

Interviewee: Sarah Kelly
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Date: February 28, 2012
Location: Worcester, Massachusetts
Transcriber: Natasha DiCostanzo and Gaiyan Wu



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Abstract: Sarah Kelly was born in 1979 in Texas, and in 2004 moved to Worcester. Sarah had studied music all through her life, and became a major in flute. After working in the music business, Sarah moved to Worcester to open up the Worcester Academy of Music. In this interview, Sarah discusses the challenges and advantages of her music business in Worcester. Sarah had studied music all through her life, and in college pursued a flute major. From there she worked in the music business, but after the economic downturn decided to be her own boss. She talks about the negative aspects of Worcester, and its charm as well. Sarah then discusses the journey to starting her business, and the struggles she has to go through. She also elaborates about women's experience in Worcester, and gives out advice to future businesswomen themselves. In this interview, Sarah talks extensively about the importance of the arts and music in people's lives, and its necessity in schools in the United States.

ND: We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics/community involvement. Thank you for your help with this important project! We are asking permission for your oral history using your name and date.

SK: I agree. [laughs]

ND: So what is your full maiden?

SK: I'm not married. My name is Sarah Kelly.

ND: When were you born?

SK: [], 1979

ND: Are you originally from the city of Worcester?

SK: No, I am not.

ND: If you were not born Worcester, when did you arrive, like your age or year?

SK: I have been in the area for about eight years.

ND: How did you come to live in Worcester?

SK: Well I actually work in Worcester. I don't live in Worcester. So I own a business in Worcester.

ND: What is it called?

SK: It's the Worcester Academy of Music.

ND: Have you live consistently in the same place, or you moved around a lot?

SK: In Massachusetts, I have lived primarily in only two different places. So the current place I have lived in for seven years.

ND: What was your neighborhood like over here?

SK: It is very nice. It's quiet... typical New England town.

ND: Is there any particular part of the city of Worcester where you like to spend a lot of time?

SK: I primarily spend it in the downtown area, perhaps because that's where my business is located. But I like to go to Shrewsbury Street and check out the restaurants there, and .. yeah so downtown and Shrewsbury Street are probably the primary areas.

ND: Do you have any family over here?

SK: Not in Worcester... I have two younger sisters that live in South Boston, well one lives in South Boston... one lives in Dedham.

ND: Do the rest of your family live, where you are originally from?

SK: They live in Minnesota.

ND: How does that affect you? I feel like being so far away..

SK: It's ok, because I have my sisters out here, and my parents come to visit. You know few times a year, and we go home a couple times too, so it's fine.

ND: That is good. What do you think are some distinct characteristics of Worcester, since you moved around a lot, compared to other cities?

SK: One of the things I really liked about Worcester, which drew me here, and is why I wanted to open my school here was... there is a certain charm to it. Maybe because it is so old. I love the New England area, because it is so old and so historic. And I really like what they were doing culturally in the city. They really are, you know, getting engaged with a lot of theater, and lots of different music programs, and I really like how supportive they are of those things.

ND: What challenges do you think that the city of Worcester faces?

SK: I think it faces several. I think it is a hard city to be in, because there is such a diversity in incomes and wealth, and you know it is very segregated in different zip codes of Worcester I guess based on... you know those sorts of things. So I think until things are a little bit more integrated, and things are evening out a little bit more... It is going to have some challenges, especially like where I work in the downtown area; it's primarily a low-income area for people who can actually live there, but then a lot of the businesses people who come they leave at five, and go home, so it's kind of deserted on that front. It has its ways to go.

ND: What would you like to change if you had the power?

SK: I guess just making the arts accessible to everybody, since that's really where my focus is that's what I do. I think they are doing a great job, but I think there are a lot of people who do get left out of those sort of enrichment activities, just because they can't afford it.

ND: Do you think the presence of art in Worcester is not as high, or like the focus?

SK: I think they are doing a good job of trying of focus on it, but obviously there is other always bigger issues, you know, health care and insurance and, you know, just basic living things that people are concerned about, and I think with our current city manager he is doing a great job and... So I think it is going in the right direction.

ND: You've been here for how many years?

SK: Well, working in Worcester for about two years.

ND: Do you think there have been any significant changes or it's basically the same, since you lived here in the city?

SK: I think it has improved. I am involved in a couple of different organizations in Worcester, and between that and then my school, things are definitely going in a positive directions, and... so I think everyone is doing the right thing, it is just a slow process.

ND: So has any major historical event in Worcester occurred during your time? I mean since you've been here for a short amount of time, but...

SK: I don't know what is really considered significant. I mean the whole City Square Project in Worcester is a pretty big deal, that's exciting...that's finally under way, because I know they've been talking about it forever, so now they are breaking ground, and making it happen, so I think that is a big deal, because it will start bringing more businesses and people into Worcester, and hopefully that will make the economy even better in the city.

ND: Yeah, what do you think that.. Like in your opinion, what do you think women's experience in Worcester has been?

SK: I think they're doing a lot of great things for women here. The Chamber of Commerce has something called "the Women's Information Network," which is a monthly lunch-in type thing, where women get together. They get to network. They bring in speakers, and so it's a really positive environment for women. They also do this really wonderful, women's conference in June every year. It is like a daylong event, where women, but men are invited too if they want to, but it is primarily women, and it's networking, and then you take all this different seminars and lunches and breakfasts and.. So it is a really positive environment. Women are very supportive of

each other, and so it is nice to have that kind of a community. Because there is a lot of, you know, women leaders and they kind of don't have a lot of people they can talk to. Still... it is still male dominated, unfortunately, so...

ND: As a young woman, like switching around, when you were younger what was considered fashionable at your time?

SK: Like clothing fashionable?

ND: Compared to like modern day?

SK: [laughs] Well I guess having grown up primarily in the nineties.. I mean clothes.. clothing has I guess improved. It's not so dramatic though, not as like going off to like the seventies, you know, before I was born to today, which would be more drastic or the eighties, you know.. It's mostly I think more hairstyles I notice. Big bangs, perms and hairspray galore, when I was growing up, and just crazy makeup. So everything seems to have toned down and become more chic and sophisticated, I think in general.

ND: You like it better here.. now or back when you were younger?

SK: I personally like it better now, but at the time I didn't know any better, because everybody was wearing it.

ND: In school, when you were in school do you think women were treated differently or basically the same as now?

SK: I didn't really think about it when I was younger, so I probably would say it was the same. I probably only have a few... Well one that I can really think of in college. There was a professor,

who definitely favored the male students, like blatantly so, but other than that I haven't really had that kind of experience in an educational setting.

ND: What do you identify your cultural or ethnical background as?

SK: Well my father is from Northern Ireland, so I'm half Irish. My mother is from Minnesota, so she's kind of a mix of lots of different things... German, French, Scandinavian...

ND: Do you feel like it is a mix of cultures that has like affected you in your life?

SK: Not really, I mean it... it's exciting to kind of get in touch with your Irish side, because I have family over there, but as far as it effecting me growing up and forming who I am, not so much I don't think.

ND: So moving on to education, where did you attend school?

SK: Where.. when?

ND: Where did you attend school?

SK: Where, ok. I did my undergraduate work at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and my graduate work at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

ND: Did you attend... So that is where you attended graduate school?

SK: Yup.

ND: What were the challenges.. What were your challenges in the education like personally?

SK: College was just a bit of a shock for me, because prior to that I really never had to work hard in school. I just always got A's, and didn't really have to work for them, and so in college is when I got my first C. [laughs] So that was kind of a shock, but.. but otherwise it was a wonderful experience, and, you know, they often say that these are the best times of your lives, and college.. and I would probably say that's true. I mean I loved my college experience, and how I grew as a person through those four years, and I loved the environment that I was in, and I think I found a good fit for me so..

ND: Did you live there or....?

SK: Yes, so at my school it was a very small liberal art college, and so everyone was required to live on campus the whole four years.

ND: That's good. Upon finishing your formal education, what did you see as your options for your future?

SK: As a musician it's very challenging, so when I left undergrad school, I went to grad school... basically to see if I could do the music thing, and I left grad school knowing I didn't want to the music thing. I didn't want to play in orchestra. I didn't want to go on and get a doctorate in music so I could teach at a college. I just... I wanted a stable job. So I didn't know what that was, but, you know, I guess it helped focus of what I did want to do and what I didn't want to do, so I just randomly moved here, and have managed to stay in the music business, so I have always been able to do that even though it is not primarily playing as a career.

ND: What support networks and mentoring have been important to you during your education?

SK: Definitely the bond and the relationship you build with your private instructor. So I am a flutist so, you know, I was probably closest to my flute professor in college, and then also again in graduate school, because they help you not only with your music, but they, you know, are a good guide for what comes ahead... what your options are, and just being really supportive.

ND: Were your parents supportive of your dream?

SK: Yeah, I mean, I think they didn't love the fact that I was going to be a musician, but I think they realized it was something I was good at, something I was really passionate about, and so if I wanted to do it they would, you know, support me.

ND: How did you come to find that passion, music?

SK: I've been playing piano since I was in first grade, and had studied all the way through high school, and, you know, picked up flute and picked band for whenever you start instruments, and... they both just came very easily to me. It was like natural, and so then when I was deciding to go to college it was just sort of like, "Oh yeah, I'm good at flute, I'll just go and be a flute major." You know, so and I didn't really understand what it meant to be a music major, and all that stuff... It was just like, "Oh, I'm good at it, I'll just do that." So but, I just love music. It's just like you can really communicate in a way you might not be able to do otherwise.

ND: Do your parents have any musical background, or was it just you?

SK: Nope, I don't know where the musical talent came from. No one in my family, as far as I know is musical. [laughs]

ND: So moving on to work, do you work outside of your house?

SK: Well I have a music school, so it's in Worcester. I come here every day and yes so I don't work in my house.

ND: How did you come to establish your business in Worcester specifically?

SK: When I finally decided I wanted to do a music school, you know, I kind of looked at the different areas, and Boston is saturated with music schools. There is one on every block practically, and I knew that Worcester only had two. One in Worcester on the outskirts and then one in Auburn, and with it being the second largest city in New England, I figured there has to be a good market for it here, and I just, like I said earlier, I really liked the fact that they were changing things in the city, and kind of turning it around, and doing a lot culturally.

ND: If you worked outside of your home for wages, when did you begin working and what did you do? Like before your... did you always involved with music as a job or you started off somewhere else?

SK: Right, so when I moved to Massachusetts, I. I got a job at a flute making company, and sort of just worked my way up from, you know, administrative assistant to sales, and then I changed companies, and went to another flute making company, you know, and kind of worked my way up to being the vice president there, and you know.. But very early on, once I started working, I realized I had to be my own boss, so I did the corporate thing for five years, and then finally had the opportunity to kind of branch off and do my own thing.

ND: How did you get the opportunity? Did you feel like... was it your choice to do that or were you recommended?

SK: Circumstances, I guess. It was something I have been thinking about for a long time, doing my own thing, but I didn't know what that thing was. And then when you're confined to a job, you are always like, "Ok, I'll do it." You know, sometimes, but there is never a good time to do it, and then, you know, 2009 came. The economy plummeted, and I was laid off from my job. So it actually gave me the opportunity I need to really figure out what it is I wanted to do, and, you know, took a few months to really think about it, figure it out, and when I came to this conclusion, I just got to work on the business plan, and started making it happen. So it was really a blessing in disguise to get laid off so I could actually pursue a dream like this.

ND: Did you.. did you work with anyone.. or?

SK: Well I had a staff of teachers. So I probably have ten.. twelve teachers who work for me.

ND: What does this work mean for you? I mean it is your passion to be able..

SK: It.. It's really fulfilling. I look forward to coming to work. For me, it almost doesn't feel like work. It's just part of who I am now. Whereas before I was like, "Oh I have to go to work now." It was always just like a constant dread, but now I love it. Because I love the teachers I have. I love all the students, who come into the building. I love the people I have met in the community, so it's.. it's really enjoyable.

ND: What were or are your responsibilities in term of housework?

SK: Housework... well, everything. [laughs] You know, since I am single I, you know, have my own condo, but all the housework: the cooking, the maintenance, the bill paying... pretty much everything.

ND: So has it changed over time? Have you always lived by yourself or now that you moved to Massachusetts?

SK: Primarily, when I was in San Francisco I did have a roommate, but ever since I've been in Massachusetts I lived by myself.

ND: How have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, roles and interests in your life?

SK: That's challenging. With my previous jobs I was working, you know, good twelve... thirteen hour days sometimes, and commuting into Boston, you know, that was extra time, so, you know, you leave your house at six thirty in the morning, and sometimes don't get home till eight or nine o'clock at night. Having any sort of a social life or personal life was non-existent, and the same can be said for when you own your own business, because it becomes your life, but I do try to strive to find ways to have personal time. You know, talk with my friends, go out do some things... Just to make sure I don't lose track of who I am, and get too overwhelmed with just working 24/7.

ND: Has that affected like your work life, because you've been able to prioritize everything? Especially, since you living by yourself, you know, you don't have your family like right there.

SK: Its been ok. I do have a boyfriend, so he keeps me somewhat grounded, and you know he is good at encouraging me to just get out, even if it's just for a walk, and things like that, so it hasn't been such an issue.

ND: How would characterize the personal and professional costs of your chosen life?

SK: The costs? Can you be more specific?

ND: Or the effects. Like how has it affected you in a good and bad way, because you do your passion at the same time. There is always negatives to...

SK: Right, well there is certainly are stresses, you know just... Worrying about, you know, if you are going to get more students in, paying the bills, you know, things like that. So it can be very daunting, especially when you are the primary administrative person, you know. I don't have anybody else helping me with the sales, the marketing, the, you know, recruiting, the.. the finances. It's really all me, and then I teach on top of it, so it can be overwhelming sometimes, but, you know, I'm pretty good about being able to step back, and just say, "All right, I can only do one thing at a time." And that helps, and I don't get so overwhelmed. Yeah.. Does that answer the question? [laughs]

ND: Yeah, moving on to politics and community involvement. Do you.. do you consider yourself active politically?

SK: No, I don't really get into politics at all. [laughs]

ND: Have you've been involved in volunteer community work?

SK: Yes, I am involved with the Woo Card. It's a card. You probably have one with your student ID.

ND: I have one.

SK: Yes, so I volunteer on their marketing committee for that.

ND: What led you to join with this organization?

SK: I wanted to have my school become part of like the cultural network per se, and my business.. my school is actually a for-profit business, it's not a non-profit business, so I couldn't become a part of like the Cultural Coalition of Worcester, but I could get involved with the Woo Card, which is connected to that. So I was able to get my school signed up as a venue for the Woo Card, and you know what a semi-annual meeting or a quarterly meeting, you know. They said, "Ok, if you want to join the marketing committee, we are always looking for new people," and mine was the first hand to go up, because I really felt it was a good way to meet the other people in Worcester, who were involved in not only the city government, but also the cultural affairs of the city, and the other people who are movers and shakers in the art scene here. So it was really great for me personally and for my school.

ND: Let me move this up a little bit.

SK: Sure.

ND: What are the main goals of the Woo Card to do?

SK: Well to increase awareness obviously. It's, you know, only a couple years old, so it's still growing. You know, we have really ambitious goal to sell a certain number of private cards, and then to give out a certain number of college cards. You know, we want to increase the number of people who register their cards, because you don't get anything if you don't register them. So we're encouraging that, and we're also encouraging people to swipe their card, and use it at the venues who accept it, so in each month for probably the past year, we really have seen an increase in all of these things, so... We're excited about the progress.

ND: Is that the group's major accomplishment... that to raise awareness for people to do it?

SK: Yeah, I think it's really not only just the awareness of the card, but, you know. Obviously there is over 50 institutions and businesses that are a part of it, and so it's promoting all of our businesses, and hopefully getting people more aware, and encouraging them that if they don't have them, they say, "Oh, you get a great deal if you have a Woo Card." Maybe that will encourage them then to get one, and to have their friends get one, and people will be wooing all over the city. [laughs]

ND: What role has religion played in your life?

SK: Uh, I was raised Catholic and then once I went to college I decided not to practice anymore. I probably would consider myself more of a spiritual person, but not religious.

ND: How has this choice affected you in any way in your life?

SK: Uh, I don't think it affected me personally, but I know, you know, my mother feels strongly that I should be going to church, and, you know, all that fun stuff. But you know it is just a very strong belief for me not to go in participate in something so structured and ritualistic, and in my opinion. So I like the freedom to just think about being a good person, you know, and focus on that side of my life.

ND: In terms of health, how has health issues impacted your life?

SK: I haven't had anything major happen to me, I've always been fairly healthy, so I can't really complain about that area of my life.

ND: In this economic downturn, do you have any experiences in assessing quality in affordable healthcare?

SK: It can always be cheaper, or less expensive. That was probably one of the biggest shocks after being laid off was the cost of health care. Because when you have a job most often your employer is paying for a good chunk of it. So to have to go and get insurance and figure out the all the different intricacies of it, it was kind of crazy. And you know every year it goes up higher, higher and higher, to a self-employed person that's kind of daunting, but you know it is what it is. [laughs]

ND: Has the economy affected you in any ways, especially since you are a business owner?

SK: I think it makes people, especially since what I do could be considered more of a luxury sort of thing, like not everyone is going to take music lessons. You know, I think the people who are maybe on the fence financially, you know, your middle of the road, middle-class family. They may not pursue something like that or, they may cut back on- on, you know, the lengths of the lessons or the amount of lessons or something like that just so that they can put food on their tables. So it has- I think it was challenging especially last year, but this year I am definitely

seeing an improvement in people. Signing their kids up, signing themselves up, if they are adults. So I think it's going in the right direction.

ND: Do you think that more people are turning to the arts, because I feel like recently there has been a debate of whether to cut back in like school systems?

SK: Right, that's always a hard one, just because, you know, one of the reasons why I have my school is because there cutting arts from the schools. So it's a place for people to go to study music, and not feel like their missing something. Because I firmly believe that it's just so powerful in what it can do for your life in so many different ways that you don't even realize. But then the other side of the coin is if this child never has music at all in their school, they may not be exposed to it at all -- might not show an interest in making it something more important in their life to study outside of their school. So it can go either way it can be a great thing, or it could be just, "Why would we study music, we've never studied it before".

ND: What would you have say to people who don't see the benefits of arts and music?

SK: I would pull up a whole bunch of studies that show them otherwise. You know, what I tell people who are, you know, on the fence or not interested, you know, it's really good for developing your creative thinking skills; it helps with your critical thinking skills with your problem solving skills. It helps with being able to multi-task, working with a team, because a lot of times people play music in a band or an orchestra and they have to work with other musicians. So you really have to learn how to communicate effectively and listen effectively. And these are all skills that help you in school. A lot of musicians - and it doesn't even have to be like serious musicians, just somebody who takes piano lessons once a week, and is just, "Okay, I'm taking piano lessons," and is not even really into it. They do better in school. They have a higher chance of graduating from high school, and going on to college, getting a better job, staying out of, you know, drugs, and things like that. So, you know, it's hard to show people there are statistics that prove that just doing a weekly lesson is really going to help you academically. And then down the road, when you do get a job, because bosses are looking for people who are creative, who can think outside of the box, and you do those sorts of things.

ND: Do you think they should be implicated in more high schools, because a lot of the art programs have been cut, especially like the first programs out of..?

SK: Yes, I think when the No Child Left Behind got introduced it was really problematic. Because all they care about now are test scores. And what they are missing is the fact that those music programs are going to increase those test scores, if they want to have test scores that they measure everybody by. So yes music should be in from kindergarten, you know preschool, all the way through. I mean even just singing and choir, or taking a very general music class is going to help you. It is going to help your brain development, and how it fires, and that is going to affect your math, and your reading, and your history, and whatever else they test you on these days. But yes I think it is a huge problem, and until that gets changed I don't think it's going to be- it's going to be hard to convince the politicians that music needs to stick around.

ND: When you were younger was arts- do you think were considered more important than today or do you think-?

SK: I think so; I always had a music program. I had general music classes in elementary school. They had a string program for- I think it started in like 1st grade. Band, you could start in 4th-5th grade, and they had choir that might have been 5th or 6th grade. All through junior high we had music programs. High school we had orchestra, band, choir, musical theater, drama. I mean Minneapolis where I grew up was- the arts were very important, like they really valued them. So it could be I was very lucky growing up, and I had a good- was in a good state who really cared about the arts. That's obviously not the case everywhere, but even now in Minnesota now they cut back a lot so I think it's just too much pressure for all these standardized testing, and therefore we need to take the time to take these stupid tests. [laughs]

ND: Do you think that Worcester has a special connection to the arts, compared to other cities or is it growing?

SK: As far as in the schools no, I think if anything they are dropping them, but I mean it's good that they have an Arts Magnet high school. I think that's promising because there is not that many in the state, as far as I know so that's really good. But yes it's hard to get people engaged in music, if it's never been a part of their life.

ND: As a like a women business leader and a business owner of the arts do you think that you have to prove your positions to people, and prove that you are competent?

SK: Competent...? [laughs]

NK: yeah

SK: I guess I don't feel that I have to prove anything on a certain level, because I am confident of who I am and what I can do. Obviously when you're in a new area, you have to do a little bit of that because people don't know who you are. So that's why, you know, in any job regardless of what your role is it's always good to be networking, going to events if you can, and just meeting other people. And I think, you know I've been able to do some of that, and I think people have a good sense of which I am what I do and what I'm capable of which that leads to other opportunities down the line. As a woman in general it's hard but I think it also comes from like inside of you and how confident you are. [laughs]

ND: Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of woman that has been recorded in the past what should we be sure to include in your opinion?

SK: Like of the past or like just in general?

ND: We have like the connection to the past and now that we are going to the modern days what do you think we should be including especially since we are like so specifically talking about the women in Worcester.

SK: Right, well let's see I think focusing on women leaders is always important regardless of when it was 1850 or today and you know I think documenting the growth of the role of women in society in business, and whatever field it is. I think is really important because women have come such a long way but we still have a long way to go. So you know people who say oh, you know, look there's women CEO's and there's, you know, a woman vice president and this and

that and the next thing, well yeah but are they earning the same amounts as their male counterparts? No. So we still have work to do, and then you know, getting over the hurdles of how women are perceived I think is an issue and I think more of us have been documenting where we've been and how far we've come, but also acknowledging where we still have to go.

ND: Is there anyone else you would suggest we talk to?

SK: Maybe, if I thought about it...um well I mean she doesn't live in Worcester either she just works here but, Lisa Condit, at the Hannover Theater. She's the director of marketing so she would probably – also from an arts perspective you know be able to give you an even more inside into it – she's been here longer than I have, and you know, she's a very strong, and confident leader in her organization so I don't know I guess I'd recommend her. [laughs]

ND: Going back to your childhood, what difficult transitions did you go through in moving from childhood to adulthood?

SK: I'm not sure; I think going off to college was far harder than I thought it was going to be. I always been so excited to kind of like leave home and become my own independent person, and it was a little hard at first. But I you know I adjusted fine, yeah I don't know I guess it wasn't that hard. I think I've always been a really mature person, so I was probably twenty when I was ten you know, so I think I always been kind of ahead of where I should have been maturity level wise.

ND: How were your transitions to Worcester do you feel like this city is really different especially from where -- in comparison to where you were born?

SK: Well where I was born was a very small town in Texas, so yes it's very different from Texas. It is different from Minnesota, it's definitely different from San Francisco; every place I've lived is very different. Worcester might not have the same sort of refinement as San Francisco or Minneapolis or even Boston, but I think it certainly has its unique charm which is what I'm drawn to so yeah... I don't know if that answers it. [chuckles]

ND: No, no it does. Did people tell you about this city or did you research it by yourself?

SK: Both, I have some friends who do live in Worcester, and they feel that same strong connection to it like I do. You know, they're very involved in the arts and the community and so they were really seeing the prices of Worcester, and you know when I'd come to visit them I was like, "Yeah this is kind of a cool place I like it with all these things they have," and then when I finally decided it, I wanted to do the music school. You know, I talked to some other musicians in the area and got their feedback for if this is a good idea? Is this needed? And so then I kind of got that extra encouragement Worcester would be a great place -- need something like this you know so it was good.

ND: Do you feel music is undermined, and that's why you felt like such a passion to start your own business especially here -- there's not that many places?

SK: Uhh... undermined? I don't know if I'd say undermined, I think undervalued, underappreciated may be are better ways to describe it. But yeah, obviously I felt like there was room for another music school area... so yeah, that's why I came.

ND: When you're not at home or at your job where do you usually spend your time?

SK: At one of those few places. I don't go out for say a lot, if I need to its usually shopping, or to the grocery store or you know, going for walks. You know other than to go see my sisters in Boston then we meet for dinner and something like that. I don't have a lot of time to go and do other things...other places, so it's just more routine stuff that I feel.

ND: Do you have hobbies or any regular leisure activities that you take outside your house?

SK: I guess it depends on my mood. I'll occasionally get into knitting scarves, I love playing Scrabble. You know I've been taking up some other instruments, last year it was guitar, this year

it's voice. So yeah, I love reading; reading is a big thing that I enjoy doing. But yeah nothing like rock-climbing or skydiving or anything like that. [laughs]

ND: How do you feel about the choices you have made in your life? Do you have any regrets?

SK: No, I mean that's one thing I definitely try not to have is regret even if there's something I've done in my life that, you know, isn't the greatest decision in the world, I look at those things as learning opportunities. So, I can't ever say I have a regret. But yeah, we all make mistakes and hopefully we all learn from them. [laughs]

ND: How do you define success in your life?

SK: Well, I think there's several things that go into success. For me, it's doing something that I enjoy, which I am. Having some sort of financial success is important then, I think then just being happy where you are personally whether it's in a relationship, with your friends and families, things like that. So I think it's kind of threefold personal, professional, financial I guess.

ND: Has this definition changed over time?

SK: Probably, I think if somebody said, "What does success mean to you?" I would have probably said, "Oh being you know super rich." I think that's what I would have said when I was younger, so I think that's just something that comes with maturity. [laughs]

ND: Based on your life experiences, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

SK: Well, that could be a whole novel [laughs] I think it's just important to be well rounded, and you know I think it's important to get as much education as you can, whatever it is, if it's a trade school, you know really learning your craft well, you know if you're in a liberal arts school, just

learning as many different subjects as you can, just being confident in who you are I think is important. You know, women, I think... a lot of us deal with self-esteem issues just for a million reasons and you know just gaining that confidence in who you are what you're capable of doing, know that you're capable of being anything you want to be. I mean that's a message for everybody but especially for women because I think we kind of get pushed in certain directions. "Oh no you need, you need to stay at home and raise a family, get married, raise a family." Or, "No you can only be a secretary" or you know we get these very confining roles. Really we can be anything we want to be. You know, tell people not to be afraid to speak up share their opinions or share their feelings on things. Just try to be independent, unique and creative, think outside the box and do whatever you want to do, not what everybody else tells you to do. And yeah, the world is their oyster. [laughs]

ND: Do you feel like the experience in Worcester of women and like their role here varies a lot from all the places that you lived or the attitude of women?

SK: I'm not really sure. I think it's more of a generational thing than anything else. So I think when I find that I'm speaking to an older generation, especially the males, I think they think of women in a very different way because they grew up with their mom being like the homemaker and that working was a foreign concept. So, it's very interesting to talk to an older generation in person versus somebody who was my age or younger, where we see the possibilities left and right. I mean there's still some pressure you know people my age still some of them, still think that the way the older people do just because if they grew up in a family that had very defined male and female roles you know obviously you are going to want to do what your parents did or live that kind of life. But I think it's changing and I think it's getting better.

ND: Do you think your parents mirrored that older generation?

SK: I mean they had a very traditional relationship. My dad owned his own business and worked and my mom was always the home keeper. But there was never this, you know there's three girls in the family, so there's...it was always this you can do whatever you want to do. We're not going to say, "Oh you can't do this because you're a girl." So my parents have been really great about that.

ND: Do you feel like you have a legacy or is it still continuing?

SK: I think it's still in progress. Hopefully I have a long way to go in my life and have a long future ahead of me so yeah; you know I really just want to make sure that I can bring music and the arts to as many people as I can. I really want to enrich their lives in that way. So you know, hopefully through my school and through other things that I get involved with it will keep growing and people will know what I did.

ND: Do you feel like you have achieved everything you want to in life?

SK: I think that's a work in progress. I think if there's ever a day where I say, "Alright I've accomplished it all," then you know that's not good. So for me I'll always have to be working towards something, or improving something or going to that next thing, so hopefully it will always be a work in progress.