

Narrator: Kimberly

Interviewer: Xiyuan Cui

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Length of interview: 00:18:09

Attendees: XC = Xiyuan Cui (interviewer), K = Kimberly (interviewee)

XC: So today is May 22 of 2021, I'm interviewing Kimberly through the Zoom meeting for the UCSD Race and Oral History Project. For the purpose of this project, do you agree to grant the University permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes?

K: Yes.

XC: Could you start by telling me a little bit about yourself? Like how old are you and what grade are you in in high school?

K: So, as she said, my name is Kimberly, and I'm 17 years old, and I am a student at San Ysidro high school, currently a senior right now.

XC: Could you describe your upbringing? Where is your hometown and how was growing up there?

K: So currently I live in San Diego California, but more specifically in the San Ysidro area, which is close to the Mexican border, and which is probably like one or two miles from where I live. Growing up in this type of Community there's a lot of minorities and various that very like almost kind of like a poor area kind of ish.

XC: Could you tell me about your family and your relationship with them?

K: Okay, so I am the oldest out of three siblings, so I have two younger brothers. The youngest Nathan being nine years old, And then the second oldest, which is my brother Jonathan, which he is 16 currently, and he is a sophomore currently right now in the same high school as me. And then, of course, I live with both my parents, which are both immigrants from different countries. My dad being from Cambodia and my mom being an immigrant from Vietnam, which both of them being... They were very poor in those areas, and they came to the US to start a better life for our family and yes.

XC: Are there any traditions that you practice or memories you treasure with your family?

K: Some traditions... Since my family is more kind of like those... like kind of more traditionally Asian parents, so like you'd like to do a lot of things, like over the holidays... like one thing that I remember doing a lot when I was younger is during any holidays, Christmas or anything like that, my mom would always make food since like food is something that brings families together and it's always something that we always get together, and one thing that should make that I love is pho, which is a Vietnamese noodle soup, and it takes like long hours to prepare and it's very nice to like being able to like...help my mom, and get that one on one, since she does work a lot, and this is like the time that where we can bond together and just like share her traditions with me and learn how to cook like, her traditional foods.

XC: And I want to know more about you personally. What are one or two words that you would like to describe yourself or your personality?

K: One or two words I would describe me as a person is --- i'm a very "caring" person and a very motivated and determined person like very passionate as you could say. Caring side is I probably get that from having two younger siblings, so I'm the oldest... So it's always thought on me to like, care for my brothers to make sure that they're always fed and there was like..good with school and everything. And my mom always taught me the importance of caring for others and making sure that everyone is good before yourself and making sure that everyone is well. And for the passionate side, if I have a goal in mind, for example, anything like that I'm very passionate about, I will always make sure that I do it, and if i'm, even though I..like..basically like, if I don't complete it, it doesn't feel like I don't satisfy myself. So I make sure I put in the time and make sure I complete it first before anything else and yeah.

XC: When you were growing up, who is the person you think that has influenced you the most?

K: Influential wise would probably my mom since she's been through a lot during her life, coming from a very, very like, very poor background when she was in Vietnam, like, for her to lose her mother at such a young age, and having to step up since she was the second eldest of her siblings and so she had to step up and bring that...be that "mother" figure to her younger siblings and have to like...on basically be their "second mom" basically and being from where she was. And in the past, very poor to coming to the US, and not even knowing a lot of English and stuff like that, she was able to, no matter what, even with the language barrier, she was able to like...put in that hard work and all that sacrifices that she put in really paid off, since she's made a life here for her family and is now able to support her family in Vietnam and is able to --- now bring her family from Vietnam to to the US, so that is one thing that is very influential about her and that she always like motivates me and my siblings to do better to to make a life better than

her so that when we grow up, we can have...our kids can have better life than what we have in them, and so forth, and she always motivated us and told us that how schools, important and things like that.

XC: Do you have any favorite memories with your mom that you want to share?

K: Most of my best memories it's like being able to like...after when she's working or something like, I know she's tired, but I know that she wasn't seen as much so, like being able to like, when she comes home and she's like relaxing just having that one on one talk with each other and just talking about like her day...and like just talk about life, like in general, like...or what I want to do in the future...stuff like that, and just being able to like connect with my mom during that time and being able to just talk with her before I go off to college, since I won't be able to talk with her. That as much, so I just wanted to gain like...more of that connection and bond with her and yeah.

XC: I am very interested in your high school. I heard that San Ysidro wants to create a space for the students who are special, and they want to do some classes like...prepare for their college lives and career. It is very attractive. I guess that's why many people went to this school. What about you? Why did you choose San Ysidro?

K: Why I personally chose San Ysidro is for their academics, and for that support that every teacher in the school has for each and every single one of their students, even though they may not know them like...personally or their life, all the teachers there and all the stuffs always want to see their students succeed and always want to like have the best for the students like they always put their students first, before anything else and that's one of the major on this why I chose to attend San Ysidro. And other things is that the teachers are really “connect” personally with their students, because they understand like, the challenges of growing up in like, let's say, not a...not so nice neighborhood or community, and they understand what their students is going to and being able to connect level on that personal level is something amazing that not most school can say that they can do. And in San Ysidro they can, because they know what it's like to be a minority in the Community and not have a lot of people on rooting for you to get that higher level education and stuff like that, and so that's what I like about San Ysidro and the caring asks that they have at their school.

XC: What is your favorite class in school and why?

K: Most class... My favorite classes would be...probably on all the sciences, since I do want to pursue a career in medicine. In San Ysidro they offer, like many good programs, that would set on students for the careers they would like. For example, I've been in the medical pathway at my school and I'm not sure if all schools have this, but it's like a program unique to my school. They

do have medical pathways for their students who are interested in the medicine field, which I think is very nice and very unique that they give us the option and things like that. I like science, the most because I'm just like a very curious person about, like the world and how it works and how everything is connected in one way or another, and yeah.

XC: Is there a teacher that you remember for any good/bad reasons?

K: Teacher of that was probably the most influential thinking now would probably Ms Gomez since going to class for junior year I took her class for AP US history um I would say that this class was the most challenging for me, since it is actually challenging me...like academically. And for her, she was a very influential person, because she really gave it to us straight like she never sugarcoats anything and she really challenged me as a student personally to see if I can overcome my challenges and be a better person at the end, and she would always tell us that in life, We may not expect what on...like we won't expect like the outcome that we want, and that's okay, because you can grow and learn from those of your mistakes, so that next time you are better, and things like that.

XC: And what do you like most about your school?

K: Most I like about my school again would be the teachers and how motivated academic wise that they are towards their students and how...they're very inspirational themselves, and always want the best of the students, and always wanting their students to reach that higher level education, so that they can one day come back into something for their community or just things like that.

XC: What do you like least about your school?

K: [Smiles] Least right now, since that we are virtually, I wish that I could have gone back to campus and now we can, but it's already halfway through the Semester. I wish that we could have gone back to campus and be able to really, especially during my senior year, to go back to see my teachers and get that interaction with my peers and all the other students on campus but yeah...

XC: We had a difficult year because of the coronavirus. We cannot go out to play, we cannot go to the restaurants, and we can't communicate face to face. But that is also a very special experience for the people who live in this age. I think people in the future will also learn something from our stories. So I really want to hear about your own experience under the pandemic. How is your life/studies being impacted by the coronavirus?

K: Yeah, so personally the corona like this whole thing in the quarantine pandemic really affected my family mostly like, financially, since... [pause] Since jobs were being closed down and everybody was becoming unemployed. It was a very big major change in our lives financially since, like my parents were being unemployed due to not, due to the quarantine mandates and things like that, and it really changed person, because now I have to have my mom and dad at home constantly, and they're always worrying about like money and rent and things like that and it's very stressful to have...even at this age and, like my brothers, seeing them have to work see my parents like that wondering on like worrying about money and things like that. And for school, academically I think it's impacting me like, not so as much, but like the change from the in-person to online school was kind of hard to adjust since that I have to do everything at home, and I also have two younger siblings at home, which one is nine years old, so he's barely in the third grade and he's never gone through this type of thing. So it was very hard to adjust for them also and for me to manage my home life in school, at the same time, while taking care of my brothers and making sure that he's going to school and making sure that i'm he's also like, understanding, like the aspect of online school and things like that, and so it was just a bit hard to adjust, but then once I got like more comfortable with it, it was more easier to manage.

XC: What is your understanding of the pandemic? How does this long-distance-social affect your communication with people?

K: So..more..so like yes, I miss the interaction part with face to face with people, but I think it more affects like our younger generations, like my brother, my younger brother, like he's gonna, like after this whole thing is done, he has to transition from being on the screen and just talking to people through a screen and never had that interaction personally to next year when we go back into person, it's going to be completely different with all the other kids. They're probably going to be like, still having to wear a mask and things like that and I think it's going to be a huge change for them, since they've never experienced that, on face to face interaction. And I think it's very important like, those interactions really developed skills and it's very important to develop those skills at a very young age. And from that change, from online to in person, I think it may affect some kids mentally and like, personally, since it's going to be a huge change...but yeah.

XC: What is a difficult challenge you have faced and experienced during the pandemic?

K: So personally for me, since I am the oldest, a lot more responsibility was placed on me during these times, so like, I had to make sure my brother was going to school and make sure he was going online while making sure I was also balancing like my home life, making sure that I helped my parents as much as I could and help them apply to like, I don't know...some benefits like governmental benefits, since we were struggling, and since my parents don't know the English language well, so I have to help them translate whenever they want to, because during this time, my father did get ill so I have to like help my mom translate at the hospital with her

while still doing school and everything like that so it was kind of like a stressful time during this time since I had so much so many things on my plate that I had to balance and make sure that I had to like study for AP tests or like..I don't know, do my school online. [Laughs] And well, at the same time helping my brothers, so it was like a very, like this time made me grow like, more maturely, and like [okay?], like these are my responsibilities, I need to do these, and I need to manage my own time and not make excuses for myself and just get them done and things like that.

XC: What do you think is the most stressful part of studying remotely?

K: Stressful part about studying remotely is probably... I've never thought about this. [Smiles] But I think it probably be the fact that I miss being able to like, [pause] talk with my peers. If I ever had a question like...I can ask them right...like immediately, or ask my teacher immediately like raise my hand and ask them a question, but if I wanted to ask a question. I'd ever have to like after the [media?], then I have to email... email the teacher, but that takes like a couple of hours or maybe a day and I wouldn't get my answer [unclear], so I think I kind of didn't really, like that was like kind of like a hard part for me not to like have my questions answered immediately and things like that, but I can't like change the situation, so I just have to like... yeah.

XC: How do you take care of yourself and relax during this time?

K: Some things that I've done to like distress and that I like to really do is I like playing basketball. Currently right now I'm playing basketball. It's like a way for me to like distress and like...get away from school and just be around my teammates and people and have that interaction personally. Since we were able to play now. I'm able to talk with my friends and we're able to like being near each other and like, not be behind a screen and things like that. And playing basketball has really helped me like, be able to like, distress and just like have fun in these tough situations and I really liked being able to do basketball and -- currently right now, we... I'm pretty sure... [Smiles] Yeah, so right now we are basically going to the W.I.N league. And it's going to be the first in history in our sport and basketball to get a league banner for our schools so that's something really special that all my team and I have done this year.

XC: That's it. Thank you for sharing your stories.

K: Alright. Thank you.