

Interviewee: Bridget McKay Kane
Interviewer: Jaimie Venini
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Worcester Women's Oral History Project

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Abstract: Bridget McKay Kane was born in 1979 in Springfield, Illinois and moved to Worcester with her family at the age of three. Also living out of state for a period, she is currently studying art at Clark University and living in Holden. In this interview, Bridget shares stories surrounding her work history at a number of jobs, both in retail and the youth development fields. She speaks about her personal challenges discovering her path in life in the face of high expectations surrounding education and achievement. She reflects upon the social atmosphere at her schools growing up, as well as the experience of arts education and community engagement at Clark. She emphasizes the importance of family in her own life and in defining the character of Worcester as a city. Bridget also shares memories of Worcester landmarks, including Tatnuck Booksellers, where she worked briefly before it closed. She also touches upon her perspective on the growth and change that has taken place in Worcester throughout her lifetime and gives advice to the next generation of young women in the city. After graduating, Bridget plans to move to L.A. and try to get work as a writer in the television industry.

JV: Today is March 21st, 2006. Is it ok if I record this interview with you because my class is studying women, work, and the urban environment and we are focusing on women with Worcester connections and their working experiences?

BMK: Yes.

JV: What is your full maiden name?

BMK: Bridget McKay Kane.

JV: And, when were you born?

BMK: ... 1979.

JV: Where were you born?

BMK: Springfield, Illinois.

JV: Do you have any children?

BMK: No.

JV: And, have you ever been married?

BMK: No.

JV: Tell me about your parents, like maybe what kind of work they do?

BMK: My mom works at Rotman's Furniture. She is the manager, or one of the managers, of the bedding department—bedrooms and bedroom furniture and things like that, mattresses. She's been there for five years. Before that she was working at Westborough State Hospital in their staff development. And that was her first job since um, before my sister was born.

JV: Oh, wow!

BMK: When my dad passed away he had just set things up insurance-wise and through social-security that my mom could stay at home and take care of us, which made us have an amazing childhood because she would take us to lessons and things and just chauffeured us everywhere. She was like the queen of the PTA at our school and uh, it was funny. There was my mom and another Mrs. Kane and they were best friends. They were also both presidents of the PTO, so everyone thought there was this one magical, magnificent Mrs. Kane when really there were two magical Mrs. Kanes, but it was just funny. But, yeah, so my mom worked her way up. I mean she started working at Westborough State Hospital for ten dollars an hour, my mom when she was—I was a junior in high school, so she was like I don't know, forty-eight? Ten dollars an hour? Because she hadn't worked in so long. I mean it was unbelievable. And she worked her way up there really well, and I think she just had some issues with working for the State and different, different things. And she went into sales, which is what she had been doing before my sister had been born years and years and years ago. And she loves it. She has a really good time. She had a hard time getting—she works with a room full of men and she had a hard time getting them to sort of respect her and to listen to her and let her do her thing, and she pushed her way through and she's now their boss. And, they love her. She's like the mother hen, but for—it was a struggle. She would come home and cry sometimes and be like, "I don't think I can do this. I don't think I can do this, but I'm gonna to stick it out and I'm gonna see how it works." And she did and she's happy. I mean everyone hates their job sometimes, but for the most part my mom is, you know, they make her laugh and it makes her happy, so it's good.

JV: Yeah. How old is your sister now?

BMK: She's twenty-two.

JV: Twenty-two. Does she have any jobs or just school?

BMK: Well, no, she works at—it's hard because she's in New Orleans, so she has a job, but she just started it. She just back—my sister was home for the fall semester because of Katrina, so she went back. And her, I think, she works at a clothing boutique in New

Orleans and she works there once a week, but she, for some reason she wasn't working right away when she came back. I don't know if the store wasn't open yet or what the deal was. When she lived up here, when she was, my sister went to Worcester Academy. And she worked part time at the Bagel Inn in Holden, and that was a fun experience for her. So, she was there for like three years just like Saturdays going through school and, yeah, she liked it a lot. She also danced a lot, my sister, she went to Joan-Sherry Dance Center. She started dancing at the age of two and went all the way up through high school and did competitions and lots of really cool stuff. So, yeah, it was great.

JV: Where have you lived during your life?

BMK: I've lived in Illinois, Iowa, um, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maryland.

JV: Wow! Did you grow up in Worcester?

BMK: Yes.

JV: In, around like what neighborhoods?

BMK: I lived right by St. Peter-Marion.

JV: Ok. And, what was your neighborhood generally like?

BMK: Um, pretty safe. Pretty, almost suburban.

JV: Yeah. So since you didn't, um, you weren't born in Worcester, when did you come to Worcester?

BMK: My family moved here when I was three.

JV: And, was there a reason you guys came or?

BMK: My dad's work brought him to the area.

JV: And where do you live now?

BMK: I live in Holden now.

JV: Ok. And what about your other family members? Do they live in Worcester or around here?

BMK: My sister goes to school in New Orleans. Most of my family is not from the area. Most of my family is from New Jersey and Illinois/Chicago area.

JV: Ok. And um, let's see, what changes have occurred in Worcester over time? Did you see any?

BMK: I've seen some changes. You're starting to see more um, corporations come through, like for retail stores and things like that. One of the more funny changes I've seen recently was—my mom and I have talked about—was when she moved here from Illinois she always was really frustrated with the grocery stores and like how there were no good grocery stores. And like in the past five years like all of the old grocery stores have kind of like shut down and they've built up these new, fabulous, huge grocery stores, and it's just funny.

JV: When you were here were there like any major historical events that happened or?

BMK: Hmm. No, I was living in Chicago when the fire happened and I mean that's—are you talking about major historical events in Worcester or in the world?

JV: Yeah, in Worcester like when you, if there was anything that happened while you were in Worcester?

BMK: No, not anything...

JV: No?

BMK: Not anything major; I don't know what major would be.

JV: Um, let's see. What distinct characters make, characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

BMK: Worcester is very like, I like to call it the city that wants to, but won't and can't. Like, it's just funny. I see all these things happening and I see people saying that Worcester is up and coming, but people have been saying that for like years and years and years. And I just don't see it ever getting to where people want it to be. Um, although there are some changes going on now. A lot of younger people are getting lofts and apartments in Worcester that are commuting into Boston, which might mean that there might be like more fun things for younger people to do in the city, but every time Worcester tries to do something like cool and trendy and, you know, just fun, it's always sort of like, there's just something not right about it. It's always like it was a nice effort, but it's just not there. I just always feel disappointed by new things that happen in Worcester.

JV: Is there any examples you have of that or?

BMK: Even just like little restaurants that might open that look really fun and then like you go and the food just tastes like crap or like ... (laughing). Worcester is really gritty and there's a lot of history to the city, but you really have to kind of go through the side roads and the back roads to find it. It's not just on the main streets and stuff. Like I love just like driving around and smoking cigarettes and looking at all the old factories on South Main and like, you know, trying to find places to explore to take photographs.

And, it's all about the little pockets that you find. It's all—there isn't like one section of Worcester that's like, "Oh, you have to go to this section of Worcester. It's great!" There isn't like a Newbury Street in Worcester or anything like that. You have to explore different pockets of the city. Like there's great restaurants on Shrewsbury Street. There's a few fun shops on Park Ave. There's fun stuff to do on Highland Street, but it's all like little pockets here and there. It's not like you could spend an afternoon in one place and it's all—Worcester's just all about exploring the different areas.

JV: What about women's experiences in Worcester? What are those generally like?

BMK: I think it depends on like what you're doing and where you are. I mean there's definitely places that I don't feel safe walking around in Worcester at night as a woman alone. Like, it's just like not, not a safe place to be. But, there are other places in Worcester where I think it's fine. I feel like Worcester, I feel like women in Worcester are really hard workers. I feel like people in Massachusetts specifically in Worcester, um, are just really hard workers. And, I feel like, like women in Worcester work really hard and they don't necessarily have a lot to show for it. And, maybe, maybe you know, wages aren't great or, or I don't really know what happens. But I just feel like the women in Worcester are more hard working than women I see in other places, for sure.

JV: Where did you attend school? And can you name your schools?

BMK: I went to Venerini Academy and I went to Holy Name Central Catholic High School for—Venerini stops at eighth grade, and then I went to Holy Name for freshman and half of sophomore year, and then I went away to boarding school.

JV: Ok, where was boarding school?

BMK: It was in Dublin, New Hampshire, which is between Keene and Peterborough.

JV: Oh, ok. How were girls treated when you were in school?

BMK: Um, when I was in school the girls would definitely be more secretive and sneaky about the bad things they were doing and the boys would definitely be more in-your-face about it and definitely get in a lot more trouble. And they were also really like exclusive and secretive and gossipy with each other and even when it would be, you know, your close, close friends, they would have a secret sleepover and not invite you or like I'd have a secret sleepover and not invite a certain person and it would be top secret. And, I just remember the boys just being a lot more open about like—I mean not their feelings, not that they were sitting around like saying how they felt about things, but you know if a boy didn't like another boy they'd know it. It'd be fine; it'd be what it was. And with a girl it was a lot more complicated than that.

JV: Yup!

BMK: I don't really think that Worcester was, I mean I think it was like going to school in Worcester was similar to going to school in any other sort of city, like smaller city. I mean, girls are mean. Especially in junior high, like I had awful experiences in junior high with the people you would call like your best friends. I mean, I was awful too. It's just like that age; it's awful.

JV: How old were you when you were allowed to date?

BMK: That's a good question. I actually hid boyfriends from my mom for a really long time, but we had never like had a talk like, "You can't date until you're fourteen" or whatever. I was just embarrassed that like I would even think about boys ever. And so, I hid it from her for a really long time, and then I went to high school far away so it was like it wasn't even that I had to hide anything. I mean I wasn't even near her. So, then I think like after that talking to my mom about boys it was like once I was out I was eighteen. So, it was like, "Yeah, I like boys." So, it just sort of like evolved sort of like that.

JV: Where'd you guys, where'd you go on dates?

BMK: We went to the movies a lot and a lot of it was like group dating and, you know, things like that.

JV: What was considered fashionable when you were younger?

BMK: I remember in junior high we used to wear skids. I don't know if you know what those are?

JV: No, no I don't.

BMK: They were like these flannel pants that were like sweatpants almost I guess. And they have like plaid, like huge plaid. And like, huge prints. I guess they weren't all flannel. There was flannel for the winter and then cotton for the summer. But, like the cool thing about it was that there was like this diamond shaped yellow like a street sign on the back pocket with like a car skidding out. So, they were called skids. And I just remember thinking those were the bomb like we all wore those like everyday. And then there was this store like, we all, all of us little white kids thought we were like just little gangster kids. We all wore gangster clothes, like we all went to the Greendale Mall and went to like the cross-colors store and bought like African clothing, like literally African colors, like red, yellow, green; it was hysterical. It was hysterical. And my mom was just like, "This is great that you're getting into different cultures, but you're not behaving..." like because we would talk, we would talk like the rap music we would listen to. We would talk like that and it wasn't like, we were all just like white-bred kids from educated families and none of us were brought up to speak this way, but we were all talking like we had grown up on like the streets of New York.

JV: What was your favorite musical group or song?

BMK: We loved New Kids on the Block. I love New Kids on the Block. I actually got to see them in concert once. It was amazing. It was really cool. I saw them at the Worcester Centrum and I had like a front row balcony seat like on the side, so we saw like them coming in and out of backstage.

JV: Oh, that's cool!

BMK: It was so amazing! And, Jordan Knight, he heard me scream for him over all of the other girls in the Centrum, and he gave me this really funny look and he waved to me! It was really fun.

JV: What about dances or clubs?

BMK: I remember when I was in high school we used to go to a lot of the St. John's dances and it was just fun because we could tease the own boys at our school because they couldn't go because it was just for the St. John's boys. And, uh, I remember going, like having a lot of guy friends in high school and a lot of my guy friends in high school worked at St. John's and used to do the musicals there and things like that.

JV: Did you pursue any educational programs like vocational training or beauty school or anything like that?

BMK: You know, I went to bartending school, but I didn't finish it.

JV: Was there any reason? You just...?

BMK: I was, it was right before I was moving to Chicago and I was in school. I was in, I was taking classes at UMass. The end of bartending school just coincided with like finals and moving and all this stuff and it was just like...

JV: Kind of hectic?

BMK: Yeah! I just never...(laughing)

JV: Do you attend college?

BMK: I do.

JV: Where do you go?

BMK: I go to Clark University.

JV: And, is that the only school you've been to?

BMK: No.

JV: What's your other ones?

BMK: I went to Quinsig Community College. I went to UMass Amherst. I went to Columbia College in Chicago and Clark is my fourth college.

JV: Ok, and how come you are at Clark now? Is there any reason?

BMK: Clark is like the perfect school for me. It's small; it's like very community-minded. I love the art department here, and that's what I'm majoring in. People here are so amazing and friendly and you can really just like, if you have an idea and you want to do it, you can do it. Like, you can do whatever you want.

JV: That's good!

BMK: Yeah.

JV: And, how are you paying and how did you pay for your education before?

BMK: Well since I'm an older student they like basically like at a private college they almost pay you to go. Like, I have a lot of scholarships and what I don't have in scholarships I have in loans, and it works out really nicely.

JV: Oh, that's good!

BMK: Yeah!

JV: How did you decide you wanted to go to college after you graduated?

BMK: You know, obviously I've gone in and out of college a lot. And for a long time I kind of thought like the stuff I wanna do with my life I don't necessarily need a degree for and I'm really not like a school person. I really hate being in school, but I came to terms with, like from being out in the working world and trying to make it and still like pursue my personal interests and the things that I wanted to do at the same time working like minimum wage jobs that had nothing to do with what I wanted for myself in life. I just was sort of like, "You need the piece of paper."

JV: Yeah.

BMK: So...

JV: So, tell more about your experiences at Clark?

BMK: Clark has been really amazing. I love the students in the art department. The art students in Clark are not like what you would picture art students to be like. They're all really friendly and bubbly and no one really seems like very affected, and like just fun

people which is not what you would really think of art students. You always think of like brooding kids wearing black and really unfriendly and like pretentious, and there's none of that here. They're so friendly. And just nice and fun and funny, which is something that like—I went to art school in Chicago and, you know, there's a, there's an art school I went to and then there was an art institute school and all the kids were really snotty. So, it was nice to be around artists that I can like actually have a nice experience and like enjoy themselves and not feel like they have to be like angry all the time! But I feel like Clark students are also very outspoken. And, I feel like there's a lot of protesting and things of the sort. In a lot of my classes here I'll find that my professor will uh—not a lot, but some of my classes—my professors will assume that everyone is a hardcore bleeding liberal democrat. And, not that I'm not. I sort of lie pretty moderately, like on the sort of scale of political mindset. But it bothers me that they would just assume that we're all to one side, which most people—I mean, I think the school is probably like 90% like bleeding hardcore liberals that will lie on the train tracks for a tree, to save a tree, but, I mean, there are definitely kids here that aren't like that! And, you know, I feel like there's a lot of sort of community effort and action here and a lot of the Clark students really enjoy getting involved in sort of making South Main a better community. And, I mean a huge part of Clark is to revitalize this area. And to make it work between the university and the neighborhood, which are just two different worlds like mindset-wise, but we're all in the same little geographic area. And it's interesting to see how these students, I mean a lot of these students are from Ohio or like, you know, from little suburbs in different places that have never lived in a city before. And it's interesting to see how they deal with, dealing with or with an inner-city place like Worcester. You know, kids are young and they think they know everything and they think they know what's best for these people a lot of the time. And I think what these kids need to do maybe sometimes is listen a little more and talk a little less. But, I mean their hearts are all in the right place and everyone wants to, you know, do what's right. There's just a lot of people that want to save the world that go to Clark. But, it's great! It's a great place. I'd rather be around people that wanna save the world then not really care at all.

JV: Yeah! What about your, you said you're an art major?

BMK: Yeah.

JV: What about some of your projects? Have they been displayed in Worcester?

BMK: Oh yeah, I meant to tell you that! I've been showing a lot of my work at Arts in Worcester, which is this great gallery that is on South Main that is sort of part of this action that they are trying to make to make South Main an artist district. And, um, they have this beautiful gallery on the corner of Main Street and Chandler Street and last spring I won this great award for some of my art work. It was this sculpture I did, and I won the best in category for sculpture and the visitor's choice award.

JV: Oh, that's awesome!

BMK: Yeah, it was great! It was really, really fun and a lot of my photographs have been shown there too. I was just in a group show in January to February and then February—and it's still up now in a student art show with all the students, all the art students, from Holy Cross and Assumption and Worcester State and Clark and all the Worcester schools in the exhibit. It's a great exhibit. They put on some really great art shows there.

JV: That's awesome!

BMK: Yeah!

JV: Whether in or outside of school were there any support networks or mentoring that was important to you?

BMK: My family is so close. There's no way I'd be as successful as I am with school without my family. There's no way.

JV: Even though some of them live far away? You guys are still very close?

BMK: Absolutely! I talk to my cousins all the time. My mom is like my best friend. My sister and I are really close. And, you know, I've always had tight groups of friends that have helped me sort of—I tend to be someone that always sort of has some really close friends that are older so that I always have someone that I can like bounce stuff off, but isn't necessarily my family.

JV: Yeah, that's good.

BMK: Yeah, that's always nice.

JV: Was there any extra-curricular activities you did in school? Or anything really important to you?

BMK: Yeah, I was really into theatre and musicals and music and singing a lot when I was younger. I would do community theatre and I took private voice lessons and, yeah, I did a lot of like artsy stuff like that that I was really into.

JV: That's cool.

BMK: Yeah. When I, um, when I used to do the musicals and the plays and stuff when I was younger I started doing, it was really funny. We, we went to church actually way out in Princeton and we had a visiting Priest and he was involved in some theatre in Worcester. And he, you know, took a look at me and he was like, "You know, the theatre I'm working with, they're doing 'Annie' this summer. You should go audition." My eyes just lit up because I knew the movie 'Annie' by heart, so I was like, "I am meant to be Annie! Like that's it!" And, it was part of this camp at this theatre at Holy Name High School. And, they did this every summer and they did some camp things and there

was some community theatre things for older people in the summer. So, in the summer it was totally separate from the high school. You wouldn't even know there was a high school attached to the place if it wasn't attached to it! So, I went in and the guy, you know the director, was like, "We don't take younger kids younger than seventh grade." Now I was going into forth grade at the time, but ya know, since he was doing some kid-oriented musicals he said, "We'll bring you on." And I didn't get the part of Annie. Actually the girl that got the part of Annie went on to do shows on Broadway, and so I'm trying like not to take it too personally. But, you know, I got a part in that musical and I kept going back there. It was a huge part of my childhood. Being a part of that community and feeling like I was really a part of not just, you know, soccer games after school, but that, you know, I was like a little cog in this wheel of this small theatre that needed everything that they could get to keep going. And, you know, I was the youngest person there and some of my buddies that I would hang out with were in their forties and fifties. And like, you know, I was exposed to so many things when I was younger being around creative people like that. That it really made me feel a part of something and it made me feel ok with maybe not being like cookie-cutter like a lot of the kids I was going to school with everyday. So, um, that was a huge shaping part of who I was as a kid, for sure.

JV: Were there any particular areas in Worcester where you spend a lot of your time?

BMK: We used to hang out at the mall a lot, and we would go to the movies all the time like the Lincoln Plaza movie theatre and the downtown Worcester movie theatre, the Showcase downtown, and the movie theatre in Webster Square. All of these theatres are gone now which is so sad. We would just go, we would—you know where we used to go when I was in junior high? We used to go skiing on Ward Hill on Friday nights. It was like five dollars to ski for the night. We would go there and meet boys and have like a really fun time and we used to hang out up at Wachusett too because all of our families would get us the ski passes for the season, so you could go whenever you wanted. So, we would do that on the weekends too, which is kinda fun, you know, like going to, you know, we would go look for boys. Everything was about boys! We were always looking for boys in the ski lodge and things like that. And let me try and think of other places that we hung out at...I guess once I got older we used to do like camping and like take weekend trips and things like that. When I was in high school I was like a huge hippy and I used to take off a lot on the weekends, like in the summer with my friends and lie to my mom and tell her I was going camping, but I'd really be going to like a bunch of Grateful Dead concerts! Stuff like that, but I was really into that. And, you know, a huge thing in Worcester—I don't know if they still do it, but like you know on Saturday nights everyone would like get into their fancy cars and with their shiny rims and like blast all their music. But so my friend Paul and I—Paul is like this really tall, skinny, hippy boy with long hair—we used to get in my car which was my mom's old station wagon covered in Grateful Dead stickers and like cruise down Main Street just to mess with the people! And like blast like our hippy music! We totally did that!

JV: That's wicked funny!

BMK: Yeah, my friends and I were just like sort of, you know, we would go to the little coffee houses. There was coffee house on James Street, I don't remember what they called it, but you know my friend's little high school band would play there sometimes and we would go do that. And we liked to go to coffee houses. We hung out at Denny's on Lincoln Street all the time and like, you know, just like silly stuff like that. We just wanted a place where we could go out and think we were cool!

JV: After you graduate from Clark, what do you see as your options? Or what are you planning on doing? Do you know?

BMK: Yeah, I'm actually looking seriously at internships in L.A. this summer.

JV: That's awesome!

BMK: Yeah! I really wanna work in television or film, and I'd love to write for like a sitcom or something like that. So, hopefully I'll be heading out to L.A. when I'm done with school.

JV: Wow, that's cool!

BMK: Yeah! I hope it works out.

JV: Now, do you have a job right now? Do you work outside your home?

BMK: I do work study at school. I T.A. in the darkroom at school.

JV: What's T.A.?

BMK: It's sort of like teaching assistant, like I help other students. I set up the darkroom. I do all that kind of stuff.

JV: And, like where, what was your first job for wages and stuff and when did you begin that?

BMK: My first job was a summer job when I came back from boarding school and was in Worcester for the summer at Media Play. It was sort of like a Best Buy that was at Worcester Common Fashion Outlets. I think I was paid six dollars an hour? And I was like a sales person in the music department.

JV: Did you like it?

BMK: Um, it was my first job, and I just thought I was really cool because I was hanging out with like all these like "scene-ster" kids that were like in, you know, their twenties in Worcester. And I just thought they were all really cool.

JV: How'd you find that job?

BMK: I think I just walked in and applied.

JV: And, how'd you learn to do the work? They just trained you there or?

BMK: Yeah.

JV: And, so, you had a boss right?

BMK: Yeah.

JV: And how was your relationship with him or her?

BMK: To be honest with you, I don't think I remember who my boss was at that job.

JV: Oh, ok.

BMK: Is that horrible?! (laughing)

JV: No, no that's not bad! Did that work mean anything to you?

BMK: I mean no, not really. It was hard because the music I sort of liked to listen to—I always liked helping people and so I was always on the floor helping people find music, but no one was ever really looking for the music I wanted to talk about. So, I mean it was sort of frustrating like that.

JV: What about housework? What are your responsibilities in terms of housework?

BMK: I'm actually living with my mom right now, and I'm probably the messiest person alive and I'm sure she's wanted to throw me out on more than one occasion! It's really bad like I'll set up, like I'll go through phases—for a while I'll be like at the dining room table and that's my study area and then I'll leave it because it's too messy for me to work at so I'll move somewhere else in the house, but I won't ever clean up that area! But, I mean, I do my part. Like, I clean in the kitchen and I help clean in different areas in the house. I'm more of a clutter person than a dirty person.

JV: Yeah, so your mom does most of it though?

BMK: She does. We actually have a woman, we've had her come in for like twenty years, that comes in on Wednesdays and does like a lot of light stuff like vacuuming and, you know, washes sheets and stuff like that, which is really nice.

JV: How's your housework changed for you over time? Like has it just increased or?

BMK: It's just dependent on where—obviously I have to do more of it when I'm not living at home with my mom.

JV: When you were younger did you know what you wanted to be when you grew up?

BMK: I think I've always sort of known that I've wanted to entertain people and tell stories and do something like that. I mean, I've never really knew this is what I want to do, but I've always sort of known that like I want to sort of make people see things in life differently.

JV: Did you feel like anything was expected of you?

BMK: Yes. Education is so important to my family and it always has been. My family has always taken pride in the colleges that they've gone to and things like that. And there was, it was never said, but there was always that sort of like, "You need to be going to a good college that has a good reputable name and this, that and the other."

JV: So, basically your options were kind of limited?

BMK: Well, I mean no. I went to Quinsig. I went to colleges because at that point I was kind of a slacker in high school. So, I mean it was all I could get into at that point even though I wasn't necessarily like—like I've always been a smart person, I just never, I wasn't, I just didn't have the grades. But there was definitely some disappointment in me from like my grandparents and aunts and uncles for a while because they knew that there could be more from me and they weren't seeing it.

JV: Yeah. What about volunteer work? Were you involved in any or did you do any paid work for a non-profit organization?

BMK: I have. I've volunteered in high school. It was kind of a requirement to graduate so there was a lot of like little things like Salvation Army and like I think there was a children's museum that I volunteered at in Keene, up in New Hampshire. And more recently I was, I worked at the Boys and Girls Club in Marlborough for a little over a year. And um, I ran the Learning Center which is where the kids would do homework, and I did summer camp and I did the Arts and Crafts Room.

JV: Was there any specific age group you worked with?

BMK: The Boys and Girls Club, I mean kids come in at like age five and, you know, are up to high school. So...

JV: It was kind of a big range?

BMK: Yeah.

JV: And what led you to go work for them?

BMK: I love working with kids. I had been working at a psychiatric hospital before that in Westwood, Massachusetts and I needed to work closer to home and I wanted to have a job that was more fun and not as regulative with kids. It seemed like the perfect, the perfect place.

JV: You said that Media Play was your first job? After that what did you do?

BMK: Well, after I graduated from high school I came home and I worked at Bath and Body Works at the Greendale Mall, and that was really fun. It was just a fun experience to work with all those girls and stuff and like play with all those girly products. And I worked at, they had this new age store at the Solomon Pond Mall that I worked at for a while, and it was the most horrible experience of my life. It was like down at the end where Sears is and no one ever went down to that end of the mall and like no one wants to buy incense at the mall and no one wants to go in and buy crystals like at the mall. It was just a really horrible idea, and I sat and did nothing all day.

JV: How was your boss at that job?

BMK: Horrible!

JV: Yeah?

BMK: Yeah, yeah it was just a bad, because like they would come in and see me reading the paper and they're like, "We're paying you. You shouldn't be reading the paper!" And I'd be like, "I, I cleaned the store like three times! There's nothing else for me to do!" and, you know, they just didn't really get it. Um, but I moved on from there. I had a really fun job at a hotel down in Maryland. It was in Ocean City which is like a huge summer town down there, and it was just fun to see all these people on vacation and to be sort of in a different part of the country where, like everybody down there when they found out I was from Massachusetts literally looked me in the eye and asked me if I was related to the Kennedys. Like they really thought that like anyone that was Irish and from Massachusetts had some Kennedy connection, which I always thought was really funny. Yeah, it's interesting living in different areas of the country and having people's reaction to you being from Massachusetts. I guess everyone has a reaction to wherever anyone is from, but I mean everyone was sort of automatically thinking that I was very rigid and very sort of, you know, in-your-face, very Masshole. And I definitely have that side to me, but it's not the only side. People tend to think that we are all like that. I mean, I guess we all are to an extent, but we all have different layers to us as well. Um, when I returned from Chicago I worked at Tatnuck Bookseller for a while which was interesting because, I mean, I grew up going to the old Tatnuck store in Tatnuck Square and like, you know, learning to read from the books that I bought there. And it was always a big treat to like have my mom take me there to buy books. So it was kind of fun to go and work for the store. And when I first moved here back from Chicago being at Tatnuck was where I met a lot of my friends because I didn't really know anyone when I came back. I didn't have a lot of friends that I had like grown up with that I kept in touch with. So I actually met up with some people that I was friends with when I was younger

working at Tatnuck. It was really fun. And I feel like so many, so many people that live in Worcester or come here to go to school end up working or had worked there, you know, in the bookstore or in the restaurant. Tatnuck owned like all the book stores for the colleges and so it was just—everybody I meet I feel like they worked there or their boyfriend worked there or somebody worked there. So, I feel like it was a huge loss and it was a huge dimension within the city that, you know, people could just go there and people did. I mean, people went in there every day, the same people every day buying books. People would come in and not shop! And, just sit on the couches and just read and it was fine.

JV: How long did you work there?

BMK: I was there, um, for nine months, but really part time. At first I was there maybe like 20 to 25 hours a week, and then I got a full-time job at a psychiatric hospital, so I—but I didn't want to leave Tatnuck. And, I worked there once just so I could be around all these great people and be in this environment.

JV: How'd you balance all your different priorities, responsibilities, roles, and interests throughout your life?

BMK: Well, I have a really hard time balancing stuff! I actually had to quit the job unfortunately at the Boys and Girls Club because I didn't have time with everything going on with school, and I just sort of take life as it comes to me. I try to keep an organized calendar, but it doesn't always work. I do what I can.

JV: Um, how would you characterize the personal and professional costs of your chosen path? And what about your benefits from it?

BMK: I, you know, when I go out to L.A. and I try to get a job it's gonna be really hard. And if, you know, if I even get to go on the path that I want to take, like writing for TV, it's so up in the air. You don't have benefits. I mean unless you have like a real corporate job within like one of the big companies, you have to pay for your own insurance. You don't know. You could be working on a TV show for up to three months and then be, and then have a ton of money and then be unemployed for six months after that. So, I don't really know how everything's gonna play out.

JV: Was there any difficult transitions you went through when moving from childhood to adulthood?

BMK: Yeah. I, it's hard to sort of like name it. I mean, I guess I've always suffered from depression my whole life, depression and anxiety. And I had a lot of that going on um, like in my early twenties. And that's part of why I moved back to Massachusetts to be near my mom, was because I really couldn't handle my life at that point. It was too much to deal with, so...

JV: When you're not at home where do you usually find yourself?

BMK: I'm almost always at Clark. Um, I pretty much live in the Arts Building! I'm always doing photography or sculpture or something crazy, so that's pretty much what I do.

JV: What about hobbies or other activities that take you outside the home?

BMK: I'm so lucky to be studying things that I'm interested in. I'm so lucky that my homework is making a really cool sculpture or like, you know, producing a bunch of really amazing prints in the darkroom. So those are my hobbies, but it's also like my work and my school. So, I mean, I just feel like really fortunate that I get to do that.

JV: How do you feel about choices you've made in your life?

BMK: Ohhh! You know, I just feel like everything is a great learning experience and, you know, yeah, I've wasted a lot of time, but I have also learned things in that time and I feel like in the end everything always evens out for everyone anyway.

JV: Do you have any regrets?

BMK: I try not to. I try not to! Um, I do though, but I try not to!

JV: Based on your life experience, what advice would you give women today and in future generations?

BMK: Not to spend any time worrying and to just go for whatever feels right. And to trust your intuition because women have amazing intuition and they don't use it!

JV: Based on your experiences, is there anything else you think we should know?

BMK: Yeah, I just think that it's great that you guys are taking a look at women's history and how it has such an important role in the world because there's always been women throughout history. As for Worcester, you know, I mean I think what keeps a lot of people here is family. I think Worcester is a really family-based city. I know for me, like when I was a kid growing up like as a really young kid, I'd be like, "I can't wait to get the hell outta this city!" And, like I couldn't. And, now I'm here and I'm struggling with it because I'm so close with my mom and so close with my family and this is where she is. And, it's like I do have all these routes that I want to pursue and I'm going to pursue them, but I'm kind of just like this is where my mom is. If you ask me, people have asked me, "What is your favorite thing about Worcester?" And I say, "It's my mom! My mom lives here and that's why it's my favorite thing." And, I do, I mean I see there's so many families that stay here generation after generation after generation and I think that's a huge reason why people are here. Because, it's not a city that people necessarily come to to live. I mean a lot of kids come to college here and they get out as soon as they're done and they go somewhere else. I would say Worcester is definitely based on family-

oriented sort of building. And it's been a pleasure working with you here today Jaimie. Thank you for interviewing me! It was an honor.

JV: Thank you Bridget!