

Interviewee: Kerri Aleksiewicz Melley
Interviewers: Kaleigh Hickey & Matthew Bailey
Date of Interview: October 12, 2012
Location: Worcester, Massachusetts



Overseen by: Profs. Leslie Choquette and Esteban Loustaunau, Assumption College

Abstract: Kerri Aleksiewicz Melley was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1972 to Charles and Mary Aleksiewicz. Kerri lived a lively childhood growing up in Tatnuck Square with a tight knit family. As a child she danced at Charlotte Kleins and attended Christ the King Church. Kerri attended the Bancroft school for four years of high school. She then went on to study at Connecticut College. After studying at Connecticut College she moved to Boston to pursue her love for dance and art. While living in Boston she met her husband, Neal Melley. They moved to Rochester, New York while Neal finished his graduate school and finally moved back to Worcester to settle down and focus on having a family. In this interview Kerri discusses her life as a financial planner, being a working mother, and her passion for volunteer work.

KH: My name is Kaleigh Hickey and I am interviewing Kerri Melley on October 12, 2012 along with my partner Matthew Bailey. You agreed to record this session?

KM: Yes.

KH: O.K.

KH: What is your full maiden name and your married name?

KM: Kerri Aleksiewicz is my maiden name and Kerri Melley is my married name.

KH: And can you spell that out for us?

KM: K-e-r-r-i- A-l-e-k-s-i-e-w-i-c-z M-e-l-l-e-y

KH: And when were you born?

KM: [] 1972.

KH: What is the name of your current husband?

KM: Neal Melley

KH: Do you have children

KM: I do.

KH: How many do you have?

KM: Two.

KH: Two, and what are their ages?

KM: Tim is my oldest and he is eight and Sarah is four.

KH: Obviously no grandchildren.

KM: No, [laughs] not that I know of.

KH: What cultures or ethnicities do you identify your family background with?

KM: My mother is 100% Irish and my father is 100% Polish. So, I have always known very clearly what I am and my husband's family always says they're mutts. [Laughs] They are about, you know, the largest percentage would be Irish for them, but they are a whole bunch of other ethnicities as well.

KH: Very nice, tell us a little bit about your parents. Growing up, how they parented?

KM: Sure, my parents still live here in Worcester, my mother was born in Worcester and raised here, so her whole family is here, third generation. And, my father grew up in Bayonne, New Jersey.

Checked to make sure tape was recording.

KM: My father grew up in Bayonne, New Jersey and came to Worcester to go to Assumption College.

KH: Really?

KM: He did, he came on a basketball scholarship.

KH: [Referring to my partner] Oh that is what he is doing. Well he is not on a scholarship but ya.

KM: So he played basketball and their roommates were dating, so that is how they met, when they were all in college. So, it is kind of fun because actually they have a great group of friends, still from those Assumption days that they ya know, get together with. So family was huge for me. As I've said, I have all of my mom's brothers and sisters, and cousins all lived in Worcester so we all grew up close by. My dad's family was in New Jersey but we would go and visit them a couple times a year. I went to Bancroft School in Worcester, where my dad has worked for over 40 years, so I really grew up there as well. My mother – has worked – is a nurse she has worked at Fairlawn Hospital for – since I was in fifth grade I guess, and my father as I said worked at Assumption for a while as Athletic Director and then, took over as Athletic Director at Bancroft when it went co – when the high school went coed in the seventies. And ya know he has had a whole bunch of different jobs there over the years. They both – they are newly retired, supposedly they both still do a little bit of work, now just by choice on projects they are asked to come back and help with.

KH: So, you mentioned that you grew up in Worcester. Where did you go for those 15 years?

KM: After I left Worcester?

KH: Ya.

KM: So I went to college at Connecticut College which is just a little over an hour south, down 395 as you guys know, so not too far away. And after college I went to Boston. So I lived in Boston and worked in Boston for seven years, which is where I met my husband and then he went to graduate school in Rochester, New York. So we lived in Rochester for five years, he got his masters and his doctorate.

KH: Cold there.

KM: It's very grey.

KH: Yeah.

KM: Its very grey, it's actually it's not much colder than here and people think of it as having a lot of snow and it was interesting because it was more that we got a little bit of snow a lot of the time. Versus big storms.

KH: That is interesting I thought it was snow all of the time

KM: Yeah, you know it's funny. It's an interesting area because Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse are each an hour from each other and they have completely different weather. So Syracuse and Buffalo get the bigger storms and Rochester is a little closer to the lakes. So, I don't know if you – I studied abroad in England in London and I equate the snow in Rochester to the rain in London.

KH: Oh, okay

KM: So there it is sort of like it kind of rains a little bit almost every day but not to the extent to even need an umbrella. So I mean I brushed my car off about five times a day but it was rare that school or work was cancelled because of one big storm. But yeah, then after Neal graduated from—he was at the Eastman school of Music; he is a musician—we were moving –we are both from Massachusetts and wanted to move back home because our families are really important to both of us. We decided to live in Worcester because my family is here, he has a brother here, it is just a lot more affordable to raise a family in Worcester than in the Boston area because we can actually have a house and a yard and the kids can play outside. So that is how we ended up back in Worcester.

KH: While you were growing up in Worcester what was your neighborhood like?

KM: We grew up in Tatnuck Square, which is still known as Tatnuck square. I went to Tatnuck School through fourth grade and we went to Christ the King church which was right down the street and I danced at Charlotte Klein's which was right down the street so.

KH: Very tight knit?

KM: Yeah, yeah. Like I said my father had worked at Bancroft since before I was born but it was very important for my mom that we had friends in the neighborhood because kids from Bancroft come from all over the place. So like I said between CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine), brownies, and dance class and going to Tatnuck for sort of those first five years I developed friends in the neighborhood and certainly had a lot of friends- it was a different time. We had a lot of kids say within between the ten and twenty houses around us and we would just go outside and play and when it was time for dinner your mom or dad came to the front step and called your name and you came running home. And I think of that today, I wouldn't just let my just child go play and not know what house or yard he's in. But that is how it was.

KH: So, your mother and father still live in Worcester, any other family members in Worcester?

KM: Yes, a lot. [Laughs]

KH: You don't need to name them all.

KM: We always sort of joke, every third person I meet is either related to my mother because she has a very large Irish Catholic family all over this general area. Or we know them through Bancroft because my dad worked there forever. Still lots of family in Worcester.

KH: We will do this in two parts; what challenges do you think this city still faces? So challenges, maybe you have seen things changing a lot?

KM: You know it's interesting because I have only lived here as an adult for [thinks] is it even six years? I did not live here as an adult so I did not know there were any challenges growing up. You know?

KH: Yeah

KM: But I think as a young adult living here I think education is a big problem, since I have been here there are just so many programs being eliminated from the school, and that was an issue when I was a child. We actually ended up going to Bancroft several years earlier than originally planned for because of a lot of programs that were eliminated when Proposition 2 ½ went into effect. So I would say as a mother of young children, who I am choosing to send them to private school – they are also going there, I think education has a lot to do. Though, I think the city manager is fabulous and there does seem to be quite a bit going on downtown. Which had been somewhat of a ghost town and you see a lot of development going on, so I think that is pretty exciting.

KH: We aren't from aren't from around here so we have no clue what it was like even like a year ago.

KM: Right, right. And like I said I was gone for the first almost 15 years of my adult life. Then add college in there. As a kid you only know about you're little life and how that's going [laughs].

KH: In this question it kind of reiterates the same thing, but what changes have you seen in Worcester over time? Have you seen changes in the – what is the word I'm looking for?

MB: Population, city, anything like that.

KM: You know, again I feel it's a little hard for me to comment on that because I have only been here as an adult. The changes that I see are mostly with the downtown area of Worcester. Which sort of has gone through many transformations. You know, when I was young you had a lot of nice different places. You had the galleria you had a lot of nice different department stores a nice place to go and then, it was not. I think it is exciting because I think particularly in the six years that I have been back, between the Hanover Theatre and lots of new restaurants the St. Vincent Hospital complex, the expansion of the DCU [civic center, all of the work they are doing there I think we are going to see a huge difference in the next five to ten years in the vitality of the downtown area. Though I think if you will there is still a lot of cleaning up that has to happen. Our office which has been here for two years, we were in the glass office building right across from City Hall before that. I wasn't always comfortable walking around to go to someplace for lunch or even go to Dunkin Donuts across the street.

KH: What distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

KM: Well I think what is distinct about Worcester as a city, is that, it is a city but there are always very residential areas that people don't realize who aren't from here. I grew up in the city of Worcester, but where I lived is probably closer to the town of Holden than downtown living. So I think Worcester is unique in that regard in terms of the residential areas as well as what seems to becoming a more vibrant city life as well. It is also close to Boston so you can get that big city pretty easily, and even New York. New York City is only three and a half hours away, so you can get to those big cities but still live in a much more residential feel. The other thing that is really unique about Worcester is all of the educational institutions that are here. I mean there are so many, so many. So, now thinking about it as an adult, I think Worcester can do more in terms of what it offers for the college students that are here in terms of enticing them to stay and work and live in the city. But the colleges themselves offer a lot for the residents of Worcester to participate in as well.

KH: What do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been generally?

KM: Oh my gosh, I don't really know. That is kind of general. I don't know if I would say the experience of being a woman in Worcester is any different than my experience from being a

woman in Connecticut or Boston. I can't think of anything that is unique to Worcester in that regard.

KH: Yeah, that's fine. Yeah, that is a tough question because I think that question may be more geared towards the older generation. Like people who have been here their whole entire life.

KM: Yeah, exactly.

KH: Yes, because there are some people on the list that are very up there in numbers and they still want to be interviewed. So those women can remark on that sort of thing.

KM: Even my mother, who is mid-sixties. She lived in Boston for a little bit of time, but for almost 60 years has lived in Worcester.

KH: We are going to move onto education. You already mentioned you attended Connecticut College, were there any programs that you attended there, or any classes you took there that really made you want to become a financial advisor?

KM: No, completely unrelated. I couldn't have told you ten years ago that I wanted to be a financial advisor. No, when I went to school I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I had come from a very small school at Bancroft, so I didn't want a school that was too big. I wanted a school that had a strong dance program and a strong liberal arts education. So that is what I was looking for when I went there. I studied psychology based human relations which was a weaving of psychology, sociology, and child development. I can certainly say that is something I use in everything that I do. So when I left CC, the first ten years of my life, I expected to eventually run an arts organization. So that was the path I was sort of first on. So, I worked in Boston at different arts organizations.

KH: So how did you become a financial advisor?

KM: So, I was doing—I danced all along. I danced with several companies in Boston. After I graduated college and I was working in the administrative capacity in different arts organizations and I eventually ended up working primarily in the development with the fundraising area. So I sort of grew in that career field. I worked at the BSO [Boston Symphony Orchestra] and then I took a break from work for a while and went back and got my MBA [Masters of Business Administration] again, just sort of hoarding my business skills in the hope that I would eventually run an arts organization. We moved to Rochester in August of 2011. So just two weeks before September 11th. The economy was crashing at that time anyways even before that, so it was sort of an interesting time to come out of graduate school. Most of my friends, who had gotten jobs, were losing their jobs before they even started. So, I just ended up continuing to work in the development field there, but I was sort of growing frustrated with the lack of business skills shown in the leaderships of arts organizations. It tended to be artistic people who

were running them as opposed to business people and you know there is ego everywhere. But I – the last role I had, I was working at the Easton School of Music and I was the director of major gifts and planned giving so, individuals who are giving to the institution through life insurance gifts, and annuities. I was at a conference about that topic and I realized that because I had my MBA I understood the financial concepts to a greater extent than most of the development professionals who were in the room, and simultaneously a colleague of mine who I had worked with and who I had a lot of respect for, we both shared a background of being artistic and both had out MBA. He had transitioned out of development and into financial planning. So that is how I got introduced to the field. Ultimately, how I made the transition, it is still using a lot of the same skills in terms of building relationships with clients like I had been using with donors. But again just sort of a different environment, so that is how I ended up doing what I do now.

KH: Where did you—did you go back to Connecticut College for your MBA?

KM: No, I got it at Boston College. Yes, so I was working in downtown Boston and living there. Then I stopped working for the two years that I went back and got my MBA. So I went full time.

KH: Any challenges in your education that you can recall? Anything that really set you back?

KM: No. I loved school. I loved school from forever [laughs].

KH: Alright, upon finishing your formal education what did you see as your options? Did you really want to go right for the arts side of things? Like did you take you a while?

KM: No, I – Well I shouldn't say—with a liberal arts education the opportunities were open to me. At that time I wanted to dance; but I didn't want to be poor, and I didn't want to be a dance teacher. That is how I ended up working administratively in arts organization.

KH: I know, I stopped dancing a couple years back but I would have loved to do something with it but there really is nothing to do.

KM: Right, the thing that is great about – so when I was in college and trying to figure out what to do and senior year, I spent time—we had a five-week winter break. So I spent a week in Boston with a woman who ran a dance company who had graduated from Connecticut College. Then the same thing, spent a week in New York City you know same thing, with an alum who offered to host us, so those were great opportunities. So for me, it was I knew I wanted to dance, I knew I wanted to be in Boston or New York and then ultimately I said I really wanted to be in Boston. It was just trying out different jobs, till I sort of found my way.

KH: Alright, want to take over.

MB: Yeah.

[Talks to partner]

MB: Alright, so how did you come to this work? Oh, we did that one. Who do you work with or for?

KM: My firm is called Baystate Financial Services and we are a New England Financial Firm. But as financial planners, we really have our own practices within the sort of greater organization. And I am currently working on building collaboration with two other women financial planners. One works in Beverly and one works in North Andover. Because women certainly are a minority in our field and women in general tend to be less educated about their finances and are so busy running the family, many are now working full time or running companies that we are really dedicated to educating women and empowering women to have better control over their finances. So, that is something the three of us have just started working on. But really we sort of designed our own practices within the larger firm.

MB: What has this work meant to you?

KM: This work for me is so meaningful. We – I do financial planning, we do insurances, investments, and it is really about building a relationship with the clients and gaining their trust and helping them design a plan that will make things better for their family. You know, everyone has different goals and everyone has different financial circumstances. But the work that we do has such a plan that will make things better for their family. Everyone has different goals and everyone has different financial circumstances. But, the work that we do has such an impact on their ability to achieve whatever their goals are, which of course changes over time, but also educate them about the choices that they have in terms of their finances. There are so much information out there in books and articles and TV shows, some of it is good, some of it is bad, some of it is appropriate only for certain segments of the population, so it is a lot for people to try to weave through on their own. So having that planning relationship with our clients and seeing them through the different stages is so meaningful for them which is what makes it so meaningful for me.

MB: What are your primary responsibilities in terms of housework?

KM: [laughs] All of it! No, managing it. I still manage it all. My husband- I am very lucky, because my husband as I mentioned earlier is a musician. He has- you know he doesn't work nine to five. During the school year he is teaching sort of starting at 2:30. He is home during the day, he takes my daughter to preschool and picks her up, he does the grocery shopping, you know he does a lot because he is around during the day which is great. But, I still manage it all, make sure it gets done, coordinate the schedules, and coordinate the childcare.

KH: Make the grocery list, do you do that?

KM: No you know I let him take care of that. I have sort of given up. You know what I will say my husband is the cook. If I never have to cook again that would be just fine with me [laughs] so I am very lucky he is a great, he is a great cook.

MB: So, I know you said your husband does a lot; do any of the kids do any chores or anything like that?

KM: You know they're little but they are just starting. They will set the table, they help clear dishes, they'll help pick up toys but that is kind of the extent of an eight and four year old [Laughs] to help. They help weed the garden for about two minutes then they go play.

MB: Has it changed to be this way at anytime or has it been different previously?

KM: No, we have always sort of had a good partnership in terms of helping around the house, because when we got married, my husband was a grad student for the first five years. So even then he had a different schedule where he was home more often and I had somewhat more of a traditional work day.

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

KM: It is really hard. It is really hard being a full time working mom. And it just gets to the point where you have to be okay not finishing everything. I – you know which is hard for me because I was the type of person that everything had to be organized and completed and done perfectly and this and that but you just don't have the time anymore. So you have to be able to sort of – and also with the work that I do, it is not a traditional nine to five job either. I make my own hours; I meet clients sometimes on the weekends, and sometimes in the evening. So it is a matter of your time and this is my family time, this is my work time, and being able to respect your own time, because everyone will take advantage of your time if you let them so it is a matter of just deciding what is important and taking the time for each of those priorities.

MB: So how would you characterize the personal and professional costs of your chosen path?

KM: Costs? [Long Pause] Working full time and being a mom and having a family is a choice you make, and I wouldn't ever make any other choice. But it is a matter I think of just finding balance. I don't know I would say there is a cost to it, I guess I have less time for myself but that's ok right now.

KH: You'll get it back.

KM: You'll get it back, exactly, you'll get it back. So its busy, it's really busy.

MB: Are there particular benefits about having this job?

KM: Yes, there are a lot of benefits about having the job that I have because I am my own boss. I make my own schedule, and I choose which clients I want to work with and I choose how I want to take the path of my practice. Because I manage my own schedule, on one hand you have to be very responsible about that, but it allows me to chaperon field trips and go to the school when they are having a special assembly, so it gives me flexibility. I don't have to sort of ask for the day off; I just have to make sure that if I take a day off maybe I spend a little extra time catching up after I put the kids to bed at night or on a Saturday or something.

MB: And you said your husband is a musician.

KM: He is, he is a trombone player. He teaches private students, and he performs. He performs with a lot of different local groups, some groups up on the North Shore; he does some of the shows at the Hanover. Then in the summer, we have a very different schedule, because he does the summer theatre up at Ogunquit at Ogunquit playhouse. Which work for us because his parents live in Kennebunkport.

MB: I go there all the time.

KM: Yeah, so it works out great him and my kids get to spend a lot of time at the beach and I go back and forth. So we are very fortunate too that we have two sets of grandparents. You know, I have my parents and he has his parents and they are all very involved in our lives and the kids' lives so that is great.

MB: Alright, so now on to move onto politics and community involvement. Do you consider yourself to be active politically?

KM: Nope.

MB: No?

KM: Not at all. I am really not. Frustrated by it that is about it.

MB: Have you been involved in volunteer or community work?

KM: Yes. In the last couple of years I really have gotten very involved. Again, just following that passion of women and empowering women, and educating women, I have been involved in an organization called Leading Women which is promoting the growth of women in their careers. I am very involved with the Women's Initiative of the United Way. Just recently started this month on their coordinating committee which is a great opportunity because that organization just celebrated their ten year anniversary and there are many very impressive women from across our community. I feel very privileged to be part of that and to get to know them better. I have also been very involved with the Women's Leadership Conference that is put on by the Chamber of Commerce. I attended the first year just as a participant and thought it was

fabulous and volunteered to be on the committee. So I have been on the committee now for two years, and that has grown incredibly and that is another great venue for women from across the city, from many different walks of life; retirees, professors, corporate people, entrepreneurs, and it has grown tremendously in the last couple of years so that is an exciting committee. It has been really great to work on that and to see that conference grow.

MB: Could you tell us some of the organizations' main goals?

KM: Which organizations, the ones I volunteer for?

MB: Yeah.

KM: Well again, Leading Women and the Women's Leadership conference is really sort of promoting, I should say empowering women, whether it be in their personal life or professional life. And then the Women's Initiative of the United Way is really promoting philanthropy among women specifically for adolescent girls, in terms of, giving them the confidence that they need to continuously have better lives.

KH: Yeah, especially because that is something young girls lack, is confidence.

KM: Yup. So that is getting the two ends of the spectrum if you will.

MB: What would you consider the groups most major accomplishments?

KM: Sorry, we are talking about a couple groups here at the same time.

MB: It's ok you can pick a couple from each.

KM: I would say you know Women's Initiative I have been involved with just for a year. But, I am coming in at a time where they just had their ten year anniversary, and they have raised an incredible amount of money that they have given back to so many different organizations in the city that provide gender specific programming for adolescent girls. At the annual event that they have, they often have girls come back and talk about where they are today and it is really exciting to see the impact that the programs have had on giving them the confidence to you know, go to college, or have leadership roles in their high school or whatever it might be. The Women's Leadership Conference as I said is very new, and to see that conference grow and to see this opportunity for women across the city come together. The way that conference has ballooned is really extinct. It was amazing two of the speakers we brought in you know national speakers, commented on that because we grew last year by 100 participants. We went from 250 to 350, in the economy that we are in. Those women that were here as speakers who travel the country said they are just not seeing that in conference attendance, and ours is just growing like gangbusters. That is – ya know I think that is really exciting for the women of Worcester.

MB: Alright, and then it says what role has religion played in your life?

KM: Religion has always played a huge role in my life. I was born and raised Catholic and it – I am still an active practicing Catholic. I believe that the values that I have are a part of everything that I do you know trying to help, whether it is my clients or the girls at these organizations, other women professionals just constantly strive to be better and just to be good people. And you know my husband and I really try to instill that in our children. I grew up- five houses up from Christ the King Church, we used to walk you know and then I was gone many years, I actually met my husband at a church at BC, we were introduced by the priest who has married all of us. Now, we are back here in Worcester, and we go to church every Sunday with my parents and my kids. It is kind of nice to have that- it is just part of our lives. It just has sort of worked out that way. My son's little league team is made up of a lot of families who also go to the same church so we see each other in church, they go to CCD together, and they play little league together and you know again it is just a lot of really nice families and I think the kids have a lot of respect for each other and you see it in how they play even on the ball field.

MB: Alright, so we are going to move onto health. How have health issues impacted your life, or those in your family?

KM: I mean health issues; I am very healthy so I am very fortunate. But I had an aunt and uncle who died in their forties when I was in high school and when we lived in Rochester my mom's sister and mother died within a few weeks of each other. I think- and I see it in my work and what I do too, how health does have a huge impact on families; emotionally and financially. Sometimes it pulls families apart; sometimes it brings them closer together. But I think that sort of ties in with your religion and your faith and how that tends to bring families together more. Then again, in the work that I do I try my best to educate families on why they need to be financially prepared for health issues because people are living longer and health issues can come up any time. I mean I say I don't have health issue; I actually have a degenerated disk in my back, so I went to college as a freshman and couldn't dance. I could hardly walk actually. So, it makes you realize how fragile you are. I have an assistant here- my assistant here who is 29 and has terminal cancer she has a one year old baby. Health issues do not discriminate and they do not come at convenient times and I think it is – you just have to live every day and be thankful for what you have, and do things for families who need some extra help when someone in their family is going through that. It doesn't impact just the person who's ill or injured, it impacts the whole family.

MB: So, what are your experiences in accessing quality and affordable health care?

KM: I haven't needed to use it too much ya know? For me it hasn't really been an issue. I mean we are fortunate we have always had health insurance and we have always lived in cities with exceptional health care. So, I haven't had the experience of being in a place where it is hard

to access. So I think between Worcester or Boston or Rochester, New York you know also has a great health care system so I have been fortunate to not have to face that challenge.

MB: Do you see people asking about that a lot like your clients and stuff like that?

KM: You know, I think we – I don't sell health insurance if you will, though it is an important part- it is an important part of their budget. I think that is one thing that is becoming more and more of a challenge for families because they are having a bigger and bigger- whether it is for families or business owners, the cost of health care is becoming an increasing burden on families. So that is a real challenge that people- that I see people have.

KH: (To MB) before you go to this one ask that last question before we do the conclusion. We should do that.

MB: I am assuming this is your immediate family, but whose health are you responsible for besides your own?

KM: Ya I mean right now for me, fortunately it is really my husband and my kids you know the four of us. But, unfortunately we were not here when my aunt and grandmother were so ill. And a lot of my family members had to take a significant amount of time out from work. You know we were living in Rochester, so we came back when we could. But, again my husband and I each have both of our parents. You know, they are healthy now but I am sure we will be very involved when that time comes, when that time comes.

KH: Alright, so these are more of the fun questions.

KM: [laughs]

KH: Not very serious, we are almost done actually. Alright, so when you were younger what would you consider fashionable?

KM: Oh, well you see it was the eighties [laughs] so, feathered hair, leg warmers, you know.

KH: You see that style coming back.

KM: Ya, I know it is funny isn't it? You know bright like hot pink was big.

KH: Ya, that is big now too.

KM: My daughter loves hot pink now, but ya so it is very funny to see over time the pictures of different styles.

KH: What did your parent's education consist of?

KM: My parents are both college educated with advanced degrees. My dad like I mentioned went to Assumption and has a Bachelors and a Masters from there and then he has worked in an educational institution for his whole life. And my mother went to Notre Dame Academy here in Worcester and then she was at Mass. General Hospital for nursing school. At the time she went to nursing school it was separate from a college Bachelor's Degree so, I believe when I was in high school she went back to Assumption also, to get her Bachelors of Science Nursing Degree. Now you get it together with your RN. So, she went back and she was in college when I was in high school and she graduated at the end of my freshman year from Assumption.

KH: What difficult transitions did you go through moving from childhood to adulthood?

Long pause

KH: You can name just a couple.

KM: Ya, I am trying to think. I think for me the most difficult transition was the moving away aspects of it and in terms of you know moving to college and then moving to Boston. Then, the hardest transition was moving to Rochester. That was so – each of them were hard because it meant being farther away from family in different ways. So that was the hardest part for me, was the separation from family because we did grow up with you know I am the oldest of nine cousins, everyone lived within five minutes of each other, you know. We spent so much time at our aunts and our grandmothers; any one birthday was at least 25 people. You know, it was to move far away was a big move away from that. It was hard that is why we came home. We went to Rochester, NY knowing we would come home, because we wanted to be closer to our- we wanted to raise our kids closer to family.

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

KM: Oh, that is a funny question. Allowed to date and actually date were two different things. Allowed to never really came up as an issue. I can't say I really ever had a boyfriend till I was in college because later I found out, which I didn't know at the time, was that my father while I was in high school was actually the head of discipline at Bancroft School. So, I like to think that way. [laughs] It was also a very – I was also a very unique class. We only had thirty six people and the girls outnumbered the guys two to one.

KH: Wow.

KM: And I was also too busy dancing. So it was never an issue of being allowed to. [laughs]

KH: Well, in college when you did eventually start to date, where did you go on dates. Like what was the hot spot to go? Was it the movies?

KM: I mean in college...

KH: Yeah, I know what you mean.

KM: We were a very campus oriented college, so ya it was more just spending time together, yeah. Whether it was movies or going out to dinner, you know or just spending time with a group of friends.

KH: And how do you define success in your life?

KM: I think defining success would be feeling happy and fulfilled with the choices you make. In what that meant to me ten years ago and today is different and you know ten years from now are going to be different. So for me it's having a job that I love, working with people that I enjoy spending time with whether that's my colleagues or my clients. Then, the importance of spending time with my family, they are always going to come first.

KH: Now that we are working to tell a further story of the history of women that has been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include?

KM: I'm sorry, say that one more time.

KH: Now that we are working to tell a further story of the history of women that has been recorded in the past, what do you want us to include in that? Is there anything specific?

KM: About women in the past? Or about today?

KH: Well how women have changed from the past to today.

KM: Well I would say that women today have so many more choices. I mean I remember my mom will talk about the fact that as a woman when she was growing up you either went into nursing or teaching. And her two sisters are nurses- oh I'm sorry, her two sisters are teachers and she's the nurse. Now, you know I refer often to a comment that my son made. Four years ago, so he was about four- five- four or five during the last presidential race and he looked at me and said 'Mom are you going to be president someday?' And I said, 'No that isn't really the career path that I'm on.' 'Alright then maybe Sarah will be president.' Now, this is his baby sister. So clearly he wasn't going to be president because he has already decided he is going to be a Red Sox player who delivers pizza on his days off. So, he has determined that. But to him it was well oh ok then maybe Sarah will be president. It never occurred to me that he probably doesn't even know there has never been a women president. And I think I do also have several friends and colleagues who have husbands who are home more or who are much more involved with the raising of the kids and the cooking of the meals and all of that and I think that allows women- I think there is just a lot more flexibility in choice.

KH: Yeah, and final question is there anyone else you suggest we talk to for our project?

KM: A lot of the people I have suggested in the past have already been interviewed. [laughs]
But you know a good list of people to look at to consider and I would have to ask for permission are the women I have mentioned earlier, this coordinating group of the Women's Initiative. It is a pretty neat group of women of all different ages and backgrounds. So, I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of them have been interviewed but Anne Whettengel. is sort of the program coordinator.

KH: How do you spell the last name?

KM: W-h-e-t-t-e-n-g-e-l. I bet you know some of them, who is it Maureen Doyle might want to reach out to Anne because there may be some interesting women on that committee who have not been interviewed. One in particular that I think of, again I don't know if she has been interviewed before but Wendy O' Leary would be a very interesting person to speak with.

KH: Gwen?

KM: Wendy.

KH: What's the last name?

KM: O'L-e-a-r-y and her maiden name is Noar. N-o-a-r. Of Noar's Oil which is a local company.

KH: Okay.

KM: She would be an interesting person if she hasn't already been interviewed yet.

KH: Thank you for the interview that was awesome.