

Vicki Marks '73
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives Project
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Transcribed by Laura Logan '22

LOGAN: My name is Laura Logan, and I am at Shabazz Center [for Intellectual Inquiry] in Hanover, New Hampshire. And I am doing a Zoom interview with Vicki Marks who is in Atlanta, Georgia. Today is November 5, 2022. And this is an interview for the Dartmouth Black Lives Oral History project.

Hi, Vicky—

MARKS: Hi, Laura! I'm good!

LOGAN: Hello! [laughter] Thank you so much for you today. First, I'd like to learn a little bit more about your childhood. Can you please state when and where you were born?

MARKS: I was born in 1951 in Atlanta Georgia.

LOGAN: Can you tell me the names of your parents?

MARKS: Julia Morris-Marks and K.C.—and that's K, Period, C, Period,—Marks.

LOGAN: What was it like growing up in Atlanta, Georgia?

MARKS: Well as I mentioned, I was born in 1951, so it was in the midst of the segregation period in the South. [pause] But it was a great place to grow up. Because, one, we were very, to a certain extent, insulated from a lot of stuff. And because it was segregated, you had African Americans in every profession. So you had doctors, you had lawyers, you had educators. Any profession you could name, there was probably someone in the Black community that was doing that. So, I grew up with the sense of knowing and the confidence that I could do whatever I wanted to do. There were no limitations put on me because within the Black community people had these professions. So I knew it was possible.

The other thing that had a great impact I think on most Black Atlantans was the fact that we had a very educated population because we had the AU Centre [Atlanta University Centre Consortium]. There was Spellman, Morehouse, Clark Atlanta University, and Morris Brown. So you had that Centre of Educational Excellence right here in your midst.

So there was never any question in my mind... It wasn't even, "Will I go to college?" I grew up just knowing I was going to go to college. So that was never a question in my mind or in my parents' mind.

LOGAN: Did your parents go to college?

MARKS: My mother was an educator. She was a teacher, and she went to Morris Brown College which at that time, a lot of the teachers in the Atlanta Public School System went to Morris Brown. So that was their specialty at that time. My father got a scholarship to go to Morehouse but he chose—both my grandfathers were entrepreneurs. So that was my father's bent. So when he graduated from high school, Washington High School, which was the only Black high school in Atlanta, he and his best friend decided to start a restaurant. So they went into the restaurant business and that was my father's first entrepreneurial venture.

So I was a product of what I consider an outstanding public school education. Because we had Black teachers. We were in a segregated school system. There were black schools, and there were White schools. And the teachers really cared about us, and they instilled a sense of pride and confidence in us. I remember we would say the Pledge of Allegiance starting in elementary school. And then we would sing the Black National Anthem. So I knew that from the time I was like five years old. And I knew what that was about and yada yada ya. And no one had to preach to us! It was everything about the beauty and wonder and the excellence of Black people I was surrounded by. So I always had a great deal of confidence in my abilities.

LOGAN: My mom is also a teacher—and my dad actually is a teacher, and I remember being in school—

MARKS: Yes, yes.

LOGAN: Feeling a little bit of pressure to be the perfect student because the teachers knew my mother. Did you ever feel that way?

MARKS: Yeah. One of the things that my mother did, she never let us attend the schools where she was teaching. Because she did not want us to get any preferential treatment. And, like you, because Atlanta was a small echo system of Black Excellence, all the teachers in the educational school system, they knew each other. So, the only thing I felt was I knew if I did anything, they were going to call my mother [laughter]. And she was not going to be happy! But I didn't necessarily feel any pressure from it. I just knew that was going to happen.

But that was pretty much the environment that I grew up in. In my neighbourhood everybody knew everybody. And if you did something wrong, and someone saw you, they were gonna call your mother. That was throughout my life whether it was in school or in home. You knew somebody was always watching.

LOGAN: You mentioned an "us" just now. Did you have siblings?

MARKS: Yes. There were four of us: three girls, one boy. My brother's the youngest. I'm the middle girl-child. So I exhibit middle child syndrome.

LOGAN: [laughter] How does that manifest exactly?

MARKS: Well my sister was the older child, very motherly, very maternal, very, VERY sweet. And I was the more rebellious, I'm going to do what I wanna do, I'm going to walk my own path, you can't tell me anything type of thing.

LOGAN: You remember getting into trouble for anything?

MARKS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. I just did my thing, and if I got into trouble, I got into trouble. But I wasn't thinking of it that way, and I didn't think that I was necessarily doing anything wrong, or even being rebellious. But it was just that I walked my own path, and sometimes that path got me into trouble.

LOGAN: But were you a good student academically?

MARKS: Yes, very good student.

LOGAN: What were your favourite subjects?

MARKS: I liked everything. I absolutely loved school. And I had some things that happened to me health-wise when I was in elementary school. So I missed some days. But then, in high school, I would go to school sick. And there was one time I was really ill, and my mother wouldn't let me go to school and I just broke down crying. I was just undone that she wouldn't let me go to school. I absolutely loved school. I loved learning. And I'm a very curious person, so if I heard of something I would always wanna find out more about it. So that has helped me a lot.

LOGAN: It stuck with you.

MARKS: Yeah. I'm very analytical. And I think that was one of the reasons I majored in Economics. Not that I necessarily was a great Math student. But I would do what I had to do when it came to that. But just very analytical.

LOGAN: What did you do for fun when you were growing up?

MARKS: Oh gosh! Well when I grew up there wasn't a concern about where you were or what you did because we were safe. So, we did the usual things. We played baseball. That was a big thing. Hopscotch, jump rope. We rode our bikes all over. And it was one of those things where you got on your bike and you went over to your friend's house and that might be ten blocks away. But as long as you were home by dark. My mother didn't really have any idea where I was in the summer, but she

knew I was safe. And I wasn't a bad kid. So she knew I wasn't into anything, that I was probably at somebody's house

So you didn't have to be afraid of anything like that. When I was real little, we used to ride the bus by ourselves at five, six, seven. We would walk places. No one ever tried to kidnap us or any of the concerns that you would have today about young children being out and alone. Someone snatching them if they're walking to a friend's house. That just wasn't an issue.

LOGAN: Did you play any sports?

MARKS: Only recreationally. And that was mainly baseball.

LOGAN: Right.

MARKS: And that was always in somebody's yard. I happen to live in the house where we moved when I was thirteen. And we have a big side yard, and it was great for playing baseball because it was long and wide. And so we used to play baseball a lot.

LOGAN: Baseball is really big in the South, isn't it?

MARKS: I never thought about it. It's just something you did. It was a lot of fun. And a lot of people could do it at the same time. Or you could just have two or three people doing it. It was never a formal game of baseball. It was just something we did for fun. And we only had one base. It was sort of like cricket in that sense. You'd run down the yard and then come back. So it wasn't like formal baseball but it was our version—kid's version—of baseball.

Oh, skating! And biking! Biking was big. Everybody had a bike. And everybody had skates.

LOGAN: That sounds fun!

MARKS: And then when I got to high school, I was really into tennis. And so in the summer I would get up in the morning. I'd take the bus to the park, into the tennis courts and stay there until mid-afternoon. And whoever came by, we would play tennis together.

LOGAN: You mentioned that Atlanta in this time was really segregated. So, did you have friends of other races? Or did you interact with people who weren't Black?

MARKS: Heck no! I went to an all-Black elementary school. When the home that we live in now was built, it was becoming a Mecca. Blacks tended to live more in the east side of town, and we started moving West and different subdivisions were built. And my father subsequently had a real estate business. So he was involved in developing this community and

my parents built a house here. It was very rural. This was considered the suburbs. Where I live now was considered the suburbs that time. I'm only about ten, fifteen minutes from downtown Atlanta but it was light years away back then.

So as Blacks moved to this area, there was a high school that was built that was in walking distance of my home. So I went to that high school for the eighth and ninth grade. And what happened was, so many homes were being built in the area, and so many kids were moving into the area, that when I got into the ninth grade, the school actually was on the verge of becoming overcrowded because they grossly underestimated the number of students that would subsequently be attending the school. So they were talking about doing some kind of half-day type school. And my approach was, "No way—"

LOGAN: "Absolutely not!"

MARKS: "I wanna go to college! What I didn't know at the time... There had been a white high school that had been desegregated. And so parents got together and said we want to desegregate ANOTHER high school. And so they got together and a group of us who were at Harper High School, which was the name of my Black high school, went over to this White high school and enrolled. We didn't have any issue and I always say desegregate, because integrate to me means that you have interactions. I KNEW White students. But they were not my FRIENDS. I never went to their houses; they never came to mine. I would never have invited them.

So there were no issues. You had some students who would kinda say stuff to you. but it was surprisingly easy. We didn't have a lot of the issues that a Boston had in desegregating schools. But no, kids that I knew at school.? No. No, they weren't...

You'd deal with the stereotypes. I'll give you an example. I loved the library. So sometimes after school I would get on the bus and go to the library. Well, in the area where this school was, there were a lot of middle-class families and most of them had stay-at-home wives—

LOGAN: White families?

MARKS: White families, yeah. And so around two or three o'clock, you would see a lot of domestic workers were getting off—

LOGAN: They were Black?

MARKS: Black, right. And they would get on the bus. Well, one day this White girl I knew, she didn't want one of the Black women to sit next to her. And I ended up sitting next to her, and I asked her why. I said, "But I'm Black." And she said, "You're not like them." [pause] I said "Hmm. Okay." So it's stuff like that. No one ever expressed. [pause] I was not

called the n-word until I moved to Boston after college. I never had anything like that, and I only knew it tangentially.

I'll tell you another story. When I was very little, my mother was in college. She got married and started having kids while she was in college. And Morris Brown was—well, all the colleges were very family-friendly. So, a lot of people got married around twenty and started having kids and still went to school. So my mother would sometimes take us to class with her up to Morris Brown.

And I remember at that time, we were living on the East Side, not too far from downtown. So we probably took the bus or walked, I don't remember. I don't know if you remember or ever heard of Woolworths stores?

LOGAN: Yeah. We still have them in Jamaica.

MARKS: Okay, so, you know, a big issue had to do with the cafeteria. Yeah. With the stools and you sat at the bar and ate? There was a section—it's almost like what today is like a takeout window. But there next to that where you sat down to eat was this area where Black people could come in order food and take it out. Because you could not sit at the counter and eat. So, my mother went there. It must have been maybe around lunchtime or something and she started to place an order. Well, as I said, this area was right next to the counter and there was a stool there. And I was a little girl and I sat down on the stool. So this White guy came, and I overheard him tell my mother, "You know I can't serve you now." Because I had sat on the stool.

Yeah so that was the extent of it. But again, very isolated. I, as a kid, don't remember seeing White people. Where we lived was all Black, but there were little things like that. I remember one of things we used to do on Sundays was take a ride around town. We'd all get in the car and just drive around town and take a look. And I remember, we were in this one area where there was a fair grounds, and we passed by it. And I said, "Oh Dad, I'd like to go there." And he said "Vicky, we can't go there." And I knew exactly what he meant, and I felt bad not because I couldn't go there; I felt bad because my dad had to say that to me, and I know HE felt bad saying, "I cannot take you to this place, because they don't allow Black people in the fair." So every now and then little things like that. But again, I was so isolated. Because I grew up in a beautiful Black community.

LOGAN: I was gonna ask how you got from this beautiful Black community that you described as a centre of Black excellence to Smith College?

MARKS: Because I want to get the heck out of Dodge [laughter]. I knew there were places beyond Atlanta. You were restricted to certain areas. Whenever we travelled, or we were on vacation, it was always a big

issue about will there be hotels where we could stay, that would allow us? And there was this one chain, and I forget what was the name of it, but it was after you got past the Carolinas I think [inaudible] go in the hotel. So that was kind of a thing, you know?

I just wanted to get out. I was tired of it. Because Atlanta was what it was, it was very cliquish. And I felt that a lot of people that I went to school with... One of my best friends, her brother had gone to Morehouse and she was just dying to go to Spelman. And I had no interest in any of the schools in Atlanta. I didn't even apply.

And also because my older sister was at Spelman, and we're two years apart. And in high school we were together. But she originally started at Washington High School the year before this school that I ended up attending was built. So when we moved here and then high school was built, she transferred over. But because, one, she was very smart, and two, because of how outstanding Washington High School was, they skipped her a grade. So she ended up being further ahead of me. But it was always, like her name is Jacqueline, they called her Jackie. I was always Jackie's little sister. And you get tired of that! So, I didn't want to repeat that at Spelman, not that I had any interest whatsoever in going to Spelman.

So when I was probably around the 10th grade, I started researching schools. And remember there was no computer back then. But we had a full set of encyclopaedias and I just started going through reading about different schools. And then around 11th grade, I started sending off information about schools. I mean it's a very laborious process. You know if you're going to be looking at schools back then outside of HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities]. I really didn't have any interest in going to an HBCU.

And I think it's funny how things all line up in life. I often think that my transferring to this all-white school, which I went 10th, 11th, and 12th, grade set me up for going to school with white kids. So that was a good transition. There was no culture shock if you will about that.

So, that's what I did. And I don't know how familiar you are with the situation of the seven, seven Black women that graduated [Dartmouth] in '73. But all of us had started at other schools. I ended up going to Smith College in Northampton Massachusetts. Are you familiar with Smith?

LOGAN: A little bit. You could tell me more about it.

MARKS: Well, one of the things I wanted to do is I didn't want to go to a city school. So I wanted to be like WAY out in the country and very isolated type of thing. [laughter] And thank God, I didn't end up going to that type of school. But it was a very small town. And it just so happens that

a good friend of my sister's—and I didn't know this. She said, "Oh Ruth is at Smith. I'll get her to talk to you." I said, "Wow, okay."

So I applied to fourteen schools. Got into fifteen. There's a school in New Jersey that accepted me based on my SAT scores. And so I just sort of kind of narrowed it down and decided that Smith sounded like it would be a great place to go. And I had a certain level of comfort knowing there's this friend of my sisters who I knew.

LOGAN: You didn't do any visits?

MARKS: No, no. We couldn't afford to do any visits. So, no. It was just what I had read about the schools.

LOGAN: The fact that it was an all-girls school, did that factor into your decision?

MARKS: Not really at the time. Because I applied to big schools. I applied to small schools. I didn't apply to any schools in the South. I was really interested in going to Stanford. I really wanted to go to Stanford, but I didn't even apply because I thought it was just too far away. And I thought, I don't know how I could afford to come back and forth—fly back and forth—so I didn't even apply. So I sort of regretted that.

And as it turns out, a guy that I knew who was at Harper with me, but at the same time his parents had the same concerns about what was going to happen. And this is when the prep schools like Andover and Exeter started accepting Black students so really were looking for Black students. He ended up going to one of those and from there... And so I sort of lost touch with him. And then it wasn't until many, many years later that I found out that he went to Stanford. But if I had known that, it might have changed my mind. But he was an only child too, so he didn't even have the same financial concerns that I had.

And that was the other thing. I always knew that I was going to need to get a scholarship if I wanted to go to the place that I wanted to go to. And so that was also an incentive to be a good student. And then I had two younger siblings, so that was the other thing.

But I initially loved Smith. It was a great fit for me. It was the right size and location wise, for me. Very, very pretty campus. Very pretty campus. And so, it was good.

And one of the things that I had mentioned to you about having other members of the Class of Seven [also involved in the Dartmouth Black Lives Oral History Project] as I'll call us. Is that we all came from different schools. So three of us. Leslie [Gibbons '73], Teri [Garrett '73] and I were at Smith. And it was Teri who first told me about the [exchange] program. By my second year, I was thinking about transferring because at that point, I did want more of a co-ed situation. And while I felt that there were like absolutely brilliant women at Smith,

they didn't really [pause]. I don't know how to explain this, but you had all these really bright women who didn't necessarily... I don't know if what was reticence. I don't know if it's because of the age that we grew up in... But didn't often [pause] you couldn't get into lively discussion. Now I consider myself an introvert, but I would go to class, and classes were small. So you might have ten, fifteen women in a class. And sometimes there was just not a discussion getting started, so I would start a discussion. Because it's like "They're crickets here!" And I want to have a discussion. Speak up!

So that sort of gave me some pause because that's what we were there for really: to learn, to engage, to discuss things, to debate things. And I just wasn't getting that enough. And it was frustrating because these women were brilliant! These weren't like slugs or anything. [laughter] These were really smart women, so it was kind of frustrating that we had grown up in a society, I guess, or an environment where that type of discussion was not something that they were used to.

Which was very different at Dartmouth. Because, at Dartmouth I thought, "Oh, I've really got to be on my game when I go to Dartmouth." And it was through the exchange program. Dartmouth had not yet gone co-ed and other places like Princeton—and Harvard always had Radcliffe—but Princeton, Yale and Brown had all gone co-ed before Dartmouth did.

LOGAN: We were the last Ivy to go co-ed.

MARKS: Yes! And I wish I had known that, but again I didn't. Being in the South, the Ivies was just not something that people... you just didn't know. And I had nobody to really counsel me...

The college counsellor—I digress here, but I'll go back—the college counsellor at the white school. So I went in to talk to her. Now, I've taken Sciences, English... I was in the orchestra, five years of Math, dot dot dot. Plus, I had gone to summer school. So I had more classes than I needed to graduate. And if you take out the students that did like Gym and back then Home Economics and Typing and that type of thing, I was probably like one of the [pause] It's hard to say. Maybe in the top twenty-five academically because of the classes I took and the grades that I got. But if you add in all the people that took Home Economics and just had a very different course load than I did... So I was further down the list.

And [pause] now I forgot where—

LOGAN: The college counsellor?

MARKS: See, I go off on these tangents! I was talking about the college counsellor. So the white college counsellor, and she started talking to me about going to some technical school in Savannah, Georgia. I was

like, "Do you know what kind of student I am? Do you know the classes I've taken? And you're talking about some technical school in Savannah?" And I thought, "Okay, I'm done with her." So I didn't really have a resource, so a lot of stuff was done on my own.

Now, a neighbour of mine also had become a counsellor at the school but she was not the college counsellor. So, one time a young Black woman from Radcliffe came and she said, "Are there any students I can talk to?" And she said "Yeah." So I came down and talked to her, and I became very interested in Radcliffe. And I wish now that I had applied, but it was like, around in December. She was here, I guess, for the holidays. And I had already applied to fourteen Schools. It was a laborious process. There was no computer, no Common App. You had to do all this stuff by hand. And at first I said, "Oh, I really want to apply to Radcliffe because I thought she was just great.

But at the end of the day I thought, God, I am so tired of filling out applications and getting recommendations and doing all the paperwork. You had to handwrite your essays. And I just thought, "I can't do it. I've had enough." Fourteen was just way too many. But I was like playing my cards because I was like, "I might like you, I might like..." So, I had narrowed it down to fourteen colleges, and so I just applied to them. It took a while because nobody's essay was necessarily the same. It's not like the Common App. So it was like fourteen different essays? I don't know how many I had to write. So it was a lot. So I just didn't apply. And also, because I'd looked at Radcliffe and they weren't, at that point, an individual school. So you took all your classes at Harvard. And I was like, "Oh, this isn't really a school! It's just the name." Not understanding what Harvard was and why actually. And you got your degree and it actually said Harvard back then. It didn't say Radcliffe. I just thought "Oh, this isn't a real school." [laughter]

LOGAN: So, you got to Smith in 1968. Is that correct?

MARKS: '69.

LOGAN: 69. Okay. And then you transferred to—

MARKS: Dartmouth? No, They had an exchange program that had run for years among all the Ivies. It was actually also the schools in the [Connecticut] Valley. Like Amherst and UMass [University of Massachusetts]. You could also go to an HBCU. One of my best friends went to Howard for a year. And because of the social situation with all-male schools, the guys would come down to the Seven Sisters, if you will.

And there was a group of guys in my freshman year... Before a lot of the Black Dartmouth men went to [Mount] Holyoke which was close to Smith. But this group of guys would come down to Smith and the Black Students Association [at Smith] would have parties and stuff. So starting in my freshman year, I met a lot of guys from Dartmouth, and

we became really good friends. I became good friends with a lot of them, and then I would go up to Dartmouth on the weekends.

A lot of times because—also at that time, I don't know if you knew this, Dartmouth had classes 'till like noon on Saturdays.

LOGAN: Oh, I did not know that.

MARKS: Yeah, and so sometimes it made it hard. If a guy was taking a Saturday morning class, they couldn't come down on Friday nights. Usually they would come down Friday nights, leave after classes and drive down to Smith and party. And then the Black Association at Dartmouth [The Afro-American Society] would want to [have people] come up from all different schools. And guys would give up their rooms for us for us to stay.

And so I knew a lot of guys. That was the place where I knew the most guys. I had other friends. I would go down to Colombia, and I thought, "That's too far to go regularly." I had a couple of friends at Princeton. I thought, "That's too far." I went to Yale and thought that was the ugliest school and gloomiest school I'd ever seen.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: Yeah, because I went down in the winter and it was "Ugh!" I did not like Yale at all in the winter. So Dartmouth became my default. I knew the most people there, and so I felt very comfortable.

So my sophomore year, as I was mentioning earlier, I started thinking about transferring because I wanted a different experience. I thought about Stanford. Then I found out that at that time, if you transferred you could not get financial aid your first year. So that kind of blew THAT up.

And so I was thinking, what was I going to do? And I'll never forget, Teri, Leslie and I all lived in the same dorm in sophomore year. And I remember Teri was sitting on the steps for some reason. And I came, and I guess we started talking about what we were going to do junior year because a lot of people did the [study] abroad thing.

And my thing is, I had already decided that I loved the Econ [Economics] Department at Dartmouth. And I had already decided that I wanted to get a PhD in Economics. And so I was very academically focused, so I didn't want to go abroad because I kept thinking, I need these classes, I need these classes. And so I had taken a bunch of Econ courses my freshman and sophomore year. And so I thought, I need to go someplace where I can take Econ courses and the ones that aren't offered at Smith. And that is going to help me get in grad school.

So I knew nothing about the exchange program and so Teri started telling me that she and Leslie were applying to the exchange program at Dartmouth. And I thought, "Oh, I love Dartmouth. I got a lot of friends there. I know the campus very well. I feel very comfortable there. That would be a great place to go for a year. And probably having that on my academic record would probably help me get into grad school!"

So I decided to apply and go through the formal application process. Then someone would come down from Dartmouth and interview all the people that wanted to go do the exchange program. And actually my soph—I don't remember. Yeah, I think each year, freshman year and sophomore year, they already had exchange students from different schools. Black women. So I knew them, and I knew they had a good experience. So I thought, I'll apply to that program. And once I go away for a year and get that experience, I can come back and finish up my senior year.

So, lo and behold, I got accepted into the program. And so I decided to go because Leslie and Teri had also gotten accepted, and they were good friends. So, that's how I came to Dartmouth. And then at some point in... I think it was late Fall. Like, towards the end of the term, Dartmouth announced that it was going co-ed and they were going to—

LOGAN: Was this '72?

MARKS: No, I don't think. Oh yeah. Wait a minute. '69, '70, '71. Fall of '71. Yeah, and that they would allow the women that were there on the exchange program to apply because they just had a two-year residency requirement. So we fit that because we would be there you know for a year and then our senior year would be our second year. So all seven of us applied, never thinking that all seven of us would get in. We had no idea because every—I think probably 90% of the women that were there probably applied. So, we didn't know what the numbers were going to end up looking like, and we didn't think—

LOGAN: I remember reading an article in the [Dartmouth] Alumni Magazine, and they said it was one hundred out of one hundred-fifty women who applied.

MARKS: Yeah, yeah. That's what I had the sense of. No one ever gave us numbers. I thought most women were having a positive experience and probably would apply.

The only hang up was going to be the fact that when you participated—at least from Smith—in the exchange program, you had to sign a document that said you would not apply to transfer. So for any of the schools, I suppose, where you had signed that agreement... So they went to Smith, and asked if they would allow the Smith women to apply for the transfer and they gave the okay. So then we were officially allowed to. Because legally we had a binding agreement that we would

not transfer, probably because they figured, "Oh, these women get a taste of co-education, they're gone!" So once we got that waiver, we were good to go.

We used to have these discussions about, now, who would probably get in [pause] and who wouldn't—not who wouldn't but, you know? Any of us could be accepted, but what would be the rationale for who got accepted? And then lo and behold, all of us got accepted and all of us accepted.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: So, it was a very positive experience. I loved Dartmouth. I think our experience was very, very unique. And particularly for the women that came from the sister schools and had been coming up to Dartmouth beforehand, we just had a comfort level. And there wasn't any culture shock or anything like that because we were doing everything except going to classes. But we already had a friend set. So it was a very easy, very easy transition. And the only thing I was concerned about was the academic rigour 'cause I thought, these guys, you know? They're gonna be, you know!

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: And I would go to class and I would always make sure that I was always SUPER prepared. And we'd get to class and most of the time, especially in Econ, I was the only woman and I was the only Black person in the majority of my classes that I had there. I would listen to these guys, and it was obvious to me, because I was so prepared, that they were full of B.S.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: The professor knows they're full of B.S. I was like, "What?! Have you READ the material? What are you talking about?"

LOGAN: They have not read!

MARKS: So I immediately thought, "Oh God, I know I can compete with these guys."

And that was interesting to me from my Smith experience when women were super prepared and had the intellect but just were reticent to discuss the topic. Guys would just jump in, didn't know what the heck they were talking about? And I thought, "Oh my God. I've never heard so much B.S.!" So that was interesting. So then I immediately said, "I got this, you know? I'm not going to have any problems here."

LOGAN: Did you take any classes outside of Econ?

MARKS: Oh yeah, yeah! Because I still had requirements to take that would be different from the Smith's. And it's interesting because sometimes these schools know what they're talking about when they have these requirements. Because I had not completed my science requirement. So there was the class called Physiology for Non-science Majors. That turned out to be one of the most fascinating courses I ever took. And if I had taken that earlier, because I became fascinated with the kidneys and their functioning. And if I had taken that earlier, I might have thought about becoming a research scientist, and specializing in the kidneys. But it was my junior year, and I wasn't about to change my major at that point. But I thought that was a great class to take. It's very eye-opening. I was more a Physics, Chemistry type person. I took my first biology class in high school. I did not like dissecting anything. I thought, "Okay, the Biology tract is not for me." So my next two years I took Chemistry and Physics.

LOGAN: Did you ever interact with the AAAS [African and African American Studies] Department? Because I know that it was established around that time.

MARKS: No, the only thing that I knew. A lot of Black guys came there wanting to go to law school or med school. And a lot of my friends were pre-med and I knew how that was a killer track. So I might have been discouraged but I just thought, "Oh, I just love this class, and I love learning about, in particular, the kidneys." And I guess because I'm a very curious person and that was learning how something worked. And so learning how something worked in the body, and I thought the whole process of the kidney and what it did was just fascinating. But I might have taken a few more Science courses and said, "Nah this isn't for me." Because I don't know how I felt ultimately if I had to actually dissect a kidney or something. But that's the only time I thought, Huh! I might consider another major.

I actually went to college thinking I was gonna go to law school and then I ran up against the Econ Department. And it was just so interesting because you had these very old, White men who were economists and very conservative and straight-laced. And then they had this whole younger group of guys. Because even at Smith a lot of my professors were male, who were like socialists and Marxist and just really interesting characters. And so, I thought, "Man, this department is really interesting." Very diverse in terms of the professors and their outlooks. And so I became fascinated with that. And that was really why I switched from thinking I wanted to be a lawyer to being an economist

But that was the only time. So I still had courses that I had to take. Let's see, I took Philosophy. I took History. I don't know. I don't remember if I took any Sociology. I think I took [pause] I don't know if it was Geology or Geography. I had to meet a requirement for something. I took one that satisfied that. So no, I think each term I probably took an Econ

course, but I had more than... I had to complete my Math requirement there. So I did that. Luckily I had completed my gym. Requirement.

Does Dartmouth still have a gym requirement?

LOGAN: [laughter] I think. There was a swimming test when I entered. But Covid did a number on that one. So right now it's a bit... I don't have to do it as someone who's graduating in the spring, which is pretty good for me.

MARKS: Yeah, so I completed that at Smith which is—again, I'll tell you this funny story. So to get out of the swim requirement, you have to go and do a swim test. Well, I went to the gym and they told me, and I had taken swimming lessons as a kid, but I was not a strong swimmer. And I was not about to jump into the deep end.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: They tell you to come in, which I thought was the stupidest thing. Come in and jump in the deep end. And I said, "No, I'm not going to jump into the deep end!" So they created a big hoopla because they said, "Well, no one's ever told us that before." And I was thinking, "What stupid women, who are non-swimmers, come up here and jump in the deep-end because you tell them to?" I said, "No, I'm not gonna do that." I don't have any problem taking swimming, but as a test, I'm not going to jump in the deep end and drown. [laughter] So I was like, "I can't believe that women would come up here and just be like sheep, and you can't swim or you're not a good swimmer and you're gonna jump into the deep end." If they had told me to come into the shallow, I would have done it. But I was not about to jump into the deep end. I'll say they probably thought, "Ugh! This is what we get for allowing Black women!" [laughter]

LOGAN: What was it like being Black at Smith versus being Black at Dartmouth?

MARKS: Well, the obvious difference: men versus women. Yeah, the thing that I did—I'm not [pause] I wasn't ever interested in sororities. My mother was a soror. She's a member of a sorority. I don't like cliques. I think when you join sororities... And we had social clubs in high school, we were very bougie [laughter] The middle class Black community was very bougie. And like my mother's sororities, they did the debutante balls and all of this. And my mother's like, "Oh, are you going to be a debutante?" And I was like, "No way!" My oldest sister was the same. It's like, "No." You know, you go out and you go to a sorority and you have a good time with that whole debutant process, but no thanks. So I just didn't like those and there were so many cliques when I was in high school and stuff and yeah. I just didn't like it. I just thought you separate yourself from people that you might be very good friends with because of certain things. And this wasn't coming from a place of not being

popular because I was in those clubs. But I just always had an aversion to that.

Oh! I should have mentioned that. That was one of the things that was a criteria for me. I didn't want to go to any school that had sororities and frats. And although I applied to big universities that had them, I just was not a big believer. So the fact that Smith at that time didn't have any sororities was very, very appealing.

But you had your mean girls, you know, even among the Black women. [pause] But it was fine. My closest friends in the world graduated from Smith. And Teri and Leslie and I even though we had a similar experience transferring to Dartmouth, I met them at Smith. It was just a different experience. It's always different when you have guys around. It was nice to have a male perspective of things. And I have a lot of friends and guys were very, very nice to me. Overly nice from the standpoint of always wanting to walk me across campus at night. I was like, "I don't have any problems. You don't have to walk me across campus! I can defend myself." So just very, very nice and having platonic friendships. There are guys that I'm still very close to, and far more guys that I am close to than women I'm close to from Smith. There were just really, really nice Black men at Dartmouth.

And we didn't have that experience that a lot of women coming later had. Just the issues surrounding women coming up from other schools and [pause]. I don't know how to explain it, but it was a very unique experience. So I don't think that, after us... and maybe the women that were [pause]. Well, I think that were one or two '74s. I think one. I think that there were two '75s. I think there were three women that came after us and then you have the big class of '76. That was the first four-year class.

LOGAN: And they arrived when you were leaving, right? They were freshmen when you were a senior?

MARKS: Right. Right. And so it was interesting. So senior year, one of the things that we were talking about what we could do. And we're sitting in the Aam with a group of Black women and we started talking. And I don't know if you've seen—I hope the poster from the one and only Black woman's conference, that was held at Dartmouth, that was the brainchild of myself and Wanda Johnson ['73]. And I had it framed and gifted to the Aam. It used to be on the wall there. I don't know if it still is.

LOGAN: I'll look.

MARKS: Yeah, but I was surprised that no one else ever did anything around Black women. So we had speakers come up. We had an exhibit in the Rotunda of a couple of prominent Black women artists at the time. A lot of speakers. Toni Kade Bambara came up.

LOGAN: When was this?

MARKS: I think it was in the Spring. So '73. I don't think it was in the Fall because it took a lot of planning, a lot of planning. And in the end, it came down to just Wanda and I orchestrating this whole thing.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: So I don't think the Fall term would have given us enough time to do it. And I remember it wasn't cold. So I'm thinking must have been in the Winter term but maybe like springtime

LOGAN: Yeah

MARKS: The date is on the poster. But we were really, really proud of ourselves. I know after it was done... It was a really big success. Wanda and I took ourselves to the Hanover Inn to have dinner and drinks [laughter]. We were so happy. We said, "Let's go to Hanover Inn and have dinner and drinks and celebrate!"

LOGAN: Was it supported by the entire community, men and women?

MARKS: Yeah. We had a couple of guys that were very supportive. Not as many guys as I would have liked. I would have liked, like, ninety per cent participation. But it wasn't that high. But all the sessions were packed. And then remember we had all the women from '76. So the turnout was really good. It was really good.

LOGAN: Do you have any thoughts around Black on campus at this time?

MARKS: Oh, it was tremendous! We were a great community, very supportive, very involved, very active. I lived in the Choates. And I loved that because I'd come out of my dorm, go in through the basement of the Aam [Shabazz Centre], up the steps, see who was in there and then out. And I'd come back again to see who was there, stop and talk, down to the basement, out the door, over to my dorm. So I was in and out of there several times a day. But I thought it was a great Community. They're people that I just love to death from Dartmouth who were just great people. Great people.

MARKS: So it was fortuitous because I don't know if I would have liked there during some of the issues that some of the women have. I was very involved with Dartmouth for over two decades at least. I've been an interviewer and I was on the Alumni Council. So I've done a lot of work for Dartmouth. I used to like to do—I've become discouraged now. When I would go back for reunions and different events and particularly reunions and talk to other Black women who just had a horrible experience. And I just cannot fathom. I think going to college—I personally think it should just be a magical experience for you. And I always feel bad for those poor people who just hated their college

experience and had, you know, a lot of issues because I had a really great experience [pause]. And I think the men there at the time were very special people.

LOGAN: That's fair. I mean, I'm one of those persons that does not like their college experience. Yeah, I understand that it's quite [pause]. There's like a very diverse set of opinions. So, that's fair.

MARKS: Yeah, I think I just lucked out. Yeah, it was a very special time in this country. A very special time in terms of what white colleges were trying to do around diversity.

LOGAN: Yeah.

MARKS: And gender equality. And so, I would do it again.

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: I would do it again.

LOGAN: Was Lorna C Hill [nee Mills '73] one of the students that you remember, one of the women?

MARKS: Yeah, but we were more acquaintances; we weren't friends. I think she went to Wellesley. And we just had a very different track and set of friends. So I never really socialized with her or really had any contact experiences with her. So she was probably the only one that I didn't get to get to know.

LOGAN: Of the seven? She was one of the Seven.

MARKS: Yeah, yeah.

LOGAN: I believe she was really involved in the theatre scene. So it was just your paths never crossed.

MARKS: Not really. She didn't live anywhere near me. Again, she was very involved in the theatre. And yeah I just knew her in passing. So I can't say we were friends or anything like that. We were kind of acquaintances.

The rest of us, particularly in senior year, all of us lived in the Choates. Except Lorna. No, Leslie... Wait a minute, Teri, Wanda, Brenda [Funchess '73], Lucinda [Stevens '73]. Maybe Leslie didn't. At least five of us lived in the Choates.

LOGAN: Do you remember there being Alphas on campus while you were there?

MARKS: Being what?

LOGAN: Alphas? Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity? The Black one?

MARKS: No. I think those fraternities came after I left.

LOGAN: Okay.

MARKS: I don't remember any fraternities among the with the guys I knew.

LOGAN: Okay.

MARKS: Yes, I think there was after. And it may have been soon after. I think they did come in the '70s. But I'm not sure. And if they were, it was a very small outpost but I don't ever remember that there were any frats even started when I was there.

LOGAN: Were there any extracurricular activities that you were involved in while at Dartmouth?

MARKS: No, and that's one of the regrets I have. I think the one thing I didn't do was take advantage of everything there was to offer there. For instance, [laughter] Wanda and I decided that we wanted to learn how to ski. And we were going to ski Winter term. We were gonna take a skiing class. It was extracurricular, but you know you got free skiing lessons and all the equipment and stuff. So we signed up for that. Lo and behold, when we came back Winter term, we were like, "Oh no, what if we break something." You know how the winters are there. And I don't know if they are as bad, but you literally walked through walls of snow. And they come and get the snow off the sidewalks and the street and there would become like piles and piles of dirty, nasty looking snow. And very slippery and stuff. And we were like, "Can you imagine if you broke your leg, your arm trying to manoeuvre?" So we said, "Nah, not going to do it."

And then lo and behold. Years later, when I got a job in Boston and moved to Boston, I had a group of friends that were skiers. And then I got into skiing. I was like, "I had to pay all this money to take skiing lessons." Yada yada ya. "And I could have done all of this for free!" I was like, "Jeez, who would have thought that ten years later, I'm going to become an avid skier and have to spend all this money to learn how to ski when I could have learned how to ski at Dartmouth!" I was like "Gosh!" And that was one thing I regretted. I thought, "Why did I just punk out on that?" We just started talking to each other about how cold it was going to be and breaking something, and we really talked ourselves out of it.

LOGAN: Did you ever work on campus?

MARKS: Oh yeah, I had a work study job. I worked at the Museum. That was the only place I worked. I worked at the Museum. In the administrative part of it.

LOGAN: Was that common for students to have work study?

MARKS: Yeah, yeah. Because Wanda and I did it. We both worked in the museum. But yeah, a lot of people—and that was a great job because I certainly did not want to work at Thayer Hall [the main dining hall, now Class of 53 Commons]

LOGAN: Dining services?

MARKS: Yeah, I think a lot of people did. Thankfully, we had good financial aid but it was like our spending money. So it was good from that standpoint.

LOGAN: Do you remember the murals being painted in Shabazz? I think that was done—

MARKS: Oh yes! That was done while I was there. Great source of pride.

LOGAN: Did you pose? I know that the artist, Florian Jenkins, asked certain students to pose for some of the panels.

MARKS: No.

LOGAN: I live in Shabazz right now, which is Cutter as you used to call it, so I see them every day.

MARKS: Yeah. It was great. And I don't know if they still have the brochures—

LOGAN: Yeah, they do.

MARKS: But the brochure that the museum did was an idea that I suggested to them. Because nothing had ever been done, written up and formalized that talked about the murals. So they produced that brochure. And hopefully it's still around somewhere.

LOGAN: Yeah, I'm not sure if it's the same one but we do have brochures in the mural room for any visitors. I also wanted to mention that there is a group called Black Girls Are Magic on campus, and they don't have a conference, but they'll have socials, and they have hair care events for Black women. So there is still that tradition here of women looking out for each other.

MARKS: Oh, good!

LOGAN: So, for the final part of the interview, I just wanted to transition into your life after Dartmouth. So if you could just tell me a little bit about what you did immediately after graduating.

MARKS: Well, I applied to doctoral programs in Economics. And I ended up going to the University of Michigan because—because I don't know if you're aware—University of Michigan has been sort of at the forefront in terms of diversity. So I got a full ride there, and it was quite a shock. I mean, it was a big culture shock because the University of Michigan is a HUGE school. And the Economics Department was very, very small department. And I started the summer after graduation which was a mistake. I should have taken the summer off. So, I went up there and then I was immediately disappointed. I didn't like the school. I didn't like the size of the school. It was overwhelming. I didn't know anybody up there. And you feel it because, one, just the campus and the thousands upon thousands of students that are there. And then, even though it was a very small department, you had to register with everybody else. So you're standing in this HUGE space with thousands and thousands of people trying to register for classes, and it was just overwhelming. Didn't particularly like the department. Very staid.

And the other shock was, okay, actually, you should think that it's going to be more like five years to get your doctorate. Because doing your thesis and getting approved, and going through the whole process is very laborious and it takes a long time. So it's not unusual for it to take five years. And I was like, "What?!" And then my idea was that I wanted to be an economist for a bank. And when I really looked into it, I found out that you didn't get that. Usually, it was White guys. When you had worked for about two decades as a professor, gained a reputation, then you might get hired as an economist for a bank. But those positions were few and far between, unlike in subsequent years where there were more jobs like that in banking. Most of the jobs that were available were to teach like assistant professors, yada ya. I was like, "God, I don't wanna be a college professor!" So that was surprising [inaudible] being an economist for a bank

LOGAN: So, sorry, I can't... Vicki?

MARKS: Yes?

LOGAN: Could you repeat what you said after, "I don't want to be a college professor?"

MARKS: Well, that was pretty much it. I just knew going in that I didn't want to teach, and I'd never really thought about that. And I don't remember where I got that idea from, but that was my idea. That was my goal, and the fact that it was going to be a long-term goal instead of a short-term goal. I didn't want to do it.

So what I decided to do was. I thought, "Geez, I really need to hone in on what it is that I can do because the career path is going to be mapped out for me is not one that I want. My goal, my dream job, if you will, is gonna be, you know, many, many, many years out." And I didn't think I had the patience to teach. So I thought, "Okay, I need to leave, go and work and decide what I wanna do." And so I went to the school and talked to the dean, and I said, "I wanna take a leave for a year, find out what it is I really want to do. And how can I approach this and yada, yada yada. And then return." And they said, "Fine."

LOGAN: [laughter]

MARKS: My boyfriend at the time was a Dartmouth grad I'd met at Dartmouth, and he was in Chicago [IL], in med school. So I said, "That's a quick transition. That's close. So, I'll move to Chicago and get a job and kind of build this out." So, I did that. And then I decided, well, what was really gonna get me where I wanted to go was to get an MBA [Master of Business Administration]. So I went back to the University of Chicago, got my MBA with a concentration in marketing, and my career has been in that.

MARKS: So, I worked for a number of Fortune 500 companies, large consulting company, Booz Allen Hamilton. And after I worked for them, I wanted to be on the corporate side rather than on the consulting side. So I moved into a corporate environment and had a really good career after that.

LOGAN: Would you say that Dartmouth prepared you to work in corporate and in what ways?

MARKS: Well, I think my whole life prepared me. I think that it was kind of destiny that the powers that be prepared me. I think that was the whole journey, the transition from an all-White school and dealing with that environment. Then going on to Dartmouth where I was in an environment just like I was going to have in corporate America, surrounded by white men. Because I was at, again, the forefront of women that were going after careers and not the married-mommy track. And that's when companies were starting to open up to women and open up to Black women. So, for most of my career, I've been the first woman, the first Black woman, the first Black person in any job I've ever had.

MARKS: I hope my performance makes it easier for the people of colour coming after me and particularly women of colour because I was always out there on the ledge by myself.

LOGAN: Did you feel isolated?

MARKS: Not at all. Not at all. Yeah. This stuff doesn't get to me. [laughter] Again, I think my upbringing and what I experienced growing up, the level of

confidence that I had. I always knew, I am a very smart person. I'm a brilliant strategist. I'm a brilliant marketer. And I had the experience to back it up. So, anything anybody thought about me that was less than that. I didn't consider, but I knew that I was breaking barriers. For a lot of White people I was working with, it was the first time they ever worked with and knew a Black person. So you know, it was what it was. But no, it didn't stress me out. I see the opportunities that women have now which were not open to me. And I was like, "Gosh, I wish I had been able to do this, that and the other."

But I remember my mother saying that as well. I don't think that my mother would have taught school. She wanted to go to law school. But you know, that was just not a career tract for many Black women. One of her best friends actually was the person that brought a lawsuit against the University of Georgia, because they would not accept him into the law school because he was Black. And he ended up going to Northwestern Law School. A Black man had a lot of problems. It was just not a track open to my mom at the time.

So, I mean, and that's going to be the way it is for a long time for a lot of generations. Like Blacks and technology. That's been a very hard field for large numbers of Blacks to get into. I remember, I actually got invited to do an interview at Apple back in the day. And if they had hired me, I would be a very wealthy woman by now. Because they had just become a leading tech company. So it was in the beginning of the heyday of Apple. But they showed me around—they called it a campus. I did not see one Black person at Apple. And I knew that they were not going to hire me. [laughter]

But you go through all these things. I had this guy, I don't remember what company it was. But I was back on the east coast. And this guy flew me out. And I don't remember if it was Chicago or somewhere. It was Midwest, and he said, "Oh, you know" —And now I would probably sue them—but he said, "I just wanted to meet you because when I saw your resume, and you are a Black woman that went to an Ivy League school, I just wanted to meet you." Now, nobody now, they'd be wise not to say. They'd be well versed by H.R. not to say something like that. I was like, "Are you kidding me?" And then I had another investment company do the same thing. Because I had written them a letter. They had done something that I was very impressed by, and I just sent them a letter talking about whatever. And then they invited me to come up for an interview. And then they too said, "Oh well, we really don't have anything." Maybe both were lying and they just... But they had me believe that they were interviewing me for a job. So it's stuff like that.

People want to meet you because you're like a unicorn. You're Black, you're a woman and you went to an Ivy League school. You went to one of the top five business schools in the country. Wow. So yeah, it was like the monkey in the zoo. Let's go see the monkey in the zoo

type of thing. It was their loss, not my loss. Although I really wish I had that Apple stock. [laughter]

MARKS: But you're always in the vanguard, and somebody's always breaking barriers, and I like to think that the seven of us said, "Hey, Black women can come and thrive at Dartmouth."

And so we don't have to be concerned about, "Can we make it?" And I say we were a sure thing. Because not only did they have our first term grades, by the time they had admitted us, we had probably gone through midterms. So they knew, academically, that we could do the work, unlike taking in freshman. You think they can do the work but you don't know until they actually take the classes and get the grades. So they knew that we were academically strong. So, it wasn't that much of a risk, right?

LOGAN: Like they also knew you were socially plugged in as well.

MARKS: Yeah, yeah. But again, those are all things that you accept as you know that you are the first anything.

MARKS: And again, because I knew I was, shall we say, good enough and strong enough and prepared enough, that I could do it.

MARKS: I've had three VPs that I had worked with who all said the same thing: "You're one of the smartest people I've ever worked with." And I knew it. [laughter] Well not that they had ever worked with. I was that good. In fact, when I worked at one company, for a senior VP, and he reports to the CEO. And the CEO had to review his [pause] I'm drawing a blank, but, you know, your "How you did" right? And so he wrote up my review. And he told me the guy said, "Nobody can be this good. Go back and rewrite and find something." So he said, "I just want to tell you the stuff that I had to put in there that were very minor things. But he would just not let me give you like a wonderful 100% glowing review. He said, 'Nobody could be that good.'"

LOGAN: I'm thinking you must have retired by now?

MARKS: Oh yeah! I got out! I was. [pause] Sometimes breaking barriers is tiresome. [laughter] And sometimes you just say, "Enough is enough." And I was ready to go.

LOGAN: Did you retire early or?

MARKS: I would have worked longer had I been happier with the trajectory of where I was going. But certain things just. [pause] I was privy, because of my level, to be aware of certain things. [pause] And where I was. [pause] I just didn't want to deal with it anymore.

LOGAN: Do you feel like you were sort of prevented from going to the highest position because of your identity?

MARKS: Yeah [pause] Yeah.

LOGAN: You were put in a box?`

MARKS: Yeah, it's hard work. Well, I won't say. It might sound racist [laughter] But sometimes men can rise to high levels even if they're incompetent. You know the thing about being ten times better, just to be considered average? That you have to be brilliant from the get-go. Where there can be no denying. That you're pretty good.

I'll give you an example. I was asked to attend a meeting, and I don't remember the exact. But with the group of board members of the company. And we went through some exercises. I don't remember what it was. We went through some exercises with them, doing something. And then we were each asked to present our idea or concept or something. And I was one of the, in terms of level, junior members, if you will. And I was on this team who had two people that were considerably higher than me. Two women, as it turned out, they were higher than me. So they said, "Okay, well, who wants to present from this group?" Well, you know, these two women just sat there. Because I was expecting ""Kay, you're at this very high senior level and, I'm expecting them to say, "I'll present." They sat there, and I said, "Okay." So I finally spoke up. Because there were only three of us, and they weren't volunteering so by default meant me. And I was expecting them. And I said, "I'll do it." And then I said, "And I'd like for whoever to do it with me." So I got up there and presented. And I was like, "I can't believe that they wouldn't volunteer." That just astounded me.

So anyway, I happened to be sitting next to one of the board members. And we started talking. And he said, "I hope that I get to meet with you again," or, "You're in one of our meetings," or something to that effect. So I had impressed him, a board member of a major Fortune 500 company. I had impressed him enough that he thought I deserved to be in meetings with the board.

But that was an outside perspective, right? Whereas inside, it can be a lot of other things. We used to have what we call "people meetings." And that's when you come together as the department, all the senior members and talked about the folks that worked in the department and their review and their performance. And what were your impressions of them yada yada yada. So we talked about everybody, not just our direct reports And I have seen how some people that I would not have said were racist would talk about people of colour. Behind closed doors, things get said. And you can say, "Oh, that's my opinion. That's my assessment." And you think, "That is tinged with more than a little racism. If this person had been white, you would not be saying this. This is a really gifted person."

And that's one of the reasons actually, to come full circle, how I started interviewing and writing up the recommendations or the... I don't know what they call it now, I forget. But I [inaudible] and there was a White guy that worked at Gillette. And somehow they put us in contact. We said, "Okay, we'll do the interviews together." And I have always said I really want to interview particularly Black applicants and students of colour.

So, we were interviewing, and we had interviewed this great young, Black guy. And so we talked about his review. This guy had a totally different impression of this young man than I did. So I was just astounded. Now, not using any type of racial language but just, if this kid would have been White, would your impressions have been the same?

So I said, you know what? I'm gonna volunteer to do our write up all the reviews. I wrote this guy up [laughter] And I thought, "This is why Black alumni have to get involved in the interviewing process. Because some alumni are probably really not giving an unbiased review of these kids. It is shaded by their race. And that made me commit to doing it. And I always wanted to do it by myself so I could write up the review myself.

Because I just wanted an honest assessment, and it wasn't like I thought every Black student was phenomenal. But I thought I gave them a fair assessment. And there were a lot that were phenomenal. And that's why I stopped because I became—and I know it's tough to get into Dartmouth, really tough to get into Dartmouth. But some, I just did not understand, based on what Dartmouth was looking for, why some of these students didn't get in.

So after twenty plus years of doing it. And I thought, I don't want to do this anymore. Because I spent a lot of time. 'Cause, as you can tell, I'm a talker. And I spend usually at least ninety minutes to two hours talking to every student. So I think that I get a pretty good overview of who they are. And I don't think Dartmouth is right for everyone. I REALLY don't. I think it takes. [pause] Dartmouth is a horse of a different colour.

And I think you get a feel for what students would thrive in that environment and what the students would probably struggle. So, it just became heart-breaking to a certain extent when certain people didn't get in. And I couldn't understand why.

So I thought, I don't want to do this anymore. It's too tough emotionally. Because you get invested in these kids. Because I spend a lot of time. And I always did with these young applicants. I'm not doing a fifteen, twenty, thirty-minute interview. I'm really spending time with these students and talking to them. And I've had some really interesting, good conversations with students, particularly biracial students. They'll share a lot about their dealings with that, and their experiences with that.

Because I think I'm easy to talk to. And I'm genuinely interested. So they usually open up and share a lot with me. So I think I can give them a really good assessment whereas when you've spent fifteen minutes and you ask the usual questions, you're not getting a lot of insight into who that student is. So yeah, it became very frustrating. But for a long time, I did A LOT, a lot for Dartmouth

And maybe because I thought I had a very good experience there. And I would recommend Dartmouth again. Not everybody's right for Dartmouth. But I think there are students who would really thrive there, and it would be a good experience. So now I don't do a lot, if anything, anymore.

LOGAN: So I would like to actually end this interview by asking why you're taking part in this project. And I think it's quite relevant since you just said you're not really as involved with Dartmouth as you used to be.

MARKS: Well, because I think I had a unique experience there. I'm very involved in my own ancestral search and gaining information. And I think that the experiences of Black people on Dartmouth campus should be in the archives. In one hundred, two hundred years, people will wanna know about those experiences and what was it like. And especially being one of the first women to graduate and being a Black woman who was in that class, I just think it's important for our voices to be heard, and our experiences—

And that's one of the things I mentioned to you earlier. Because the seven women, outside the three of us [from Smith], the other four women, three had come from HBCUs. And four came from sister schools, Ivy League schools. The journey was, very different and my perspective could be very different from Wanda's versus Brenda's or—

LOGAN: Wanda Johnson?

MARKS: Uh-huh. I think she came from Stephens College somewhere in the Midwest. And I think she was from Tennessee. Four of us were from the South and three were from the North. Leslie was New York, Upper New York. Teri was Midwest. I'm not sure where Lorna was from, but somewhere North.

LOGAN: She was from New Jersey.

MARKS: Yeah. But our journeys were just so unique and different and especially for the three that had no relationship or knowledge of Dartmouth before they came. They'd never step foot on the campus. Their journey, their experience was probably very different. It's not something that we ever really talked about. Not of interest, I suppose, to us at the time. But now that I think about it. I thought, "Oh wow. It'd probably be very, very different."

But I like the idea. And that's one of the reasons why I wanted to give the poster to the Aam. Because A, Black women were here. [laughter] And we were active on campus and involved. And I also sent one to the archives. Just so it didn't get lost in history.

If you want your history written the way you want it written, you have to do it yourself. So, I am thrilled about the project and to have this history documented in the archives.

LOGAN: We're really thrilled to have your voice reflected in the archives as well because we think it's a really important addition.

MARKS: Yeah, and I love Dartmouth. [laughter] I had a great experience. So despite the time and place it's important to know that a Black woman came there and thrived from it. It was a benefit, and I hope I've contributed something back to the college in turn. I spent many hours on Dartmouth's behalf. So I think I've earned my keep. I appreciate it. Thanks so much for reaching out.

LOGAN: Thank you for accepting. I know that you weren't feeling 100%. So thank you for finding the time and strength to do this.

MARKS: Well as I said, I really wanted to do it. And I do think that the work that you're doing and your colleagues are doing is very important. To get our history in the archives so that we are not forgotten people. And in a place where it's easily accessible.

I've dealt for many years with archives and in fact, I have some stuff from one of the former presidents, who's now deceased, of BADA [Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association] gave me years ago. Some of it I sent to the archives. Unfortunately I came across some additional stuff that I had tucked away that I need to send to the archives. So, I'm definitely on board with regard to documenting the history of Blacks on campus and the work that's been done about it.

Was it Woody Lee [Forrester 'Woody' Lee '68] who did the thing [co-authored a book about Dartmouth's first Black student]?

LOGAN: Yeah.

MARKS: Yeah, that was, that was just outstanding, the work that he's done. And at one point I had tried to do some research on the slaves that were brought to Dartmouth. But I ran into a dead end because I was very interested in trying to find out some information. I found a little information when I was doing it. There may be more resources available for someone to have more success with doing it.

But I've been documenting my family ancestry... Oh, gosh. For over 20 years now and I've learned a lot. Learned a whole lot that I'm glad to know. Because my journey, my family's journey in America goes back

much further than I knew. I found out that some of my ancestors were likely brought over among the first wave of Africans, and it goes back to the 1600s. It's nice to know. It's like, go back to where you came from. What are you? Your family's been here twenty-five years? Fifty years? Well, how about three hundred years? Four hundred years? So it's been eye-opening for me to have that information. And to be able to see how my Southern male ancestors registered to vote during Reconstruction. And how dangerous that was for them, and how brave it was for them. Many of them could not write. So you have their "X" and then somebody wrote in their name. But even though they might not have been able to read or write, they wanted to take advantage of the right to vote. And knowing what happened after Reconstruction, after the North moved its troops out of the South. They lost that.

But when people forget about that period of time, when Blacks WERE allowed—well, you had to meet certain criteria obviously. But if you met that criteria for a brief time doing Reconstruction, they were able to vote. So the right to vote was here and then disappeared for a very, very long time but that's incredibly moving to know.

LOGAN: I'll do a bit of digging around and see if I can point you in the direction of any resources on slavery at Dartmouth, because there has been some recent advance—

MARKS: There was something written many years ago that had the names of the slaves and I worked through Ancestry.com. And so I went in and tried to research on them to see what I could find. Very little. There was some interesting information there, but they sort of disappeared.

And that's what happened. A lot of Black folks, even my relatives. They're there and then they're not on the census for a while and then they come back.

MARKS: So yeah, I haven't done anything on that for [pause] was that ten years ago? So maybe more information than was available. But I don't think I was really aware of that, certainly not when I was there. None of us were thinking about that, and I don't think that was ever documented anywhere initially. But I did find... Oh gosh, who was it? Was it Carver that came to campus and he wrote a letter to the professor and his wife, thanking them for their hospitality. I think it was Carver because he said he was sending them some sweet potatoes. And that was really interesting.

But I will let you go! Thank you so much for letting me go on and on and on. [laughter]

LOGAN: No, thanks for that additional information. I'm gonna stop the recording now.

MARKS: Okay.

