, of course, you didn't want your daughters to be walking home after dark, you know, during that time.

[00:04:18]

LL: So anyway, I went down to Oxford and just picked up on the game really, really quickly. I don't know why I was able to catch and run and all those kinds of things. I think some of that came from recess, you know, because that happened to be my favorite class, one of my favorite classes, anyway. So, we all played football, and it was [an] all girls flag football league that St. Paul Park and Recs had sponsored. We played other teams, the west side, and there were some others that were on the east side. And it was great. We were coached, believe it or not, by women at that particular point in time. And ironically, when I became a teenager, I realized that these women that were coaching me weren't that many years older than I was. They were probably about four years older than me. Honestly, they were teenagers themselves, let's put it that way, but older teenagers. So that was my first experience with being coached by a woman, or by females, I should say, because there was more than one.

Then once the football season was over, we moved into the gym where we had our own basketball team. And the very first year, and mind you, this is about 1970, and I'm in fifth grade, and we played six on six basketball, like many others were playing. However, we were allowed to have what is called two rovers, and those individuals could run the full court, if you will. The others of us were stuck on either the defensive end or the offensive end. And again, because I had never played this game before, I was stuck on the defensive end, so I was able to watch all the offense that took place on the other end. And, you know, the joy of making a basket or watching someone else do a layup and those kinds of things. So I was just, "Oh, I've got to figure out how to do this, because I want to be on that end." But anyway, as things would have it, our

team was pretty good. We had, again, the same group of athletes that played football, playing basketball, or I should say, playing flag football, playing basketball. Once the basketball season ended, we then moved into running track and playing softball. So here I am as a ten-year-old being exposed to all these different sports. And, again, we had recess at the elementary school where we were playing primarily kickball, dodgeball, those kinds of things, you know, in the gym and on the playground. And boy, I tell you, it just opened my eyes to all the different opportunities that were out there.

[00:07:16]

LL: Then I transitioned into middle school or junior high school, and once again, I'm exposed to more sports, the sports of volleyball, broom ball, and those kinds of things. And so sports really did become a part of my true makeup, and that's where my love of sport began. I have to attribute my love and passion for sports to Oxford because that's where I was first exposed to it. So it was just truly amazing. Then by the time I entered sixth grade, the game of basketball changed, and we were able to run full court, so five on five. Therefore I had the opportunity to shoot baskets and learn the different shots that were a part of the game. And we had one person—her name was Weller Johnson [ph??], and I would call her my peer role model, because she was the most athletically gifted person I had ever met. I'd have to say person, because she could compete and play with the boys, and oftentimes, that's what she did, but she did so making her own choice to do so. The rest of us were truly playing on girls teams, because that's what we wanted to do. There were others who were probably good enough to play on a boys team, too, and one of my other good friends, Debbie Stampley, she played on the boys football team. But Weller was unique in that she not only played football with the boys, and she played with the girls, but she was the quarterback of the boys team. The quarterback of the boys

team. We had great athletes that have come through Oxford playground, the Stacy Robinsons of the world, the John Withers and other folks who hear this will know those names, and lots of great players that came through Oxford. Here Weller was quarterbacking the boys team, and she also played on the boys baseball team. That baseball team has won whatever the championship was back in those days. So Weller was very, very gifted and talented, and yet she still shared her skill sets with us on the girls side. And so, for me, she was the athlete that I wanted to be like.

[00:09:57]

KH: Was she older than you?

LL: No, we were the same age. Yeah, same age and just very athletically gifted, and so I wanted to play basketball like her. I wanted to dribble like her. I didn't want to play tackle football. I was very comfortable with girls flag football, but when she left our team, I became the quarterback. I was her wide receiver, right? But then when she left the team, I became the quarterback for our girls team. And, again, a lot of that came from watching her and being so well-coached by other female athletes as well. This group of us would go on to continue our careers in junior high school and in high school, and then some of us even played together in college, i.e., Linda Roberts and I played for the Gophers for a season.

KH: And then in your case, and Linda's, too, you go on to have careers in sports and athletics.

[00:11:02]

LL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. In sports. A lot of that still came as a result of the adults that were running the Oxford programs and the center as a whole. Because one of the things that Bill Peterson did was to recruit people from the Rondo community to coach a lot of the teams that were there. That's how we were able to have female coaches and also be exposed to female

coaches who also had played collegiate basketball and volleyball, and they were all great, great softball players. So we would, during the adult leagues, come down to Oxford to watch these guys play, because they played on the weekends. We didn't necessarily play on the weekends. We played on the weekdays, after school and those kinds of things.

But it was just a phenomenal place where there were so many things in motion, and a lot of the people; the coaches we had, the administrators that ran Oxford, became mentors of many of us. Bill Peterson is an example of that. Frank White is an example of that. Steve Winfield is another example. Debbie Montgomery, who was probably, in all honesty, the first adult female athlete that I had personally met and played with as a young person—a young person, being a teenager. I mean, Debbie was in the gym with us playing basketball. I can remember playing full court with her, and she's down on defense, and I'm dribbling the ball down, and I'm like, "Wow, this is someone's mom down here playing with me, you know? What am I going to do? Do I really take her on, one on one? What do I do?" She treated us like we were ballers, which we were. She played equally as hard against us. There was no, "Oh, these are the kids, I have to play soft or whatever. Let them go." No. She played and really helped prepare us for the journey ahead, to be quite honest. So she has always stood out as a great role model for all of us, and encouraged us to follow our dreams wherever they would lead us to, especially as it related to academics and athletics. Because that was so much a part of who she was, and we recognized that and saw that at a very, very early age.

[00:13:47]

LL: So I had other role models. Wilma Rudolph and Althea Gibson were true role models of mine. I was introduced to their careers, or their life stories, when I was 10 years old, in this fifth grade class that was taught by one of the most phenomenal teachers and one of the

greatest influencers in my life. Her name was Rhoda Miller then, but Rhoda Stroud, who is this phenomenal woman who tied into her curriculum. She was clever enough, or one of the greatest educators, who not only taught the things she was supposed to teach us, you know, the math, the science and all those kinds of things, but she also turned us on to Black history, I guess is the way I should put it. She knew each of our various interests. I mean, she watched me run up and down that playground at J.J. Hill. So she knew I was very athletic, and that I love games and competition and those kinds of things. So she introduced us to Wilma Rudolph and to Althea Gibson, and she also would do great things like bring professional athletes and collegiate athletes into our class to talk about their journeys. So we knew what the possibilities were, and we had all these different visions of possibilities as well. I think those were things that truly made a difference in all of our lives, we knew that anything was possible and that we could do it if we applied ourselves in the way that we should, if we did the right things.

Then you had Oxford over here, so we would leave that classroom and go to Oxford after school, and we had the same type of seeds planted in us there with people that truly cared about us and wanted to see us do things that we were pretty much capable of doing. They did not allow us to set limits on ourselves; never, ever, ever. Even being a girl, a female athlete, and sometimes being coached by men, like Bill was my coach, Stevie Winfield was my coach. But they never, ever treated us any differently than the way they treated the boys that they coached.

We were able to watch some of that coaching take place. I was literally just someone that wanted to be good at whatever it was I set out to do athletically. Well, academically, too, but athletically we're talking here. So I would stay in the gym when I could to watch the boys practice. Those practices were led by all of those guys. And so they didn't treat us any differently than what they did. If they called the boys "meathead", they called the girls "meathead." If they

made the guys run a whole lot, we ran a lot, too. There was no treating the girls differently. They were just as hard on us and had the same expectations that they had of these young men that they were coaching as well. I think that did a lot for us, you know.

[00:17:19]

KH: And so this is what, early 70s, right? There's this broad cultural belief that, well, women of any background, any racial background really, shouldn't run a marathon, because their uterus is going to drop right out, and they won't be able to become mothers. So to hear you talk about even male coaches, recognizing the athletic abilities and interests and skills in young women, that's not a small thing.

LL: No, it isn't. And I have to tell you some of that history I did not learn until I was a full-fledged, almost 30-year-old adult woman. I had no idea, because athletics had played such a central role in my life. There were many times when I might be part of a panel where I was either with women my same age, or there were always some that were a little bit older. I couldn't believe that their experience was not like mine. When I would hear the stories about how they had to play on their brother's team, or they practiced only with their brother's team, but could not compete because there wasn't a team for girls, or girls weren't allowed on that boys team, I was floored, because of the opportunities that we had at Oxford. It was truly amazing.

Then, as part of all of that, Kim, it was instilled in all of us that we had to give back. And so, therefore, a lot of us that were part of those Oxford teams came back to Oxford to teach, to work, and to share all those things that we had learned, with others who were coming, who were behind us. So it was, to a degree, sort of a passing of the torch, or the baton I should say, for us to come back and to create programming for girls as well, to hone in on their athletic skill sets and to also serve as an example of what is possible. I can only think of a few of us that did not

continue our athletic careers at the collegiate level. Now, not all of us made it through four years, but up to four, many of us, and many of us had great careers.

[00:20:14]

Linda Roberts is an example of that, as it relates to the Rondo community, and probably throughout the state of Minnesota, and probably the region and the Big 10, is one of the most phenomenal female basketball players there is. Her jersey is retired, her name, image and likeness is very present in Williams Arena. And Linda, along with many others of us, ran a basketball clinic as our way of giving back to this community that poured so much into us. Not only did we share all of that with Oxford, but we wanted to share it with young girls throughout the Rondo community, and I would actually say the City of St. Paul, because we did not turn away. You didn't have to come from Oxford to be a part of the Shooting Stars Girls Basketball Clinic.

In fact, the clinic, which we truly wanted to be a part of Oxford's programming, and for a few years it was, but with demands for gym space and all those kinds of things, we had to run the clinic at Oxford. Also ran it at the Martin Luther King Center, if you will. Then we took it over to Minneapolis because we wanted our peers over there to have opportunities as well, because that's who we leaned in on, our basketball-playing friends, not just those that grew up in St. Paul with us, but we also had connections with athletes in Minneapolis who were in similar situations. They all frequent a particular rec center where they had the same opportunities that we did, and these are urban hubs. Man, we're talking Minneapolis, both North and South Minneapolis, and then you're talking Rondo here in Saint Paul where, gosh, we had just such great opportunities to compete, and we often competed against each other. And through all of that competition, friendships were built. That's the thing that the other big part of Oxford is, many of the people

that I played at Oxford with, are still very, very good friends of mine. I can broaden that a bit and that same thing is true with the young women I played against and with, who were from Minneapolis.

[00:22:59]

LL: One of my other best friends is Kathie Eiland Madison. She is the Linda Roberts in the Minneapolis, North community. She and Linda played on the Gophers team as well. I came a year later, so I missed Kathie. Christine Durand was another player here in the Twin Cities that was just one of the most outstanding basketball players this city has ever produced as well. She attended Highland Senior High School, but we competed against each other all through junior high school and high school. And then here, both she, Linda, and I, all competitors as high schoolers and junior high schoolers, but then we all played together for the Gophers. Linda and Christine played three years for the Gophers, and then I played one year with both Christine and Linda. But this community has been so blessed with producing and pouring into players and athletes such as the Christine Durand, the Linda Roberts, the Rita Burches, who went on to play for Marquette University. Deborah Stampely, who also is from this Rondo community, joined Rita at Marquette, and they played seasons together there as well. I'm trying to think of others. We had my younger sister and Christine's younger sister, Stacy and Roxanne Lissimore, who were true recruits of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. They were slated to go there, but chose not to.

But there just has been just great, great athletes who have come from this community whose roots were planted or started at Oxford and went on to do just great things. I mean, it brought so much pride to this community to be able to go over to Williams Arena and see three of their finest ball players playing in that arena, in that gymnasium. We've always had the Dave

Winfields, and there were others who had played for the University of Minnesota, but to have three outstanding female ball players who played together, played against each other, and now come together to become teammates for the Gophers was something to behold in this community. It brought the community into that arena, which is not a place where they were going to go, because there was no one there on the team that represented this community, per se. So it did a lot of things for the community.

[00:26:03]

LL: Obviously, it provided education and athletic opportunities for those of us who attended the university over there, and both Christine and Linda are graduates of the University of Minnesota. So there was just a lot of positivity that has come from playing these games, and we were literally playing games at Oxford playground, and not fully understanding that it would open the doors that were open for us, whether it was for our athletic careers or at the collegiate or high school level, or even opening doors for our professional careers. You know, I'm not sure exactly what Christine, what her life career has been, but I wouldn't be surprised if she hadn't coached some place, even if it was coaching at the youth level, because athletics was just such a part of us. I knew early on, when making the decision to go to college, when determining what my career or what my major was going to be, that athletics needed to be a part of it. That's how I landed with wanting to be a sports writer, because I figured I would combine my love of writing with my love of sport and [a] front row seat to watch all the action and not really understanding that it truly is work and that you're looking through a different lens when you're trying to produce stories and those kinds of things. But I just knew that it had to be a part of it. And truly enough, that's exactly what happened for me as well as for Linda, too. Linda and I co-coached, I think that was a part of the other oral history piece that we worked on, but we co-coached together as

well. I don't know how I've been able to deal with her for as long as I have. It's a good thing we're cousins, you know, and we like each other. [Laughter.]

[00:28:10]

KH: So I have just so many questions based on what you were just saying. Let me start with this one. So Christine Durand, your friend, is she African American?

LL: Absolutely.

KH: So am I correct in assuming that most, if not all, the female athletes that you played with at Oxford were African American because they were coming from the surrounding community—

LL: Absolutely. Yes, right here, Summit-University community. Yeah, they were all African American. Yeah, they were all African American women that we were playing with, yeah, and we were coached by all African American women. The women that coached us were African American women as well.

KH: Awesome. Yeah, okay, so that is going to be a segue for me to back up chronologically in your life and just ask you to tell me a little bit about your family, your parents and your siblings and yeah, I'll leave it at that, and then I'll [inaudible].

LL: Well, my family, their roots are in Valdosta, Georgia. My aunt, Linda's mother, and Linda's father moved here in the 50s, and Linda's mother and my grandmother were sisters. So my grandfather moved Linda's mother here—drove her from Valdosta, Georgia to St. Paul once Linda's father, who was in the military, was settled. My grandfather stayed a bit and picked up work at what was then Ramsey Hospital [laughs] and then he went into, for some reason, somehow, I'm not real clear on the story, learning carpentry. So what happened is they all realized the great opportunities that there were in the north, and so, they ultimately ended up

staying. And each sibling, for which there were six of them, each one eventually moved up here. Linda's mother and her three sisters and two brothers all ended up moving here from Valdosta, and took advantage of the opportunities. My Uncle Harold was what we called a great, great cook, and has had restaurants here in the Twin Cities throughout all of his adult life. In fact, I never had ribs other than his ribs until I was probably 27. Believe it or not, we didn't go to Rudolph's or all those other places that were serving ribs, because my uncle had a rib joint, and that's where we all would eat. That's what we knew, were his ribs.

[00:30:50]

LL: And so others of them ended up working for Control Data [Corporation] and places like that. We all ended up, everyone ended up moving here into the Rondo community. Like I said, my uncle was an entrepreneur and had several restaurants, and my grandfather ended up spending his career working at Ramsey Hospital. My uncle was in the military, retired from there. So that's how all of us ended up leaving Georgia and coming here to Minnesota.

So it's my generation that's born here. All of the kids are very close knit. We have always had huge extended family gatherings around the holidays and which ultimately resulted into a close-knit family where many of us have lived. Those of us that lived south of 94 were probably anywhere between two to four blocks away from each other, so a lot of times we went to the same schools, etcetera., had the same group of childhood friends. Then there were others that lived on the north side of 94, and they too lived, sometimes houses away from each other, but no more than two to four blocks away from each other. Very close-knit family.

[00:32:15]

LL: My mother, she was, I believe, 11 when her family moved here to the Twin Cities, and then my father is a native of the Twin Cities and ironically, would frequent Hallie Q. Brown,

which was the Rec Center where he grew up, learning sports and taking part in the programs that they had available there for his generation. He ended up going into the Navy, and retired from the Navy, and he and my mom separated. So I grew up truly in a single parent home here in the Rondo community, but had many, many men that played a role, a father role, in my life, whether it be through the coaching or just some of the pillars in our community helping out kids who did not have fathers and those kinds of things. So I never felt like I was without a father. My mother ended up having two children with my stepfather, and he really was the father figure in my life.

So I never, for that reason as well, never ever felt like I was fatherless, because I had not only just some of the leaders in the community that filled that role to a degree, but I also had my stepfather that was very, very, very supportive of women's sports and was equally as proud of his daughters, if you will, because he always claimed me as his daughter and never qualified it with stepdaughter or anything like that. So he was the father in my life, if you will. That's probably the way I should have put that at the onset here. He was our biggest fan. He would be the one fussing out the referees if they didn't call the game right, according to him. Whatever it was he saw through his lens. And would also, you know, join us in the alley when we were playing pickup basketball and stuff like that. And really was the one that turned us on to football, too, because that was one of his favorite sports as well. That's my family. And ultimately, my mother ended up, by the time I was in eighth grade, she was raising her three daughters by herself. She was not an athlete. Her experience with sports came as part of her class, recess, school. Many people would believe, because she had two very athletic daughters—and I have a sister that's three years younger than me, who was always taller than me, and she, too, was an outstanding athlete, and followed the same path that I did, because wherever I was, she was there, too.

[00:35:17]

KH: And what is her name?

LL: Her name is Roxanne Lissimore and, like I said, she was taller than me, and she played football, she did everything that Oxford offered as well, because we were at Oxford together. Now my youngest sister, different story. Sadly, she didn't get the athletic gene. So she's the one who we would throw the ball to and watch her trying to catch it and that type of thing. We would be bent over laughing at how funny she looked, trying to either run to catch the football if she wasn't on the ground, or trying to shoot a basket—it was an air ball. She was the funny one, but she has always been a huge supporter of us. She really had no choice. She is a huge sports advocate today, ironically. Knows the game, she thinks the games, I should say, but has never really played. Tried, but she just didn't have it. Poor thing, you know.

KH: You're the oldest of three.

[00:36:18]

LL: Yeah, I'm the oldest of three. So my sister Roxanne and I, we ran our mother nuts, literally, with always bouncing a ball, trying to see who could jump the highest and touch the ceilings or the ledges up there. Our fingerprints were always over the house. We were always having to wash the walls and those kinds of things.

We really had fun in our house, as it relates to the sports, but what I can tell you, and I always like to embarrass my mother this way, and that is, I remember when both Roxanne and I started taking the sports thing very serious, and we needed equipment, like tennis shoes that could grip the floor. We became aware of Converse tennis shoes. They were sold at a store over on Dale and University. Now, I'm junior high school, and I'm playing on a real school team, and I need some shoes that are going to grip the floor, because I can't be sliding all over the floor like I

was at Oxford and killing myself. So I said to my mother, "Mom, I got to get some tennis shoes, because this basketball thing is real, and I got to have some tennis shoes that can grip the floor." Well, she'd never heard of this type of thing, so she was like, "Well, how much are the shoes?" And I said, "They're \$9.99", because that's what they were. She looked at me like I was stoned out of my mind, right? And just said, "Absolutely not. I'm not paying for those tennis shoes." It's too much. She's raising three girls. And Roxanne, because her foot was bigger than mine, she always had a better tennis shoe than I did. She had something called, I think the shoe was called a bumper or something like that, and that's what she used to get. I still had whatever was the cheapest on the shelf. Finally, our next door neighbor, Marvin, he was probably, maybe two years older than me, or maybe three, and he was working, and he gave me \$10 to go get me some tennis shoes. I finally got a pair of tennis shoes. And boy, did that make a difference. So I always teased my mother about how I've always saved her so much money. She didn't have to buy sneakers for me because after that, I had to start working.

[00:38:50]

LL: I can say I've been gainfully employed since I was about 13 years old, and have been buying those types of things that I needed. Tennis shoes and certain clothes that I liked, whether they were gym shorts, jerseys or whatever it was. I've been doing it since I was 13, because she was not spending money on those kinds of things. And yet, when the one time I needed her to buy me a pair of shoes, just sort of loan me the money, right? She did that. This was when the leather Converse tennis shoes, I think I was maybe a junior in high school, came out and I had to have a pair. That's what we were going to wear as part of Central's team. She loaned me \$25. That's how much they were. So we go from \$9.99 to \$25 and she honestly made me pay the money back. [Laughter.]

LL: She did. “I know when you get paid, so you're going to give me my money back.” And I had to give her her money. So to this day, she has never, ever purchased a pair of basketball playing tennis shoes for me, yet. I saved her so much money. She didn't have to pay college tuition, or anything like that. So I tease her to this day about that. When I publicly speak, I tell this story all the time about how much money I saved her, and she couldn't even buy me a pair of tennis shoes. [Laughter.]

[00:40:19]

LL: But anyway, so my mother, reluctantly, did not want us down at Oxford, because, like I said, it was a bit of a walk, probably about eight blocks from where we lived. You had to go past Selby Avenue, and so there was a lot going on. And we were 10, 11, if I was 10, my sister, Roxanne, was seven. She used to make us do things together. She just wasn't aware of Oxford, the services and things like that, until we really started going down there. She was reluctant, but we managed to do it.

The interesting thing is, my mother worked nights, right? So she recruited one of my cousins—like I said, big extended family members—to come and babysit us while she worked nights. Well, my cousin was only a few years older than me. First we had the older one, so she was probably six years older than me, but then she goes to college, so now the next one in line comes over, and if she was a senior, I was a sophomore. Yeah, that's something. I told my mother all the time, I knew something wasn't right there, because Sharon and I were into the same things, right? Sharon wanted to go down to Oxford, too. Because not only was Oxford a place for sports, but it was a social place, too, and that's where people would hang out. Sharon was a teenager as well, and a responsible teenager, but she hung out, too. Sharon is Linda's sister, so we're all down at Oxford, and my mother had a time where she always called, and we would just

send someone back to the house to answer the call. She never figured it out until we were adults and told her. So she thought Sharon was it, you know, she thought Sharon was responsible. She was, but Sharon was a teenager. [Laughter.]

[00:42:21]

KH: That's funny.

LL: Yeah, yeah, it is. She looks at us side-eyed when we tell those stories. Then she became aware of Oxford, became more comfortable with Oxford, and so we were able to go down as a group, sisters and that type of thing. Still, you didn't want your daughters walking home at night. So we always had to be home before it got dark, for the most part. Then she did not, however, attend any of our games and things like that while we were at Oxford. She did attend in junior high, you know, like on parent night and that type of thing.

But the one story that is real funny is, Linda and my mother were tight as a niece and aunt, and each were single parents, and so they took on a little night gig. Because my mother then moved to a different job where she was not working nights anymore, but then she picked up this little nighttime cleaning job where they just did some little office work. I told them they were just down there dusting and playing, is what I said they were doing. So they both did it together. So now Linda and I are both playing at Central, and it's parent night, and they can't go to work that night, so they are not happy. I think Linda's a junior, and I'm a sophomore, so my mother is fussing because I'm going to miss out on these hours I can get, blah-blah-blah. And she's just not happy. From that point on, when they came to those games, and they saw how good we really were, they never missed a game. Even when Linda went to the University of Minnesota, my mother was right in the car with Linda's mother, going over to watch Linda play along with all of us as well, when I didn't have a conflict, because obviously she's playing

collegiate. I'm playing high school. There could be conflicts in game nights. And then everyone, all the family members, begin to come out to the games. I love to say that the men in our family have the greatest bragging rights, because not only can they brag about their playing days, but they can also brag about all of their cousins.

[00:44:45]

LL: And this is the other great thing about Oxford that I failed to mention earlier, and that is the boys at Oxford. They had the most incredible amount of respect for us as female athletes. It is unbelievable. Again, it's that thing when you start hearing others' stories about being labeled tomboys and being discouraged about playing because they are a girl, never was that a part of our history.

In fact, two things happened to me that really sort of says it all about the amount of respect that they had for us. There was a guy by the name of John Withers, and I mentioned him a few minutes ago. John was just this outstanding basketball player. He was the Steph Curry, the Caitlin Clark of my day. He could shoot from anywhere on the floor. He wasn't very tall, but he was just this aggressive basketball player that could do anything. He could drive to the basket, he could read a defense and knew exactly what to do. I admired that about his game, because I knew that was the type of player that I needed to be. So I had Weller and I had John, just both outstanding players. And so I used to, like I said, sit in the gym, and sometimes even when the boys were just playing pickup, and I would just sit and watch, because I could pick up on some of the stuff that they were doing, which I could incorporate into my game and the way I played. I would see them maybe do a spin move, and people in basketball know what that is, I was able to do a spin move in junior high school because I was watching how these guys would do it. Anyway, John had a daughter, and she was a phenomenal athlete herself. She ran track, she could

play softball, and she was a great basketball player. So I'm down at Oxford one day, I don't know why we were all down there, but we were there, and John wants to introduce his daughter to me. And so he says, "Lena, I want you to meet Miss Lisa." He said, "Lisa is one of the baddest basketball players I have ever seen in my life." I'm looking at him because I'm thinking, No, you are the baddest basketball player, and I'm watching you. So everything that I have said about him, he said about me. He said I used to watch her play, and he would tell me about that. He talked about the shots I would take, that I had learned from him, right? And to me, that was the greatest compliment for him to say that, for him to say to his daughter, "And you should try and play the game the way she did."

[00:47:59]

KH: Wow.

LL: That was a compliment. Another young man said to me, we were all together sadly at the funeral of Stacy Robinson, and we were all just talking about Oxford, because that's where everything happened. He said to me that he would never, ever forget the day that he beat Christine Durand in one on one. Now this was a kid who was not a star basketball player. He was probably a role player, and he had so many athletes ahead of him, so many players ahead of him. Here he said that he loved nothing more than to come down to Oxford and watch all the girls play pickup. There was one occasion where he had an opportunity to play one on one with Christine Durand, and he said he beat her and he said he walked off the court feeling like he had arrived. He said, "That is the greatest moment in my playing career."

Now, how does that happen? To beat Christine Durand She was a phenomenal player, too. I mean, she could do things with the basketball that you just didn't see girls doing during the time that we were playing. We both were really gifted basketball players very early in life. We

could just dribble the ball with ease and finesse, and take it through our legs, do a spin move, go behind our back. Like what you see right now, the way people play basketball? Well, we could do a lot of that back then, but it was called showboating if you did it. We would do it while playing pickup and all that type of stuff. I see these girls, or players, bringing the ball and doing a layup like that. If I did a one-handed layup, which I could do, I would be sitting on the bench.

[00:50:15]

KH: Really?

LL: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, I look at things, and I say to my son all the time, “Boy, I could do that stuff when I was 15,” and this, that and the other. But if I did that in a game, even if it was a set practice, no, we couldn't do that. But we did it when we were playing horse or playing scramble or all those kinds of games, when we were just playing during our own gym time.

Oh my goodness, well, that was Christine. She could do so many things with a basketball. If you are a mediocre player which this guy was, I hope he doesn't hear this, but he was. To beat her was like a highlight for him. It was incredible, the amount of respect that we all had and our popularity in this community. Not only did that wear well for us, but it did for girls that came behind us. Because my sisters and Christine's sister and Rita's sisters, they didn't have to deal with people calling them tomboys, or saying you play like a boy, or all of those disparaging labels that could honestly make someone not play. We didn't have those experiences. We really did not. We were respected for our game. And it was the truth.

KH: I mean, you all at Oxford, this community, were ahead of the game in so many ways, not only because girls had all these opportunities to play and to compete, specifically.

LL: Play and compete, key words.

KH: But to have that respect from boys and men.

LL: And men in the community, yes.

KH: That's amazing.

[00:52:02]

LL: We couldn't go anywhere. I'm telling you, everyone's father was like, "You made that". I mean, I could be in the grocery store with my mother. Here comes someone to tell me a story about something that happened. Then here's the funny part. So we get to the place where Central's girls team was playing, and Highland was our arch rival. And let me just tell you this, when we played against each other, this community showed up because they knew it was a showdown between Christine Durand and the Central girls. That is what happened in this community. It was personal. It was pride on the line. It was bragging rights on the line, and it was so fun in the summertime when we came back, and we had to play together in a summer league. You know, the gym would be packed because people wanted to see Christine play with the Central girls.

KH: Where did she live?

LL: Oh, my goodness, down the street from Central, on Lexington. She was closer to Central than I was. Yeah, and she went to Highland, and she was something else. I'm telling you, she had a jump shot that most boys couldn't do. I mean, she really had a great vertical jump. Oh, she was awesome. She was an awesome player. I couldn't say that back then, but I can say it now. [Laughter.] But she was awesome. It was the [Larry] Bird and the Magic [Johnson]. Honestly, that's what we were. You know, I played more like a Magic where I was more of an assist and defensive specialist, if you will. It helped to have six-foot-one Linda Roberts on your team, but Christine was the Bird that created her own shots and could dribble and could defend. Just had a well-rounded game as well. And she, too, had a big girl on her team that could play as

well. And then there was Liz Zachary. I shouldn't forget her. Liz went to Highland as well, and their family are huge educators from this community, and so we had Liz playing as well. So you had all of these great athletes that were right here living, probably within four to five blocks of each other. But sadly, a few of us went this way, but the majority of us went this way to Central. And man, it was just something to behold, you know, to watch everyone play. So, first time we play Highland in the conference play, there are people there, there are parents there.

[00:54:59]

KH: At Central or at Highland?

LL: I don't know which gym it was at the time, but we played them twice, so you played one there and one at home. I think they won by, I think it was a weird score, like 24 to 25, something like that? It was weird, just a weird game. I mean, we were all skilled basketball players. So you weren't going to run up a score, because we all knew how to play defense really well. So I assume it was just a very defensive game that didn't allow us to score, but Highland won.

Then the next time we played, more and more people started coming, and they beat us again. So that first year, Highland beat us both times that we played them. Now there's a state tournament, the first year of that. So this is a '75/'76 season. Now we get to sections, and we're in the same section with Highland, or regions is what it was called back then. Highland beats whoever in their first game—they win. We won our first game. They win their semi-final game, we win our semi-final game. Now it's Central vs. Highland again. It's tough because they've beaten us twice and in the world of sports, particularly basketball, it's always hard to beat someone a third time. But Highland was good. Highland was good.

So we go out and we're battling. The gym is packed. The gym is packed, and they only had seating for one side. We're playing at a neutral site. They didn't pull down the other bleachers, the other side of bleachers because they didn't think that many people were coming. The gym is packed, and it's [whispers] everybody's in the gym. So you've just got all of Rondo in this gym, and you've got the Zachary and the Durand family. And who else played on their team? I'm not sure. They had more of a diverse team, but I cannot think of another African American girl from this community that played on that team. It was Christine and Liz. I just can't think of anyone else at this particular point in time.

[00:57:14]

LL: And then you had Central, where you just had all the girls in this community on the team. I mean, you had Gwen Crowe, you had Yolanda Bruce, you had myself, you had Linda, you had Rita, you had Kim Miller. At the time, Weller was playing, but she didn't play the full year. So there's seven African American girls right there, I think. I'm trying to think of who else was on that team, but that's who you had in terms of who lived right here. And, man, the game was packed. And here's the sad thing, they didn't charge. They lost out on so much revenue. The next time, the next year, we beat them. I can't remember what the score was, but we got lucky. We beat them.

And I always like to say we beat them when it really counted. They won the city championship, but we won the section. Then, of course, we would go on and win the state, and then talk again about a proud community. Oh my goodness! When we played in the state tournament, for many of us, it was the first time we'd ever been in a hotel. We were playing against teams we've never played against, never even heard of. The first game was against a team called Wadena, and Wadena had a six-foot-two girl. Now, it was rare for us to play against a

team that had someone taller than Linda. Like I said, Highland had the Hagemeyers but they were six-one. They weren't taller than Linda. This girl was taller than Linda. Big article in the newspaper with her, and she's long and lean. We were like, "Ooh." Then they had a guard that was a lefty that was really good, too. So we're like, "Ooh." And they're from rural Minnesota, right?

[00:59:25]

LL: Shoot, we got out there and we just did our thing. We just did our thing, and ended up winning. Again, you talk about the support of this community, it was unbelievable. We'd never played in a space like that before. We'd never played in front of a crowd that size before. And then we get to the semifinals, and now we're playing—Who was it? I think that was Mankato. Still rural to us, right? We get them, and now here comes the championship game, and we're just kind of walking through this in awe, right? We're just in awe. We just came to play. And, man, this crowd, this night, I think they said there were like 10,000 people there. I couldn't believe it. I still don't believe it sometimes. When I worked at the high school, you got to go back and read the stories and stuff. It's like, this can't be. But I tell you, our community was there.

We spent the season with our cheerleaders not wanting to cheer for the girls, because the girls and the boys were playing the same night, and they would want to go to the boys game. A lot of them were our friends. But, oh man, the cheerleaders were there, and they're just having a great time, and they're on the floor, and they're doing their thing. The band is there. Each time we played, the band, and all this activity was taking place. But this particular night, all of my uncles were there. I mean, they were southern men, right? So they have all of these little superstitions. Well, I'm going to wear my so-and-so, and I will bring my stuff, and I will be rubbing that all during the time that they're playing, so these girls can win. Oh, to hear my uncles talk about us in

that way, and to see my aunties, who are my great aunties and my grandmother, who never played anything. They worked most of their life. Some of them only had a sixth or seventh grade education, and they worked. That's all they knew, was to work and take care of their families. They are such go hard sports people. They never missed a game after that, never. My mother didn't care about her little nighttime job. Tuesdays and Fridays, I have to be off. That's what she did. The support, not only just from the family, but just from the greater community and even our own equal peers. That's not everyone's story, right?

[01:02:20]

LL: A lot of times, girls are ridiculed for being so athletic, especially a young woman like Weller Johnson who could play all the sports as well as boys, if not better, and better than many of them. Man, she was embraced. They wanted her on their team. They didn't want her to play football with the girls, "No, we need her on our team." She made a choice to do what she wanted to do. She wasn't forced to play with the boys. She wanted to, but then she'd come back and play with us. We were always winners. No matter which way you looked at it, winners by the score, winners in the community. People just rallied behind us so much. That's why, I think, so many of us want to always be in a position to give back to Oxford and to the community.

When my son was born, his name is Kendall. By this time, we had moved to Woodbury. We moved to Woodbury because of my husband's job. He was a pharmaceuticals sales rep, and his territory was Western Wisconsin, and they wanted him to live in the community where he worked, or at least close to it. So we ended up negotiating and moving to Woodbury because I didn't want to live in Wisconsin. So when Kendall was born, you know, I don't know about suburban sports programs and all those kinds of things, because I didn't grow up that way. So one of the things that we wanted to do was to bring all of our skill sets, if you will, and share it with

the community here. My husband coached. [He] brought Kendall to Saint Paul, Oxford to play, and not only did it provide the community with a great coach, but it also provided Kendall with a similar experience that his family was accustomed to. Because my husband grew up in Cleveland, and so he's East Cleveland, so his community mirrors what we have here to a degree. This is what we wanted to do. Our son played his youth basketball here in St. Paul.

[01:04:47]

LL: Again, some of his best friends are from this Rondo area, and he claims Rondo as his home. To be honest, I'm like, Boy, you are just a suburban Woodbury boy, if I've ever seen, but our intentions were to expose him to something other than a suburban lifestyle and to have him experience some of the same things that both Dennis and I had experienced, and his aunties and uncles and cousins had experienced as well. I'm so happy that we were able to do that for him, because I believe that when he becomes of age and is committed to giving back, that he'd be willing to come here and give back as well. I mean, he may do something out there, but definitely it's ingrained in him to come back and do this because he's watched his father, he's watched his mother, he sees his grandmother in this space as well. It's what he knows. He worked our basketball clinic when he was a young boy. He knows what community really means, and the opportunity this community has provided for so many. So I'm hopeful, I know he will come back and do that. There's no question about it.

[01:06:11]

KH: I mean, listening to you talk about the depth of the community support that you all had, as athletes, as female athletes, so when you would go to other schools, even Highland or other schools in the area, did you get a sense that those communities supported their teams as much?

LL: You know, I've never heard the stories. I think maybe some of those rec centers may have served as rec centers. Oxford was a place that built community, and I think that's the difference between the two. If I get into my teen years, Oxford becomes a place of employment for me. I'm working there every day and understanding a bit more that this is more than just a place where I come and shoot hoops or throw a football or run or try and hit a softball. I'm learning that this is real work.

You can work here, and one of the things that happened is, one of the women that coached me, her name was Cordelia Mazique. Cordelia, she may have been about four years older than me. I'm amazed at how close in age we all were, but she became an administrator. So here I am watching this because I don't know who runs Oxford. I'm just here hanging out having fun. But then in a working role, you understand that, no, this is a real place of employment. People make a living doing this, and you understand that it's more than just recreational fun, that this place exists for. I just think that that was the difference.

[01:08:16]

LL: I didn't frequent these other places, so I don't know, but Oxford became a place where they had safe parties for kids my age. It gave us a place to hang out on the weekends, to dance and enjoy one another in ways that were not available in other places because we weren't old enough, or there just weren't things for us to do like that. That was appreciated. Another space for gathering. That's what I mean by it really built community, and then you had so many of the community leaders involved in all these different programs that were made available, I mean, like the Goodlows and the Carters and all these folks that, as a young girl, I knew them as the football coaches, the baseball coaches. There was a guy by the name of Tiny and I can't think of his first name right now, but he was a football coach. And all the Diane's and Lynn and Phyllis

Vaughn and all these different people, these women that I would later come to know as friends. Because now I'm old enough to be their friend, and you realize, Wow, they were playing before me, so I could watch them play, and then they come back and coach me, and they are all right here in the community. As a kid, I didn't know where they came from. I just know they were there. But when you start connecting all the dots, and you see all the different people that were involved and who made these things possible for us, it was just incredible.

[01:10:01]

LL: I don't know if I clearly stated that so many of these people became our mentors, supporters in life after high school for so many of us. In fact, my first job, the coaching job I had when I finished college, was all tied to this community being able to provide an opportunity for Linda and I to go coach at Central. We co-coached at Central's ninth grade team. Linda stayed on and coached a little longer. I ended up going to coach at St. Thomas because it fit my work schedule better. My dream was to coach at Central. If not Central, a[n] urban school, because I know the difference that sports made in the lives of kids and I wanted to be that person. I'm so surprised that I am not a teacher, and I don't know why I didn't become a teacher, because I really love school, and the greatest influences in my life were teachers or other educators. But I don't know why, but I did want to coach and I wanted to coach in an urban setting, because I knew that those kids needed role models. Because if I didn't have the Debbie Montgomerys in my life, you kind of lose out on it, like I have these female role models of color in my life coming through Oxford, and then I go to junior high school, and the landscape changes.

[01:12:00]

KH: You're at Ramsey for junior.

LL: Yeah, I went to Ramsey, and I don't see educators that look like me, except for a music teacher and the shop teacher, but they're men. I'm not seeing women. Thank goodness my coach was a Native American woman, Barb Blaisdell. And so that helped a bit in terms of learning and growing from a woman.

Now everything changes, and so now it was okay, because I still had my group of friends, and I was still spending time at Oxford. But it was just different, because I go from J.J. Hill, where just about every teacher I had was a person of color, and two of them were African American women, the principal was an African American woman. So I saw Black women and Black people in leadership roles. That was lost when I went to junior high school. Then I get to Central, and it's a little different, again, but for the better, because now I'm dealing with administrators who are people of color. I'm dealing with teachers who are women and men of color, coaches who are men of color, not all of them, but a good number of them.

And while they may not have been my coach, like in Floyd Smaller, he's Rondo, and he's making sure that I'm doing the things that I'm supposed to do. So even though he didn't coach me directly, except for a little bit the one year I ran track, he was still there with eyes on me, making sure I'm doing the things that I'm supposed to do. There are others in the school, the social worker, who's a guy by the name of Frank Wharton [ph??], who was the biggest advocate of women's sports. Huge, huge. I mean, I had no idea who he was. There was a huge central staircase and everyone used this staircase if you were up on the second or third floor to get down to the main level, and Frank's office was right there. I think he was assigned to stand outside his door to watch what was going on in the hallway. I just thought the dude was out there. I didn't know. And he used to always say to me, 'There goes that cool Lisa Lissimore.' And I looked at him like, cool, Lisa Lissimore? Okay. But he was a huge advocate of women's sports.

[01:14:54]

LL: In fact, I probably shouldn't go on record with this, but when I was a senior, because of the makeup of our team, I was like the second-tallest starter. So our coach had me play inside, which was not my normal position. I was a guard, but I couldn't play the guard position because we already had three of them out there. The best way to maximize the five starters was to put me inside to play like a position like Linda played. Again, being a skilled ball player, I could do things, but I was out of position. So Frank saw that after attending a few games, and he was like, "You can't do this to her. Her senior year, she's going to be recruited as a guard, so she needs to play the guard position to showcase her skills." And I guess, I didn't know this at the time, but I guess there was just a real debate among certain coaches, administrators with respect to that. When you talk about someone advocating, that is true advocacy. To see that, okay, you're playing her out of position. And it's her senior year, and she's going to be recruited as this, should she be taking this? Don't you think you need to play her in the position for which she's going to be recruited and for which she's going to play? Eventually we came up with an offense that worked. But I later learned that there was just a huge debate around how I was being played, because I was being played out of position. We still had a very, very good team, and that was a team that I thought would win the state tournament again, and we came close. We were third, but we lost by a point in the semi-final game.

[01:17:09]

KH: Oh.

LL: Yeah, and guess who took the final shot? But Central again, put me in a space like I had at J.J. Hill. You know where I was around people that knew me, knew my family, just some of the most dynamic people I've ever met between those two schools. High school was the best

time ever in my life. The best time ever in my life. I love Central. I loved, loved being a student at Central High School. There's just nothing better. That's college, that's everything. It is just one of the greatest highlights of my life. Yeah, the sports piece worked, but the other pieces in the school came together. Whether it was the theater, I mean, there was just such a vibe and a feel of being so welcomed and appreciated in that school. I've never had that experience any place else, to be honest with you. That was just it. It was everything.

Then when Central won the state tournament, and this community came out to the Met Center. So Mr. Griffin, the police chief—Fire chief, I believe it was. Police or Fire? Can't remember—police, I think. Set it up so that we could have an escort by the police, fire trucks from the Met Center to Central's parking lot up there. And to pull into that space and to see the community standing there, clapping, applauding us for our efforts and what we had done to represent this community and our school, was unbelievable. I've not experienced anything like it. I guess I'd have to win the Final Four to have something like that. But I don't even know if it would be that, because you don't have this community. I wouldn't have had this community. There would have been representatives from this community that would have obviously congratulated and all those kinds of things.

[01:19:51]

LL: But I tell you, this has been one village, and Oxford being the center of it, that has helped shape me to be who I am, and to do what I have been able to do. There's just no other place. And if you think about that, there's Central, across the street there's Oxford, and then there's this community right here, the Summit-University area right here. I used to love walking from my house on Hague Avenue to my auntie's house on Aurora, like we lived on Hague and Victoria, and my aunt lived on Aurora and Victoria and I just used to love walking over there, to

just be in the community, waving at people in cars and folks hollering out at you. I couldn't ask for a better experience. I really could not.

I look at my son, the manner in which he grew up. What I missed and what my concern was moving to a suburb was community, and I still have a hard time believing that I don't live in this community, and I haven't given up on it, but it's unbelievable to me that I don't. But everything I do is still right back here. I never thought I would live in Woodbury as long as I have lived. But one thing that happened is, I began to meet other people from this area that live out there, and then we all began to introduce each other to others that we had met that lived out there, and then that made it feel like community to me because of that. Now, it's a little different, because now everyone has gone different ways. Children have grown up and some people who were from other places have now, either downsized or moved back to where they were from. So it's a little different now, but boy, I found a community, and it really did work for me. But my mother even said, "You'll be out here for three to five years. I'll give you three years." I thought the same thing too. I still can't believe I don't live in this community somewhere. It's interesting, [01:22:38]

KH: Listening to you talk, not just today, but as you and Frank and Bill and I have met over the past year and something, and you all are describing the community that Oxford was central to and part of, and I just think I don't have a comparable experience. I've lived in the same place. I have lived in essentially two places my whole life, and I still don't have that sense of community.

LL: Oh my goodness.

KH: So I do want to kind of step back and think about Oxford and the community, Rondo, Summit-University in a wider context. So you start hanging out at Oxford in 1970, when

you're ten, you're part of the High School Championship in '76, and you graduate '78. So across the country, at that time and today—not saying we're done—issues about race and racism and inequities and injustice. I'm trying to think of what I'm trying to ask here. How important do you think that the wider context of struggles for racial justice is to combat the forces of racism? How important was that to the sense of community that you experienced in Rondo, Oxford, Summit-University, Central?

[01:24:24]

LL: There's Oxford, and there's the sports piece that opened doors, but there were other organizations in this community, and what I have since found out is that I can connect dots to all of the individuals that ran these other organizations. So, for example, there was a crime prevention center, okay, where at one point in time I worked. Okay? That was my summer work space. There was the Inner City Youth League, and that was the very first place where I worked and was able to attend an organization and learn about the world outside of my home. The Inner City Youth League was run by my best friend's father, and so I was able to be a part of the learnings that took place there even before I was old enough, because this was my best friend's father running this place.

[01:26:02]

LL: So Inner City Youth League provided summer youth employment for many of us, and as a part of that, there were learning components of all of that. For example, by the time I was probably 14 years old, I knew how to take pictures. When the photographer who taught photography there—this was what my work was, right, this was the work that I was doing, learning photography. So we would go out on field trips and shoot different things, and you had to be creative with regard to what you were shooting. We were shooting things in this community

because they weren't taking us too far, right? As part of all of that, you were learning the history of the freeway and how it gutted the community. I, as a kid, remember seeing the businesses that were alongside St. Anthony and Concordia. I remember them. I remember when certain housing was built over there, and so we were taking pictures of all of this stuff and learning how to develop pictures. This is me at 14, knowing how to do all these things, and having an understanding that there was a man named Gordon Parks who did this for a living.

So you, through these exercises, these opportunities, you learn the history of things, and you learn what happened to us as people, how we fought through it, and that's why sometimes, in times such as this—because we've lived through times such as this—we know what many of the answers are, because of that learning that took place here. Did I fully understand it all? No, but let me just say this—J.J. Hill, and this is why I love this school so much, and this is why I loved being taught by people that looked like me, because they were innovative, and they taught us about the contributions that we as people made to America. As part of that learning, we also understood and were taught the hard fought battles that took place for us to do the things that we were able to do.

[01:29:03]

LL: So I'm 10 years old, and I'm learning about racism. I'm learning about the segregated south, and I'm hearing it firsthand from my family, too, because remember, they're from Georgia. I was exposed to so much learning about our history at such a young age, and I was always intrigued by it, and I've always wanted to know more. That's what you have to do to our young people today, and I try to do that with my son and everyone I meet and teach, is to pour into them our rich history, because I don't want them to think it is what people say it is today. I want you to know the things, the ways in which we have contributed to this America. My fifth grade teacher,

who I've referenced earlier. She not only had the professional athletes, the Vikings, the Twins, come to our classroom and talk about their journeys, she had professors from Macalester College. Mahmoud El-Kati would come into our classroom three, four times a year and talk to us about Black history. When I mentioned that I learned about Wilma Rudolph and Althea Gibson at a young age, that was all a part of that Black history teaching. There were these books that were the size 5x7, like this. I don't know who produced them, but they were easy reads for elementary aged kids, and we used to have our choice of what we wanted to pull out. I don't know how she got these books, but we would read. We were not reading just during February, which back then, was the week of Black history. The week of Black history. We were doing this all the time.

So I knew about Wilma, I knew about Dr. King, I knew about Harriet Tubman, I knew about Frederick Douglass in detail when I was ten and 11 years old, because of that teaching that Rhoda—I can call her Rhoda now—that Ms. Stroud was sharing with us. I had to write papers and things like that. Like you had to write an essay or something. That's what she did. So we had the visitors that came to our class to teach us things. She would also take us on field trips to see people. Fifth grade, again, everything happened for me in fifth grade with this teacher. That's why she's the most influential person. She had to meet my husband before I would marry him. [Laughter.] As did her father and her mother. But anyway, she took us to Northrop Auditorium to go listen to Jesse Jackson. I'm ten years old. I can't remember how we got there, because I think it was the entire class, or maybe it was a school bus. She, from time to time, sends pictures to me of the things that we did, either her or her daughter.

[01:33:03]

KH: She's still around?

LL: Oh yes, yes. Her or her daughter will send pictures of things that we did. The photos of the athletes that visit our classroom, photos with Dr. Mahmoud, Jesse Jackson. We go to Northrup, and we wait until after he's done, and here's this group of kids sitting there, and he invites us up on the stage, and we have our own time with Jesse. We take a picture with Jesse on the stage. When he ran for president, I told my mother, I said, "Yeah, Mom, do you remember when I went to go see him at Northrop with Miss Rhoda?" "Yeah, you haven't met him." "No, I did, remember? You had to sign the field trip slip for me to go." "You've never gone dah-dah-dah." I called Rhoda. I said, Rhoda, "My mom says—will you please let her know?" So she sends me the picture for me to see. [Laughter.]

This village here has always taken the time to teach us about our history, and while teaching us about the history, also teaching us about navigating these spaces. I mean, they taught us to fight back and not to settle. I'm trying to think how this worked, and I think I actually have it right here in this piece. This is a speech I wrote and that they taught us, no matter where you are from, that to be young, gifted and Black is where it's at. I have to say that I walked around like that, and I still walk around like that today. I am so happy to be who I am. I truly, truly am. I wish to be none other than what I am. And that's not true for everyone, but that affirming comes from the people that either taught in the schools that I attended in this community, or worked at the playground where I played. That's what happened. That's where it came from.

[01:35:47]

LL: So, like you said, we've been through so much, even as a young child, I went through bussing, because I went to the neighborhood school, Maxfield. Then after two years there, bussing came in, and I was bussed out to Tilden Elementary, where I go from being in a predominantly Black class taught by Black teachers to being one of few students of color in a

class and in a school as a whole. But even then, you learn how to navigate those spaces. There is a lesson to be learned in that experience. I think I got the lesson. So then when I transferred to J.J. Hill, because I went from Maxfield to Tilden, middle of third grade, I go to Maxfield, I mean, I'm sorry, I go to J.J. Hill.

This place is just incredible to me, because my first teacher is an Asian teacher, and Miss Nelson was cooler than cool. Then I did have one Caucasian teacher, and she was my fourth grade teacher, and ironically and almost sadly, I cannot remember who she was. But these teachers, no matter what color they were, even this woman and Miss Nelson, they were all very relatable. We had a gentleman named Mr. Whipple, and he was a cool—I don't know what his role was at the school, to be honest, he didn't teach me, but I don't know if he was an assistant or if he was a teacher, but I just didn't have him as a teacher. But what I remember him as is a photographer, taking pictures and things all the time. But everywhere I looked, there was someone that looked like me or my uncle, or somewhere. These teachers went the extra mile to expose us to so much that, like I said, when I went to junior high school, I was like, Where is Mr. Whipple? Where is Rhoda? We had Mr. Hosey who was the music teacher, and we had Mr. Rupert. Or, did I meet Mr. Rupert? You know what, I met Mr. Rupert at Central. He was not the shop teacher. I met him at Central. So I don't know who the other teachers of color were when I was at junior high school. Mr. Rupert was at Central because he was my basketball coach, too.

[01:38:28]

LL: When things happened in the community, I can remember a police officer being shot, and I can remember the police going through the community, looking for this person that shot the police officer. From our history lessons in these places, we knew that these kinds of things happen. When people were beaten by the police because of the history that we learned back here,

we knew that these things happened. And yet, we had police officers from the community who were Black, that helped us navigate this, too. They were in front of us. The community was wise in that, every generation there was someone to teach us about our history. And, like I said, within those teachings, how to also navigate these spaces.

KH: What a beautiful illustration of why history is important.

LL: Absolutely, absolutely, there's just no other way. I have books like you wouldn't believe. I became a reader because of these folks, and I was introduced to the theater through *Penumbra*. This is what I'm talking about, like the value of this community, and it's why I say I can't believe I don't live in this community to further support it, but I do support it, in other ways. But then we got *Penumbra*, and now I'm back in. I'm older, but I'm still a young adult. But because of my upbringing, I'm in love with theater that's produced by and about Black people. I should say people of color. I like the theater as a whole, but more specifically, I love theater about me and the experience of African American people. All of that brought me to reading.

[01:41:00]

LL: I'm telling you, there were these history books. I wish I could find one, because they were this size. This size books. I just used to always have them at home, because you could take them out to class and take them home and read them, and they were just all about, the ones we had anyway, in our class were just about African Americans. Then I remember our having a booklet that was 8.5 x 11. It had just different articles about different Black people and what they did. And again, it talked about their contributions to America, the things that we founded, that we created, all of those things. So just having that exposure so young in life and understanding and knowing by first-hand accounts from my family members, it built something in me, the resiliency to deal with stuff that was likely to be thrown at me. When it does happen, yes,

sometimes it is a little challenging, because you can go through periods without anything ever happening to you.

But I can remember the first time someone called me a nigger, right? And it was like, wow, is that the best you've got? Because I've been taught this is what they do, and this is why they do it. I think I was built so that I knew how to resist it when it happened. Even whether it's sexism or what have you, I, at least, know how to recognize it, and know how to come back to it. Now, sometimes do I lose it? Yeah. Every now and then. But I know how to recognize it, and therefore it's not as stunning when it does happen. It's, like I said, Is that the best you've got? Like, I knew that was coming for me, so what else do you have? You know? Is that supposed to kill me? It has not! But I'm telling you, we were just so exposed to so much at such a young age, and you had the right people doing the storytelling, the right people that knew how to communicate with us, that could relate to young people to keep you engaged in the conversation and putting you in a place and a space where you wanted to know so much more. Like Wilma, and the real impact that she had on women's sports, when she and those Tennessee Tigers won, did all they did at the Olympics, and people began to wonder like, where are the other Wilmas? Where are they? I mean, it was just incredible. And the other highlight of my life, if you will, is having met Wilma.

[01:44:10]

LL: I was a maniac. I was 24 years old, and I was working for the legislature, and I went to my first professional conference. Twenty four years old. I had no idea what I was doing. It was in Indianapolis, and Wilma was living in Indianapolis at that time. The Congressional Black Caucus had an event, and I went. I had gone with my boss, who was a white woman, but she understood me and my desire to be around my people, right? When I connected with this young

lady that was more my age, and her father was like the president of the Senate in Alabama, and she and I connected. All of a sudden, I'm able to go to all these different places, because I'm running with this woman. We go there, and they announce that Wilma Rudolph was going to be there. You should have seen me when she was coming down the hallway, and all I had was, at that time, a napkin, like a drink napkin. I went up to her, and I was like, "Wilma, you are my idol. I read about you when I was ten, and I've always wanted to be like you, and this, that and the other and blah-blah-blah. Can you please sign my autograph? You sign this for me." She signed it, right? I'm busting through everyone to get to see her and to get this autograph. I still have the autograph. It is tucked away in my Bible, to be honest with you. Wilma would have just been another, you know?

[01:46:13]

LL: Someone asked me recently if there was an athlete that I would have liked to have met, and I shared the story about Wilma, but the other one would have been Althea Gibson. I would have loved to have done something like this with her, to get her oral history, to talk through all of the challenges that she went through, just trying to be her, and to break into sports where we did not see Black women and Black people participating. See, all of that knowledge was at ten and 11 years old, and it has stayed with me throughout. And so, like I said, when we get to times such as this, they're different, and people are coming about it a different way, but we still have lived through the answers that we're searching for. I mean, we really have, and we just have to. That's a saying from my best friend, Robin, "Lisa, we've already lived through the answers that we're looking for." And that's the place she always takes me when I call her and say, "What are we going to do?" That's what she tells me.

That's the space I'm trying to still fit into right now as we go through these trying times, these times of uncertainty right now, and to keep my sanity, that's where I need to be. It's amazing that it would come from someone who's been educated and taught by the same people, because we grew up around the corner from one another, right? It's her mom and her dad that taught us all these different things, because, again, her dad ran the Inner City Youth League. Then we get to people like Kwame McDonald, who I met when I'm 18, and you talk about someone that was about the journey of civil rights. So all these people are coming into my life at critical times and the learning continues, because now he's telling me more contemporary things. I've got this, the foundation back here, now he's bringing me through the actual, what it's like to be in the Civil Rights Movement. That's him and Mahmoud, and if you think these conversations are long, I tell you when I would go have breakfast with Kwame, or whenever we get together, it's hours and hours. Or when I get with Mahmoud, it's hours among hours, and I'm just sitting there like, Wow, you got to be kidding me. Because you read one thing, but then to have people who have lived it.

[01:49:06]

KH: Very different.

LL: Yeah, yeah. You know, again, Kwame was about young people and teaching them. You talk about, again, another supporter of women athletes, he began to take our pictures and put them in the Black press and send them also to the sports writers and folks that he knew at the two daily newspapers. He began to write about women's sports in a way like no one else has, and that's why there's an award in his honor that's given out at National Girls and Women in Sports Day because he would come and support us even when there was a men's game. He and some of his colleagues, Steve Winfield, and I don't know if Frank was tied in with them, but they created

women's basketball leagues for us when we became young women, and we couldn't play in some of these other leagues. We had aged out. They are the ones who created leagues for us to play in and for us to travel to Wisconsin. It was like an adult woman's AAU league.

[01:50:19]

LL: That's what I was doing when I was in my 20s and had graduated from college, because I couldn't play until I was done with college. But they are the people that pulled all of those different things together for us to do that. They did the fundraising and the creation of these different leagues for us to compete in. And I tell you, Kwame's son, whose name is Mitch, he's doing the exact same thing. He took a picture yesterday, or last Saturday. And again, it's the whole thing of giving back and showing up for young women.

Here I am at what is called, let's see if this will flip this way, yeah, it's called the Twin Cities Game. There it is. So, the St. Paul Basketball Champion, women and men, and the Minneapolis City Champion, play what is called a Twin Cities Game. Last Saturday was the Girls Basketball Twin Cities Game. So this is the coach of Minneapolis North. This is the coach of Como. Como played. They were playing in the championship. I forgot to say that. All of these young women, with the exception of this lady, I have either seen them play, I've had them at Shooting Stars Basketball Camp, and now they are all giving back and supporting each other in this way. She's from Roosevelt. She could be very jealous of this team, okay, because they didn't make it. All of these young women, with the exception of this lady, have all been a part—I'm gonna say it this way. They've been a part of my journey. My journey. Either as attendees at the Shooting Stars or playing in the state tournament. It was just incredible, and I felt compelled. I don't know who this is.

[01:52:34]

LL: I felt compelled to go to that game. That's probably why my butt is coughing and still now, because I just—but to support them. And this lady here, I met her while working at the high school league. I cannot think of her name right off the top. I want to say Eunice, but it's not. She's been coaching men's football at North forever. But she and I are the oldest two on the page. All of these kids, even Crystal Flint from the Gophers. I mean, it all just comes back full circle. That's Kwame. That's what he used to do. This is Mitch, Kwame's son, taking this photo because he knows the value and the purpose of all of that. That's what these folks, all these guys, the Frank Whites—I'd have never survived. I won't say I wouldn't have survived at the high school league without the Frank Whites and these guys, but I'll tell you what. My experience there at the high school league was phenomenal, don't get me wrong, but it sure helped to have the support of the people here in this community backing me, because sometimes I would not see people that look like me come through the door, even during a work day. So when Frank is on a committee at the high school league, he's walking through the door, when Jim Robinson becomes a person that is now the Head Rules Clinician [ph], he's coming through that door more times than not. And you talk about conversations, I can tell you it would be eight o'clock at night when I leave to go home, and I've been there since seven.

[01:54:32]

LL: But that learning is there, and so I can't help, I'm a sponge for that type of stuff, right? I'm not going to have someone who has been on the journey, sit down and begin telling me something, and I'm going to interrupt him and tell him I got to go. It would have to be an emergency for me to do that. So when I have people who I deem as legends coming through, who I know are legendary, coming through that door and coming to my office to just merely say, "Hi, Lisa, how are you doing?" No, you're sitting down and we're having coffee, or I might even

take you out to eat, whatever it happens to be, but just having someone to walk things past, someone who's looking through things in a different lens than what I may be. Because when you get behind the desk, it becomes different. You don't always see because you're working and you don't see it in the same way that others may. So to have those folks as part of my circle of advisors and influencers made the job that much better, is the way I should say it.

Then not only having them in the circle, but then they bring folks from their circle that I may not have ever reached into my space and that, like I said, just made the journey that much better. It really did. Last Saturday, when I was at this game, there were officials there who were not necessarily officiating the games, but they run an officials' association, and they do the assignments and all that type of stuff. I would have never met those people if it had not been for Frank and Stevie and those guys. Never. So they've all been such great folks to have in this circle as influencers. To think that that stems back to when I was ten years old is pretty incredible to me.

[01:56:49]

LL: Same thing with the friendships that I have developed, and that's just it, they've gone from directors of a rec center I'm at, to coaches, to influencers, to now, true friendships. Who would ever guess that I'd be driving down to Iowa to watch Frank's granddaughter play basketball? I would have never thought that years ago, but there's such mutual respect and appreciation to have people make you feel so valued is just really incredible. When that happens to a person, you want to pass that on.

That's why, yesterday, I'm at Sandburg Middle School trying to preach this same thing to about 15, 16, maybe 20 girls in this room about representing yourself in such a way that you know you could make a difference. I said, "You guys don't know who I am," I said, "I might be a

modeling agency looking for somebody to wear some clothes,” because I had this cool jacket on, right? And I was actually contemplating giving the jacket to them because I wanted to do something unique, to create a memory and I thought if someone says something about my jacket—because [it was] the first time I was wearing it, it was like a letter jacket—I said, I'm going to take it off my back and give it to them if I think she can fit it. Because I like doing things like that. So many people, they may have not taken their physical jacket off their back and given it to me, but they've given me enough.

[01:58:44]

LL: So I'm probably the most giving person—I tell my husband that all the time—I say I'm the most giving person in the world, and I know that I am. I truly am, because that's just the way I've been raised. I mean, that's been my experience, and so that's what I try to do, whether it's through knowledge or the shirt off my back or whatever it does. People have done that for me. Guy giving me \$10 to go buy my tennis shoes. It probably started right there. You know to be kind and generous, because I do know, too, through faith that it comes back. It's just been such an incredible journey, and to be surrounded by a community, to be raised in a community like this, is just unbelievable. I've never felt more valued than being in this community. No matter where I go or what I do in this community and no matter who, you know, it can be the person that's ringing up my groceries. It's just like, "Aren't you?" And then, I may pull a fast one, "Nah, that's so-and-so, I'm so-and-so." But even my mother has that experience as well. You know, "Are you Lisa's mother?" And she's never been, and that's probably where we get all our humbleness from, a person to boast about her children. In fact, someone put her on the spot one day, and she was very angry that they did that because she just has never been that way. We're just very humble, and as my friend Robin tells me, we all know our worth, too. That's what I try

and teach, pass along to young people. Those young ladies yesterday inspired me to want to go back to their class.

[02:00:46]

LL: Because I could go a grade higher. I could go to high school where I would probably need to do more preparatory work and that type of stuff. But I want these middle school girls because I just want to get them on the right track. It's so wonderful to go into that room yesterday and to tell them that when I was in eighth grade, that I set this lifetime goal for myself, and I achieved that goal. Man, they look at me like, I mean, there was silence. "And what was that goal?" And I said, "How many of you are athletes?" They raised their hands, and I said, "Well, what do you play?" And I'll go into, "Well, do you know there are scholarships that you can get to pay for your education and your mommy and daddy don't have to be bothered with that. You can continue your career if you love the game that much." And you know, just on and on and on and on. Because if someone's not there to tell them, like they were with me, these guys here, they don't know!

Because I don't know that they're getting this book about Wilma Rudolph and that she received a scholarship to go to Tennessee. It's probably my first knowledge of that right then and there. Althea Gibson took a different route, but somehow or another, people honed her athletic skills to get her to the place where she could go play at Wimbledon and become a golfer and do all the things that she was able to do. It was hard, and I see that in photos I see of her, how difficult it is, and things I read, her autobiographies and things like that. But she made it. I think that's what drives us, or at least drives me, during times such as this, or any hard times that do come my way, is that I know I'm resilient and I know I know the answers, and if I don't, I know I

have a village that I can go to to get them. Life doesn't get much better than that. That is the absolute truth. If I can pass that on to someone else, that's what I live to do. I truly do.

[02:02:41]

LL: I know sometimes my son hates me meeting his friends because I take them away from him, right? Because of storytelling and those kinds of things, he truly does. He's like, "Well, can we go? Because Mom, they came over so we can go blah-blah-blah." But the women that I have met on his campus that meet me, you would think when I walk into that St. Thomas Gym that I am somebody. Someone on that campus that needs me, because they make a point to come over to me to say hello and to ask how I'm doing. Even the football players, it's just like, wow. This is pretty incredible that these young people would do something like this. I can tell that there's a need and so I'm always trying to connect them with people that I know in the education space as well.

I have a really dear friend over at Macalester, Dr. Dutchess Harris, and she loves young people, so when I meet someone that is, even though they're different schools, I just know she knows how to connect them to the right places and people that they need to succeed. That has always been my experience, and its experience I want others to have. I don't want them sitting on that campus and not being connected with someone. So I love it when I go there, and I'm trying to, in my head, figure out a way to bring them all together at my house. [My] son doesn't have to be there, I don't really care. Not the boys, I'm going to do the girls, right? But he can't stand it, because I'm always trying to match make and say, "Now, this is the one you need right here, if you're gonna have one, this is her," but no, they're just wonderful young people and that's all I know how to do. I don't know any differently. If I keep what I have to myself, that is the most selfish thing I could ever do. I would never forgive myself for something like that.

[02:04:45]

KH: Yeah, you were saying that the elders, when you were a kid, did that for you. It seems to me like passing on that history, that knowledge, that identity, not only is it accurate, not only is it about telling the truth about what African Americans have contributed to this country—

LL: [Receives phone call] Excuse me, one second. This is my son.

[02:05:51]

KH: Passing on that kind of history, that knowledge, it's also armor against a world that can be sometimes hostile.

LL: Oh my goodness, yeah. That was the other thing I was taught, how to put on my armor, too. It truly is. I mean, I might not have the comeback at the moment or the resiliency that I need at the moment, but I also know how to guard myself, too. All of that learning is just there. I mean, it just truly is. It seems to be sort of a way of life for me, because in each phase, or I should say, chapter of my life, there's always been someone or folks that have come into the circle that has helped. No matter what.

Even working for a high school athletic association where, at one time, they merged in some states, and they were run by men, and then they hire a woman, and then they may hire a person of color. It's not always easy to come in and break and make change, right? So I'm at my first professional conference for that event, and I had a great boss, and he took time to introduce me to people, because sometimes you are just hired and you're on your own to navigate through it. Well, this man didn't let me down. He made sure that I was connected and that people knew, this is Lisa from Minnesota. All you other 50 states. He introduced me to a woman who would, her name is Mildred Paul [ph], and she would become my mentor in this space. She would become my mentor until this day, she is just like the people in my village here, and ironically,

when we had our national conference here, Jim Robinson and I put something on to bring them into this community, to see this space. All the African American staff people got together, which we did all the time anyway, just to have our own space, to be able to talk freely about our experiences and what we're learning and what have you. That was the purpose of our getting together was just to network, and that's all that it really was. It was just about sharing experiences. Experiences didn't always have to be something racial. It could be something about basketball that, well, in Minnesota, we do it this way, and you guys do it this way, that type of thing.

[02:08:51]

LL: But oftentimes it did include how we are perceived and treated by people. We're sharing, once again, it's just not a complaining session or a whining session. It is talking about how you navigate those spaces and what was successful for you, and what was successful in Michigan and all those different places, and that seems to be what has happened in every chapter of my life. Now I have this network of people. They're not just all African American people, they are people, men and women. But primarily, African American men and women that became, again, influencers in my life, because they had been at this longer than I had, and their journeys were slightly different than mine.

Although one was more similar to mine. She was more dance than she was sports, but nonetheless, just a wonderful, wonderful—this is Mildred—person that is phenomenal, a pillar in her own community of Indianapolis. Just been blessed to have people like that come into my spaces, and I'm just always in awe with their experiences and trying to make sure that I learn the lessons that they are passing on to me. It's pretty incredible, and I'm glad that my makeup is what it is, because I know how to take on those learnings and what to do with them, because not all

people are made that way. But because of back here, where [we're] always being exposed to those kinds of things, it is just a beautiful thing.

[02:10:46]

LL: I have another friend who worked for the Colorado High School Association, and his wife has a dance theater that is the equivalent of Penumbra in Denver's—I can never remember their community. But she is the Penumbra of this Denver community, African American community there. Her name is Cleo Parker Robinson. Oh my goodness! Now I know him, but I meet his wife and she and I take time out of every conference that she would attend, because she would attend the conference with him, and we'd have Cleo and Lisa time, and she would tell me about the theater, because I love the theater. She's a dancer, however, but oh my goodness! Alvin Ailey and Judith [Jamison], you name it, Harry Belafonte! She's incredible. And, she has a theater that is grander than—she's remodeling it right now. It will open next fall. It's unbelievable. She's incredible, but all of that history, and I walk into these spaces where there are people like that that pass on all of that wisdom and knowledge and all I do is soak it all up. I go to her fundraiser just about every other year. I just saw her not too long ago, because we were in Denver with my son. But yeah, I don't know. I've been blessed that way, and I'm happy about that. Very, very happy.

[02:12:40]

KH: And there sits Oxford, the center of it.

LL: The center of it, absolutely, where I was connected to people that really, really cared about building community, providing opportunities for young people, and it's through all of those opportunities that came my way. Seriously, the people, the places, the activities that we were involved in. Just pretty, pretty darn incredible. For Bill to be 88 or whatever he is, and for us to

be friends, I would have never dreamt that when I first met him down at Oxford. For him to have married his wife, to be a very close friend of mine, a teammate of mine, unbelievable. We still have this circle of respect.

I don't know if people really understand what that feels like to have the elders lift you up in that way. I get nervous sometimes. I'm not the expert here, and even at the times that we have set together to flush out this, I have learned so much about Oxford. Like I said, the things that they were doing down there to create those opportunities for us that has been one of the greatest learnings that I have had in recent days. Seriously, I just love listening to Bill and Frank talk about the things that they were doing and understanding.

[02:14:18]

LL: I remember when Frank left this community to go to Richfield, and he had done so many great things at the King Center. While I wasn't a kid that frequented the King Center, because we were at Oxford and you kind of get caught up in where you go, right? We're Oxford kids. We're not the King Center kids. So it's like, Wow, this is something else. When he left, it was like, Yeah, there's a gap here that we have to fill. Then other people came in. I didn't know them as well as I did Frank and Stevie, because they didn't coach me. Some of them were just a few years older than me, but they were still great people running the rec centers.

Though I am sort of surprised that maybe I should have gone in the recreation administrative space. I didn't know a whole lot about it, but when I watched Bill's wife go into it, I'm like, I could have done that. But we all land where we land. I think that I loved Gwen being in that space, because I knew she would do the right things, and plus she had the greatest mentor right here. The same thing with our friend, Cordelia, her going into that space, too, it's just, wow. I bet you, if I had not landed with the legislature, I bet you I'd have been at one of these rec

centers. It just felt natural that it would have been, because even my friend Cindy, she went in that space. She's from Flint, Michigan, but she came and played for the Gophers, and we met her through a mentoring program at the U that Linda put together. So Cindy, her life career was in athletic administration, but in Minneapolis. Yeah, I would be willing to bet that's probably a route I would have gone because someone would have said, "You need to do this." I probably would have done it and probably would have landed there, because it would have felt natural to have done that. I probably would have been good at it, too, because of the experience at Oxford.

[02:16:43]

KH: I have no doubt. Well, thank you, Lisa, so much for sitting down again with me.

And I know we could talk for—

LL: I feel like I've rambled though.

KH: No, it's all on point.

LL: Okay.

KH: It was good. I'm gonna shut this off. Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]