

WAG 20220223 King Patricia.mp4

Conan Louis [00:00:03] Good afternoon, my name is Conan Louis, Georgetown School of Languages and Linguistics 1973, Graduate School 1978 and Law Center in 1986. Today's date is February 23rd, 2022, and I have the distinct privilege of interviewing Professor Patricia King via Zoom as part of We Are Georgetown Celebrating Our Black History, an oral history project sponsored by the Georgetown University African-American Advisory Board. Professor King, it's truly an honor to be talking with you. Thank you for agreeing to spend some time with me today. So I'm going to start with your life before Georgetown. First of all, where are you from originally?

Patricia King [00:00:51] Norfolk, Virginia.

Conan Louis [00:00:53] OK. And what did you growing up as a child in Norfolk? What, what were your dreams? What did you think your future would look like?

Patricia King [00:01:03] Well, when I grew up in Norfolk, we're talking 40s and 50s and in a segregated state and a pretty large city for a segregated state. I grew up in public housing, and I didn't have too many dreams, I mean. It's a different period in time and it's a different period for women. And I was raised along with my sister by my mother. So, so for most of my life, I was not with my father. And dreams were just making it through school, I mean. It was do the best that you could do in terms of expectations for children. So my mother said to me many years ago that the only thought I ever expressed was, I want to get out of here. That was my dream. But I didn't know how I was going to do it. I didn't know what that entails. I wasn't focused on college. I was just focused on escaping from a place that was didn't seem to offer any thought for someone like me to sort of make a life, so if that's a dream, that was my dream, how can I get out of here.

Conan Louis [00:02:40] Wow. OK.

Patricia King [00:02:44] Yeah, that's what segregation did to you. And Norfolk segregation, segregation varied across the south. So I was upper south and it's a big naval port,.

Conan Louis [00:02:57] Right. Right.

Patricia King [00:02:57] So it had a different vibe than, say, Richmond. And as I tell many people, I didn't have to encounter white people because the African-American community was large enough so that you could spend your days in school, church on Sunday, and the only time you would see somebody that was not Black would be to have to go down. I didn't even have to ride on a white bus. We had a we could take busses that were filled with Black people, but we were down to go downtown. But then you might you would encounter white clerks, et cetera. So it's, every person has their own story during that period in time, and they vary enormously.

Conan Louis [00:03:51] Yeah, yeah. So now you you did your undergraduate work at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. How did you get there from Norfolk and what was that experience like?

Patricia King [00:04:02] I got there because I was a good student. I was a very good student, and my physics professor called me aside one day and asked me, What were my plans for my future? Sort of what you sort of asked me. And I said, Well, maybe I'd like to

go to college, but I can't figure out a way that I can accomplish that. So he said to me, Would you mind if I put you in touch with an organization that was then referred to as NSFNS?

Conan Louis [00:04:33] Yes, I remember NSFNS.

Patricia King [00:04:35] Yeah. Okay. And and it it offered different things to different people in different locations. For me, what they did was to find out something about me. What kind of school that I might like to attend. And I thought all girls, because that would mean an uncomplicated life. And so then they put me in touch with schools that they thought would be interested in looking at somebody like me. The problem was in those days my family couldn't afford the school applications, and nobody knew anything about the fact that they could be waived until later. So my mother said I could apply if I narrowed down from the material I was receiving the school I might like to apply to. So everybody gets a laugh at this. I narrowed it down to Wellesley and Wheaton, and she said because I wanted to stay on the East Coast that wasn't adventurous about going to the Midwest or anything. And I chose Wheaton because I had heard of Wellesley and I figured I'd never be accepted at Wellesley, so I picked Wheaton, based on nothing. But that's a big story of my life.

Conan Louis [00:05:56] Wow, wow.

Patricia King [00:05:57] So I went to Wheaton. That was major, we now call it culture shock. We didn't have a name for it then. So my first year was extraordinarily difficult. There were only five Black girls in the whole school. This was 1959. You're only five Black girls in school. I was the only one who came from my economic class, although we all had to work. So this is gradations in African-American community. And all I can say is being a Black person in a white all-White environment, even though it was female, was a different experience. Two of my Black classmates, left and went to other schools. So in the end, there were only three of us. And it was the beginning of.

Conan Louis [00:07:06] And how many students were there total?

Patricia King [00:07:08] Oh, there's a school of about 400 students. OK. So this is definitely the early days.

Conan Louis [00:07:15] This is what two two years after Brown v. Board.

Patricia King [00:07:18] And not quite a little bit more. When Brown v. Board was handed down, I was in junior high school.

Conan Louis [00:07:24] OK.

Patricia King [00:07:25] And so I started college, and that was '54, I started college in '59.

Conan Louis [00:07:31] OK.

Patricia King [00:07:33] And so it was the beginning of the sit-ins in the south. In fact, they started like the first my freshman year in college. They sort of really ramped up. So it was before the legislation was passed. It was before it was New England, which people like to think of, as always, having been a liberal part of the country. Wrong. It had all kind of isms beginning with not being comfortable with Black people. But then they were

comfortable people who weren't Protestant and there was public school private school issues. So it for me, was pure culture shock. I'll just give one example. We had to take required courses in those years, that's what colleges did, and I had to take an art course my first year. And that that just blew my mind. I knew I was going to fail. I've never been on a museum in my life.

Conan Louis [00:08:38] Wow.

Patricia King [00:08:39] Norfolk didn't have museums that I could go to. So part of this course would require going to the Fine Arts Museum in Boston. That was my very first museum. I had not a clue. I still don't in many ways because I never pursued that over time. But that was the kind of shock I experienced, and my fellow Black students were from New York and Chicago. So when I said I was different, I was different and different, in terms of my preparation for college. I never spent any time around white people. But and I almost flunked out and I recovered and I graduated with honors and I was elected the president of the college government.

Conan Louis [00:09:34] Wow.

Patricia King [00:09:35] I thought it was, I didn't understand why all of this was happening. But one of the things I was required to do was to work. So I became a supervisor in the dining halls and I, in dorms were student run, and early process for women's colleges. And I was the number two person running the dorm, so I can only surmise because I'm, I always have been pretty quiet. I'm not a very outgoing person, so I surmise that people watched me when I was too busy trying to get it all together for myself, and I wasn't paying attention and they decided they must have decided I was as shocked as anybody. They must have decided that I had skills that I wasn't giving myself credit for. So my experience with Wheaton has now been lifelong. And I was a member of the board and I was chair of the board, and now I'm a life trustee, so I must have done it. Things that I still ponder. I'm not sure I have this straight actually about everything that happened. But it gave me the courage to . . . it let me know that I could work myself through difficult circumstances, which I had had no experience with.

Conan Louis [00:11:04] Yeah.

Patricia King [00:11:05] So it was in that sense a good experience.

Conan Louis [00:11:08] All right. So now when did you start thinking about law school?

Patricia King [00:11:11] Not for a long time afterwards. So when I left, when I graduated from college, which was 1963, I came out of college trying to figure out where would a woman like me find a job? And the only job I knew that women did would be schoolteachers. Therefore, I did not want to be a schoolteacher. Don't ask me where this comes from. Um, but I must say something about my personality. I did not want to be a schoolteacher, and I applied for positions in the federal government and as I said, I did not want to stay in Norfolk, so I got an interview with the then deputy chair of the Democratic National Committee, who was African-American, he was a very distinguished journalist and Johnson and Kennedy relied on him and I was quite surprised because this is 63. And he sent me to another African-American male in State Department who was running an intern program for young people trying to train them to be administrative officers to enter the Foreign Service Reserve. So I went through a long interview process. I got accepted, and I spent two and a half years at the Department of State basically being exposed to

how you run an operation. So I spent time in budgeting, I spent time personnel, I spent time in planning. But these were like intern rotate rotations. But I got a lot of training that probably a lot of people did not get. So I attended some things at the Foreign Service school. I got sent to Berkeley for two weeks for training in management administration, etc. And I liked it and I thought, I don't want to go into the Foreign Service Reserve and I started looking around and I said I had friends who were my age, who had gone to law school, who were in law school. I visited some of them and I said, if they can do it, I can do it too. So I went to Georgetown at night to test it out. So I spent the '65 - '64 school year at Georgetown night school, which did not have very many African-Americans either and decided I liked it.

Conan Louis [00:13:58] I mean, not many women either, right?

Patricia King [00:14:01] You got it. As I tell everybody, this was the old building and the bathroom for women was shared with the people who cleaned the building. So we went to the bathroom with their mops and et cetera. But the dean of the law school, I went to see him and told him I really wanted to go to law school. I did not want to continue going at night because it was too difficult and I didn't drive a car or anything like that, and going home at 10 o'clock on the bus after a while got to be a challenge.

Conan Louis [00:14:40] So do you remember who was the dean at that time?

Patricia King [00:14:44] I knew you were going to ask me to go the the associate dean was David McCarthy, the youngest dean who later became Dean, the Dean Dean was the dean, and I didn't get to talk to him, but I got to talk and this is the name I can't remember. He was the dean just above David McCarthy, and he later became the dean at Duke. And the president of Duke, as a matter of fact. He was the person that tried to get me a scholarship and said to me that they only had 25 scholarships available to them and they were all full, but he could offer me a job working on main campus, so I couldn't figure out the economics of all of this. So I decided I'd apply to other law schools and I did, and I applied to Michigan because they would accept my Georgetown credits and I applied to Harvard. For some reason, that did not apply to Yale. I don't know why. And anyway, because I didn't know much about anything, so I got accepted. They gave me a scholarship and I knew a graduate, he was alone in his class and the Harvard class of '71, I believe, no it was in the 60s, it must have been '61. A black guy who worked at the IRS in Washington who told me that if I went, they would not allow me to leave. Because they offered the smallest amount of money, though, there was a dorm that I could live in as a student. And he had come from a southern state and his family had no money either. So I figured he knew what he was talking about. So I applied. I accepted. I got accepted. I decided to go. And so that's how I got there. Except I had to start all over again. They wouldn't take Georgetown credits, and they definitely wouldn't take night school credits because at that time, night school was frowned upon, which grew over time after that. So that's how I got to Harvard, and I graduated in 1969. And because I had worked in the State Department, I worked every summer while I was in law school at the State Department because they would give me my old GS salary and that's how I put myself through law school.

Conan Louis [00:17:27] So you went from being reticent to apply to Wellesley . . .

Conan Louis [00:17:34] Right.

Patricia King [00:17:35] To applying and being accepted to Harvard Law School.

Patricia King [00:17:40] I did. I think we I think Wheaton did that for me.

Conan Louis [00:17:44] Yeah.

Patricia King [00:17:45] And I also think that the internship program that I was a part of a State Department was very unusual. I mean, most interns just not have today have the experience that I had. They were serious about the program. Most people want to be Foreign Service officers, and they were trying so hard to to build an administrative group, so they really exposed us to everything. It was important to me because I got to see a broader world, if you can imagine that, a broader world in terms of what you could do. One of my problems was and I've stated it, if you didn't teach school, what could a woman do that?

Conan Louis [00:18:30] Yeah.

Patricia King [00:18:31] That was something that I had to figure out and work out.

Conan Louis [00:18:36] So now tell us about your Harvard law experience.

Patricia King [00:18:40] Like all my experiences, really, which is what is it like to be an African-American female in a white male total environment? So when I went to Harvard, the classes about 500 there were 25 African-Americans. That would include people of color, actually, and 37 women. I don't know what what stung most. I mean, it was it's like anybody in my age group who was in an environment like that at a time where you just always felt like you were catching it from all sides. And there were three African-American women. It was so bad, the woman who was probably the smartest one, clearly of us, she was so young, she just left. Going to Wheaton really helped me, this was her first encounter with the kind of environment that Harvard was. It was male personified, elitist personified, and even some of the Black men who came to talk to the Black students, because that happened during at the request of the dean during the time I was there, did not tell us we could go out into the world and do whatever we want it to do. They reinforced that we were only there, which is what the white males enforced, that we were only there so that we could return to serve our people. That was not a bad reason to go to law school. I don't object to that; what I objected to was that was a way of narrowing people's ambitions, narrowing paying attention to their own views about what should happen and how it should happen and where it should happen. I mean, it just wasn't, any reason . . . I think it was really astonishing to hear it from some of the few successful Black lawyers at the time, but if you were a woman, that was kind of double. But I think even some of the men were uncomfortable with people telling you, this is why you have to do this.

Conan Louis [00:21:20] Yeah, yeah.

Patricia King [00:21:21] There was nothing wrong with serving your people; I want to be clear about that. I'm just trying to say that it was a much more deliberate change, revealing the reasons for the change that people were comfortable asserting. And I think that it helped that I was a woman and then helped that I was older because I was older by the time I went back. Because I had worked at the State Department, there was no whiter place in the world than the State Department and no place that had less that have more gender issues in the world when I was in the State Department. But I also realized that being in the State Department that change was starting. And so to try to confine people, I

resented it, but I got along fine at Harvard. I've always got along fine at Wheaton. I discovered that the best way to deal with new circumstances is you have to know who you are and you have to be true to yourself and you have to analyze everything that comes along. So when I graduated, I got offers. I got offers that white women didn't get from law firms because I was a Black woman, so I got offers from law firms and almost went, so I had actually accepted it at Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering. And I said, and I'm not a genius, trust me, and I said to myself, I couldn't sleep. And I said, you have to pay attention why you can't sleep. That's the way I got through all of this. And I identified that that was one of the reasons that I was not prepared to go. That would have been an extension of Harvard. It just made no sense. I mean, I but I had to go, look for a new job. And I did. And so I worked at EEOC. I was a special assistant to the chair. And I, so that's the way I live my life, is you have to start first with trying to figure out who you are.

Conan Louis [00:23:51] Yeah.

Patricia King [00:23:52] And you learn that as you grow up.

Conan Louis [00:23:53] Yeah.

Patricia King [00:23:54] And then you have to figure out what's important to you and what isn't.

Conan Louis [00:23:58] How did your time at EEOC overlap with Eleanor's?

Patricia King [00:24:01] No, she was after me.

Conan Louis [00:24:04] Ok.

Patricia King [00:24:04] if you follow the dates, I did have a difficult time. I graduated when the Republicans were in charge, and I didn't find that truly upsetting because I'm from Virginia. And if you're from Virginia, you hated Democrats and Republicans were the good gys. And this was still a part of that period. So the head of EEOC, Bill Brown, was from Philadelphia and he was a Black lawyer in a firm that the three guys were partners. I don't know if you know of Leon Higginbotham?

Conan Louis [00:24:42] Of course.

Patricia King [00:24:43] OK. He and the other partners, law partners, I forgotten the third man's name, but he also became a judge and I became his special assistant. I didn't feel uncomfortable. That was when we were working on initially, when I went, were working about jobs in strange places like cross country driving, telephone operators, I mean, everything was really segregated and Blacks at the bottom, so build it trying to make progress in that area. We did the first sex discrimination cases and then I got offered a job to go to HEW. It was HEW then. And the agreement that I made with my immediate boss was and they were not unhappy, I could not bring myself to have to work on school desegregation. Because that was the period where there was a lot of pushback on school desegregation. That was when Nixon was and Nixon was president, but now. So we had this agreement because he wanted it anyway, which worked out fine. He was a boss. The secretary was fine. So Health, Education and Welfare had a lot of civil rights issues other than school desegregation. And that's what I did. And then when Nixon won his second term, they wanted me to be the head of the Office of Civil Rights, and they offered me the position and I decided I wasn't crazy. So this is how I got to Georgetown, that I was a

Black woman in a crazy Republican administration at this point. And Elliot Richardson, who was a secretary of education and a pretty decent guy, and I got along with him pretty well. That was OK. But they moved him out, too. So they moved out my boss. They sent him to Justice to run the Civil Rights unit. They sent Richardson to, I don't know if the Justice or the Defense Department. So there I was, the people who had said I will have to go, there is something, so I declined. So there's something called the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, which allows civil servants, now allows government employees to go study for a year or to do something different for year. So that's what I asked for. And then I went to the dean at Georgetown, who was then, I tried to remember his name this morning, but he had been the chief legal officer of the Department of State, and I went to him and asked if I could be a visitor for a year. And he agreed and he had nothing to lose. The federal government was still paying my salary. And so I went from '73 to '74, and somewhere in that year, they asked if I would consider, would I like to be a candidate for the faculty? And I said yes, and it was by no means a foregone conclusion. It turns out, I was not at the faculty meeting, it was quite a cut. There are three main candidates and it was quite a meeting. I just don't know what went on inside. But every told me. But they made a job offer, and that's how I got to teach at Georgetown. I should point out that when I went to Georgetown, there was already a Black woman on the faculty, Anita Martin. But she did not like teaching and she had left. She, she never got to the point of having to worry about tenure. She just didn't like, and she changed her whole life. She never went back into teaching again. There was an African-American man who was not there. He was on leave when I got there. He had gone to, I think, Agriculture to be head of the Civil Rights Office at Agriculture. And I'm trying to remember his last name is first name was Jerome. I don't remember names very much anymore at my age. He did come back. And he left without tenure, and he did, but took a leave, he did come back and when he came back, he was denied tenure. So that's the background to me. I mean, there was a fight about him and I have no idea. Well, I just got on the faculty and I never left.

Conan Louis [00:30:05] Yeah, that was like it was 1974 when you joined the faculty, right?

Patricia King [00:30:09] When I became officially a member of the faculty. Yeah.

Conan Louis [00:30:12] So what was the Law Center like then and how has it changed over the years in your eyes?

Patricia King [00:30:20] Well, the law school itself went from being a very Jesuit school with a lot of what that entails, which was male white. But a school, because of the activism of the early 70s, was presenting them with challenges in terms of what the school was and in terms of challenges, and it was did not have African-Americans. And it was mostly a focus on Black people at that time. I actually know some of the white people who agitated and some of the Black people who agitated for change during that period because that was the Vietnam War.

Conan Louis [00:31:18] I was actually on the main campus. Then I graduated from the School of Languages and Linguistics in 1973, and then I went straight to graduate school. I did a master's degree in sociolinguistics. So this was that was exactly the period in which I was on the main campus.

Patricia King [00:31:34] And so, you know, a little bit, I'm sure that . . .

Conan Louis [00:31:37] I know all the people that you're thinking about Johnny Barnes and Merrick, Merrick. What was his name? Meerick, can't remember his last name He ended up as a deputy mayor in D.C., but I played basketball with all of these guys at McDonough.

Patricia King [00:31:59] Right, and they were mostly guys, and they were mostly guys.

Conan Louis [00:32:05] That's right. Dave Wilmot actually graduated in '73 from the Law Center, which was the same year that I graduated from the undergrad. We played ball together.

Patricia King [00:32:14] Ok, so it was a period of change for the university. A lot of which is I have learned and actually very recent years in terms of trying to make the university a better university. This idea of growth and evolution was it was clear in the law school and law school had many fights with the main campus, but it was also a period where Georgetown wanted to be understood as more than just a Jesuit institution. So that was the how I arrived. Probably had a lot to do with being offered a position. When I arrived, the Black students who were there were in the process of trying to increase the number of Black students who were there. But this is still early stage. As you know, the names.

Conan Louis [00:33:09] Eric Malone is the person I was trying to remember.

Patricia King [00:33:11] Oh, what they were trying to do and it was in the front. And so the change was affecting the law school in the sense of there was more emphasis on scholarship. There was appreciation that we were leaders in clinical education and and it was a lot to do about that because we were real leaders in that and we were different from the other law schools. And the law school was trying to hire up. So that's sort of the environment in which I arrived. It was sort of the change came pretty rapidly, actually in the 70s. But in the midst of that change, before we had anything but one building. That was when we had one building. So one of the things I know that you're interested in is who were the people that helped me? One of the things that happened, I guess the first year after I joined the faculty, they had to ask some faculty members to leave the upper floors, and we called ourselves to be one group. I don't know if B1 was still there when you were there, but we were down in what is now the clinical area when you walk into the building. And so, with the exception of one person, I stayed with that group for as long as we were there. We moved together thereafter because we were isolated. We were, only one person on the hall, was had tenure. So we were all basically new people like Mike Seidman, for example. Jerry Spann was down there; Steve Goldberg, Judy Areen, me . . . that was us. And so it couldn't have been a better environment for someone like me because we got to know each other and we became close friends. We always helped each other. And I'm not sure I would have stayed all those years if I had not been in that group of people, and it was quite an assortment of people, if you know some of the people.

Conan Louis [00:35:33] That was a good group. Jerry Spann, his first day at the Law Center, was my first day as a student. He taught me contracts and I had Judy for Con Law.

Patricia King [00:35:49] Ok. Well, it was a good group and I don't know what we would have done because I was joining a new type of Georgetown Law professor. That's really the way it was. It was like us against the old guard. I mean, some of the old guard were friendly, but it had more of that kind of vibe to it. And it made all the difference in my development, anyway. That's what the school was like when I first got there, but it started

to change immediately. And the faculty as a whole came together when we thought the main campus was taking law school money, and that built a strong cohesion among members of the faculty who might not otherwise have gotten along or gotten to know each other very well. So it was a period of a lot of change, both in terms of who we admitted, more people of color, but also in admitting women because there weren't very many women in the law school either. So it was a good time to, for me, it was a good time to be there. The change was that not going to bother me. You know, I was going to ask you, that is where I am now up to you.

Conan Louis [00:37:24] Yeah. Now, speaking of your development, it's my understanding that you are the were the first Black tenured professor at the Law Center. Is that correct?

Patricia King [00:37:35] Yes.

Conan Louis [00:37:37] Ok, so tell us about how, how, what, what, what do you . . . if I were to ask you, what's the significance of that, how would you answer that question?

Patricia King [00:37:49] That's a tough question for me to answer. It's a little bit like being the president, a college government. I don't quite know how it turned out to be me. I didn't have, if anything, I didn't think I was as special as some of the other people. I don't know if you can appreciate that, but that's because of how I grew up undoubtedly. I was proud of myself whenever I have done something. It . . . and the reason I sound hesitant is the blackness was only one feature. As a Black female, the victory, if you want to call it, that was, there weren't many women ahead of me with tenure, either. And there were only two. And so it was a for me, something I never expected in my life. But it was a double challenge and I got through on double challenge. I assume, that's I mean, it's really at that time in my life, I thought more about being a female than I thought about being Black. I'd always thought about being Black. That's what happens when you grown up in segregation. The change for me was that a female could do it. And that may sound strange today, because the world has changed a lot, but it wasn't a changed world then. And females were . . . there were very few Black women on the main campus. I don't know how many Blacks there were, but they were very few Black women in teaching positions that came later. So it was like a, a three way victory that could come from where I came in, that's a class victory. I can be a female and I could be Black and I'm not giving them any particular order, but I'm trying to let you know that when you asked me that question, that's complicated question for me because it carries a lot of joy and baggage all rolled up in one. But I was happy. I think the main campus during the same time, because he had been at Harvard when I was at Wheaton ahead of me and I'm trying to remember his last name, quite, I think Arthur Hoyt, was a doctor in the medical. And I think he was the first tenured. . .

Conan Louis [00:40:44] At the Medical Center.

Patricia King [00:40:45] At the Medical Center, and he was about a year, maybe two years. We're close together in terms of the evolving univesity.

Conan Louis [00:40:57] Yeah, he's like you, one of those icons that the rest of us Black folks at Georgetown look up to.

Patricia King [00:41:04] Oh, that's wonderful.

Conan Louis [00:41:06] So it's interesting because you you went from a decision that you did not want to teach school . . .

Patricia King [00:41:12] Right.

Conan Louis [00:41:13] to now, being a tenured professor at Georgetown University Law Center.

Patricia King [00:41:19] Right.

Conan Louis [00:41:20] But when you think about that, what how does that strike you?

Patricia King [00:41:24] Well, I was very untraditional law professor, still, because the first year I was there, during the year, it was 1974, in my first year as a member of the full-time faculty. When I went back to HEW to tell the new secretary that I was not coming back and we and it was Caspar Weinberger, he was very nice to me. Yada yada yada, Before I left his office, he turned around and he said, Would you be interested in going on this new commission about Tuskegee? And I said commission was not about Tuskegee, but Tuskegee had helped make this commission come into being that the the public attention then being paid to it. And I said yes and I went on that commission. It turned out that it was the first bioethics commission in the United States. It was it was established by Congress, not by the president, but it changed my life in the sense that it was the beginning of a whole new movement with respect to science and medicine. And I was one of the youngest, I was the youngest people, I think there are only two of us still alive, but that was a whole different direction. Took a lot of time. So I didn't feel so much like I was a traditional law professor. So and what I decided to write about was influenced by the work that I was doing on the commission what when four of us faculty members decided to do the first law in science and medicine book. That all came out of my experience. I convinced the other three that we should really do this. That came out of my experience of being on the commission. And so it was a very new field, so it set me apart from the rest of the faculty. I don't know how it, you know, so I didn't; I changed what I was teaching. So that it would relate to what was evolving from my personal perspective, and it put me in contact with the main university because I was at the Kennedy Center on the main campus. And so my experience was were different. I mean, I hadn't planned this or anything like that, it just made me . . . it's like the law going into a new field.

Conan Louis [00:44:22] Yeah, you know, you sort of anticipated my my what would have been my next question, which was how did you how did your career path take you from civil rights to the intersection of law and medicine? And you answered that question specifically.

Patricia King [00:44:38] And there were, that's the answer to the question. But it was also a time when I went on this commission, there are only two Black people, Dorothy Height and myself on this commission. I realize, and medicine pretty male too. I realized that I was becoming a feminist. I don't know why this was a shock to me, but I consider myself, started to consider myself a feminist. And that also affected what I was interested in. So we dealt with abortion and we dealt with fetuses. And so I ended up doing a lot of work that involved families and family decisions. I started a bioethics seminar. And when you were in an a new field, it felt really different. It was also sort of exhilarating, and I was finding more, and this was deliberate on my part . . . the writings and some of the extensive histories on the Black experience in America didn't start to get written about in volume until I was teaching. That's I mean, I think about this because when I was at

Wheaton, I wanted to write a paper on reconstruction. And this was like 1962, I could not find enough material. And my professor was trying to help me on things, so I realized that I didn't have a lot of race material to draw on with the exception of Tuskegee, which you could take along. And there were diseases that affected only Black people and they were being treated differently. This evolved over time. So the race things that I did were outside of the law school. So when I worked on the area, when they were deciding how to go with the census and what they call people, for example, I was in some of those discussions and that was changing. And we went to self-identification. I mean, if this has been a very gradual period of change, but feminism change quickly. It was just the question of the way it was organized. And that may be a little different to not among the women on the faculty, but it's certainly my male colleagues, and I'm sure the students wondered why I was interested in all these other kinds of things. I was interesting because they affect Black people, too. But, I'll leave it at that. It was a tough time. I wrote, and it's just now taking off. I wrote a law review article on dying and being Black, and people were talking about being able to make, having a choice if you wanted to die, you should be able to die. And the article was hold up, wait a minute, this is different for Black people, and we have to think about what this means for Black people in terms of is this really choice? Is this self-sacrifice depending on socioeconomic status? What about the system that is treating, and I I'm still doing some of this, the the racism in medicine itself. These conversations are only now beginning in a full-throated way, but the problem been there for a long time. But, so I always had this feeling that feminism was almost a step ahead in terms in terms of pushing things in my period. But that's the part of being Black female.

Conan Louis [00:49:02] Yeah, yeah. So you've had a very distinguished career. Looking back, what are it, what would you say is the accomplished, that accomplishment that you're most proud of? .

Patricia King [00:49:22] I hadn't thought about it that way. I can tell you to experience that I hated the most. But what can I say I loved the most? I guess I loved the most because of what it did to me was being on that national commission. I've been on two presidential commissions. And it has made it easier for me to speak up about race. Dorothy Height and I couldn't get the National Commission to talk very much about race. And I say her name deliberately, because that was her life's work, and she was . . . But by the time I got to the second commission, which was dying, one could, which is death and dying, one could speak up and there were people, very many people like me then who could speak up about the impact of what the policies would be on different parts of the population. So the National Commission is a turning point in my own life, and the part of my life I hated the most was serving on the Harvard Corporation. That was like a return to the dark days, but I hope that answers your question.

Conan Louis [00:50:53] It does. So getting to the toward the end here. I'd like to talk a little bit about the impact of of Georgetown that Georgetown may have had on you. And so I would ask, Looking back, how would you describe the impact of the Georgetown experience on you, both personally and professionally?

Patricia King [00:51:18] Well, Georgetown, for all its faults, was the first place that I was ever in, and this is a part of the Jesuit tradition, was willing to talk about justice, not lawyer lawyer, justice, justice in a broader and a broader way, even though it was a Catholic order which meant a certain amount of carrot within its own problems. But it was the very first institution where ethics and a language of justice was really important, not always lived up to. But it was like changing for me the environment and in which I had spent time before, less elitism, although there's some there, just less. But given where I had been a lot less

and I learned to love Georgetown in a special way. I've served on every committee to select a president. For all the presidents that were at Georgetown. I've been on a committee to select every dean but one. And so I listen to people up close when they have to make those kinds of judgments. And I felt at home. I mean, I never felt that way in other areas that I worked in, and I felt that over time I could make a difference at Georgetown. I think I did in some ways, but . . . people would listen to you talk about justice. And you don't find that; well, you didn't find that in many places. I know that's a very broad answer, but it was the, it was the environment. And I don't want, I'm not trying to mask all the injustices, but . . . yeah.

Conan Louis [00:53:30] Okay. What advice do you have for Black law students at Georgetown?

Patricia King [00:53:36] Well, work hard. No yourself. Stay true to yourself. And end up working in some part of law or not, where you can make a difference and do it. I, y own views about being Black and female is every time you do those things, you will make a difference because you carry who you are and what your experiences are in making a difference. And I'll close with, you didn't ask me this. So one of the hardest things I ever did was to testify against Clarence Thomas. And, but I did. And I don't regret it, and I did it because I made a judgment about that I made, that I did not want to see him on the Supreme Court. And I took, caught hell for doing that. And my mother caught hell when she went to church the following Sunday, I hadn't even thought about that. But I say give that experience to say that, however, the world turns out, if you work hard, you know how to, know yourself and see if you can make a difference. And then be true to yourself, and prepare and be prepared to take a lot of flak if necessary, because the world is not kind and there are lots of views out there in the world about what should be the outcome.

Conan Louis [00:55:28] Well, Professor King, this has been absolutely delightful. I am absolutely convinced, I mean, I knew this coming in, but I'm convinced now that we were very blessed that that you decided not to go to one of those that one of those big law firms, but instead to come home to Georgetown. Thank you very much for spending some time with me today.

Patricia King [00:55:50] Thank you very much and I hope one day we meet in person. I very much enjoyed this interview.

Conan Louis [00:55:56] Absolutely. Thank you.

Patricia King [00:55:59] Hmm. Bye.

Conan Louis [00:56:00] Bye-bye