

Oral History Interview Transcript

Course Title: Energy in World Civilizations

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Student Name: Eddy Rose

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Oral History Transcript - Energy in World Civilizations II

Eddy Rose [00:00:03] All right. Welcome to the to my oral interview. Do you consent to being recorded for the purposes of oral history? It'll be stored in an archive for UChicago.

Sandra Rose [00:00:19] Yes.

Eddy Rose [00:00:21] Okay. Um, great. Could you please introduce yourself and, you know, state name, age. You know, where you were born, Where we are today.

Sandra Rose [00:00:36] My name is Sandra Rasa Valaitis Rose. I am 59 years old. I was born in Park Ridge, Illinois, and grew up in Western Springs. And we are in Western Springs.

Eddy Rose [00:00:51] Great. My name is Eddy Rose. I am the son of Sandra Rose and I am 22 years old, also born and raised in Western Springs.

Sandra Rose [00:01:11] Technically, you were born in Palos Heights.

Eddy Rose [00:01:13] Well, right. I was born Palos Heights. To start, maybe you could talk a little bit about what it was like just growing up in Western Springs, maybe, you know. When you were, you know, as early as you can remember. We'll start with that. How about how about that? What maybe what were some things like that you were doing from day to day, going to school or. Well, like, what was a day look like when you were young?

Sandra Rose [00:01:51] My earliest memories were hanging out with my mom at home. In Western Springs and we had a dog, Piddles, that was a cocker spaniel. And I would chase the dog around the yard. And my mother was very close to her mother and her sister, who lived not too far away. So we would often get together with them. And we would go to Oakbrook Mall and walk around the mall and look at the flowers. And I would run around the fountain in the mall and we would have lunch at Marshall Fields. And. We'd spend the days that way. And sometimes we'd come home and we'd cook and we'd make pierogies filled with blueberries and. My mom would laugh with her sister and mother, and then we would just hang out. And then as I got older, my sister was six and a half years older, almost seven years older than me. And so she was always in school when I was little. And I really wanted to go to school to be like her. So my mother managed to enroll me earlier to school, and I started kindergarten when I was four at St John of the Cross. And I went to school there and. And, you know, made friends and developed a close friendship with a friend down the street whose parents had come from similar circumstances as mine. So they were Polish and immigrants, and my parents were Lithuanian immigrants, so we had a lot of things in common. And my mother became really close friends with with my friend's mother. And, you know, we've maintained those friendships throughout our lives. And so I spent a lot of time over at their house as a kid because they had four girls that were close to my age. So it was sort of like me having extra siblings.

Eddy Rose [00:04:09] Yeah, a lot of fun. Right?

Sandra Rose [00:04:11] It was a lot of fun.

[00:04:11] Having people...

Sandra Rose [00:04:12] Yeah, we would run around the neighborhood and we'd bike around and we'd play kick the can in the backyard and go to the graveyard. And, in the summer, we catch fireflies and we'd ride our bikes to the pool. Um, and we did that all through grade school, even into high school, until well, you know, started driving and then go to parties and...

Eddy Rose [00:04:39] Right. Right. Right.

Sandra Rose [00:04:39] With our friends from high school. Yeah. So that was sort of my, my time growing up. And then I also was, because my parents were Lithuanian and they were very involved in the Lithuanian community, we did a lot of Lithuanian activities, so I had to go to Lithuanian school on Saturdays. Every morning we'd have to drive to Marquette Park and I would be in school from nine until 1:00 every Saturday, which I really hated because I missed all the cartoons.

Eddy Rose [00:05:10] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:05:11] And. And then Sundays, every Sunday, we would have scout meetings also near Marquette Park at the Lithuanian center on 55th Street and and Western. And we'd have to be at the scout meetings from ten until about noon. And so pretty much every day of the week, there was something that I had to go do, whether it was in school during a Monday through Friday or Lithuanian school on Saturdays or scouts on Sundays, and then in the summer, you know, I would have we wouldn't have school on Saturdays or scouts on Sundays, but we had summer camp in Michigan, so we would go to scout camp for two weeks at Camp Rakas, R A K A S, in Michigan, which was a lot of fun. We did. I was a sea scout, so we got to canoe, kayak and go and canoe trips and, you know, sleep in a tent and do all that fun stuff.

Eddy Rose [00:06:12] Yeah, all that fun stuff.

Sandra Rose [00:06:14] We'd raid the boys camps and we do fun stuff, it was it was a lot of fun.

Eddy Rose [00:06:19] And what was it? So you would say most of the time when you were hanging out with your friends and going places, would you be getting around town just by walking and biking?

Sandra Rose [00:06:28] And yeah, we run our bikes downtown or we'd walk as we got older. Sometimes we'd take the train and we'd go downtown to the city.

Eddy Rose [00:06:37] Yeah. And that was always an option, too, the train.

Sandra Rose [00:06:40] The train was always an option. I used to love taking the train when I was little. My, my aunt worked downtown. She was a secretary for the Hartford Insurance Company, which was right on Adams at the river, right by the train station. So we would, my mom and I would hop on the train and we would go downtown on the train and we'd meet her after work. And we'd go have dinner and we'd see a movie. So I remember going to see a bunch of movies downtown, like we'd always see the Beatles movies that were coming out for some reason. I don't know why we would go see those. They were fun. So we saw Like Hell but A Hard Day's Night and, I don't know, another one. And then we saw a couple other movies, too, I think, like Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and something else, some other Disney movies. So that was fun because we would go like, you know, walk around downtown and I'd love taking the train. I thought it was such a treat to go downtown.

Eddy Rose [00:07:44] Mm hmm. And so we would say, like, most of the time, if you were going downtown, you would just take the train. You wouldn't drive.

Sandra Rose [00:07:52] Sometimes we'd drive, but a lot of times we just take the train.

Eddy Rose [00:07:54] Yeah, because it was easy. Right?

Sandra Rose [00:07:57] It was really easy to just park the car at the train station. Yeah. And you hop on the train and takes you right downtown, and you just walked everywhere you needed to

go. We'd never go that far from where the train station was. We were always, like, right in the Loop.

Eddy Rose [00:08:10] Right, to Union Station. Right?

Sandra Rose [00:08:12] Yeah, we from, you know, so from Union Station, we'd, we'd walk in, pick up my aunt at her office. And then we'd go across the river and we'd walk down to, like, Marshall Field's. We'd love to go to Marshall Field. So it was, like, my mother's favorite place. So we would go there and we do a little shopping, and we'd have, like, dinner or lunch, you know, in the walnut room. And we'd and then we'd walk up and down, you know, we'd go to person Perry Scott or some other stores down on State street. Kind of window shop and stuff. It was fun.

Eddy Rose [00:08:45] Mm hmm. And when you would go, it would, like, usually just be like, women. So it'd just be like you...

Sandra Rose [00:08:50] It was always just me, my aunt and my, you know, and my mother.

Eddy Rose [00:08:54] What would your dad be doing? He wouldn't come with?

Sandra Rose [00:08:56] He was working.

Eddy Rose [00:08:57] He was working.

Sandra Rose [00:08:58] So he wouldn't come.

Eddy Rose [00:08:58] And that was pretty common for most people, too. They would. Like your friends your age, too. when they would go out?

Sandra Rose [00:09:06] The men worked and the women would stay home. You know, that's kind of how it was.

Eddy Rose [00:09:11] And when do you think you first started noticing maybe like some big differences in your town like because you said, well you've grown up here or you lived here now most of your life, when do you think you really started to like see a difference in the town? Or maybe more specifically, like when do you think was the biggest change in your lifestyle that you can remember from when you were growing up. Maybe was it like when you were in high school. Did maybe things become more expensive or was it always...

Sandra Rose [00:09:45] You know, when I realized that the town was changing because Western Springs was always sort of this quiet little suburb, nobody really knew much about it. Even people who were in suburbs not too far away didn't really know about Western Springs because it was sort of small and there wasn't a lot here. You know, there were just some local businesses, post office, a few churches, schools. But it wasn't like there were, it wasn't like La Grange that had like restaurants and more businesses, you know, of different kinds. There were just a few little local shops downtown in Western Springs. There was the bakery that's still there. There's there was the hardware store that's still there. There was the, you know, the butcher that's still there. And then there were a couple pharmacies and then you know, like little craft shop. Mhm. A little jewelry store and then like a women's clothing store that was pretty much all that was there. And then once, once I got married. So your dad and I got married in 1998 and we, we were living in the city and your dad was like looking for a different job. And we were thinking we were going to stay in Chicago and we were sort of we were starting to look to live someplace outside the city because we were planning on having a family. And so we looked at houses in Western Springs, and it was at that point that I realized that there was a change in the neighborhoods in Western Springs. So a lot of the the older houses that were on these big lots, they were sort of like slab

homes that just like ranch style homes or maybe split level houses, kind of modest. You know, sort of houses like your Aunt Barbara.

Eddy Rose [00:11:42] Mhm.

Sandra Rose [00:11:43] And those kind of lots they were getting all torn down one after the other, one after the other and people were building these humongous homes that--were--seemed so expensive to your dad and I. Like, you know, this was around 1999 when we were looking and, and we were looking at these houses and they were like over \$700,000. And we were thinking, Oh my God, who can afford that? And why do you need such a big house? And they were building these big houses because the lots were big. So they could big build a big, huge five, six, seven bedroom home with, you know, five or six bathrooms and two fireplaces and a three car garage because it fit on the lot. It would fill the whole lot. And there would still be a backyard on it. And gradually all the homes were like just getting torn down one after the other, one after the other. And I thought, oh my gosh, what's happening to this neighborhood? It's not the same.

Eddy Rose [00:12:46] Mmmmmmm.

Sandra Rose [00:12:47] You know, and then you know with that with wealth people kind of change. It attracts a different kind of person sometimes. The values are a little different. They're more about showing their money.

Eddy Rose [00:12:59] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:13:01] It wasn't really like that when I was growing up in Western Springs... People were well-to-do in Western Springs. My parents, they did well, but they lived in a really modest house. Um, you know, they spent their money on education. On, you know, maybe buying some nice jewelry or some nice clothing once in a while, or getting a nicer car.

Sandra Rose [00:13:25] Or taking really nice trips. Going To Europe. You know, that's what they spent their money on.

Eddy Rose [00:13:30] It wasn't just about like buying things. And...

Sandra Rose [00:13:34] They weren't house poor. You know, they weren't putting all their money into a home, into a big fancy house.

Eddy Rose [00:13:38] Right.

Sandra Rose [00:13:39] Because they didn't need that.

Eddy Rose [00:13:39] Yeah. It was like, do you think. That kind of mindset was pretty common before, and then it started to change.

Sandra Rose [00:13:47] Yes, because I had you know, a lot of my friends were from similar circumstances. Their parents were, you know, well-educated people just like mine. They had big jobs.

Eddy Rose [00:13:58] Yeah.

Sandra Rose [00:14:00] But, you know, when you looked at their house, it was just kind of a simple suburban house without anything fancy. But then you knew that these people had a lot of money. You know what I mean? Like, you could understand they did, but it wasn't that they showed it off. You know, so, like my friend Jim, we were really close in high school, and his dad worked for an architecture firm, and he was, you know, he had a big job at this major architecture firm

downtown, and he was very well-connected, and, um, you know, and they they belonged to, like, the university club downtown, you know? But he didn't really know that about them unless they, you, they invited you to come. Right. But you'd go over to their house and her mom would be making like, you know, peanut butter squares or Rice Krispie treats or, you know, popcorn balls at Christmas time with, like little hot pepper candies in them and, um, and stuff. And and she was just super sweet and nice and, like, very normal. And there was no like, there was no air about her. She didn't feel like she was, like, superior. She was like, wondering why you're over. She was just happy to have her kids, like, bring their friends over. And so that's sort of how people were. And then there was another guy who went to grade school with me who whose parents ended up becoming really wealthy, like, um, people in business school sort of hear about this person. One of my friends who went and got an MBA, and that was like a case study in one of their MBA classes about how this guy had sold his company and made a fortune. And and I never knew that about him until way later. Like once we were out of high school and, you know, those kinds of things were coming up. But they they continued to live in their very modest house in Western Springs despite having all this money. They had other properties. They bought a house in Florida that was probably bigger or whatever, but you'd never know it, like talking to them. They were just normal people, you know? They were. But, I, as you know, as I grew up and as I came back to to Western Springs, I saw how much the neighborhood changed and how people were a little different. Um, they were more showy of their money. And, um. I don't know, it kind of turned me off a bit.

Eddy Rose [00:16:32] mm hmm. Do you think, why do you think people were more modest then than they were when you started to see the change? Do you think that was because people were it was maybe frowned upon? Or do you think it was based on maybe some sort of social class, or why do you think people were more modest and they stopped being this modest?

Sandra Rose [00:16:56] I don't know. I think that's a really good question. I'm not really sure. I- I think that it was a generational thing, perhaps. I think that generation of people, you know, like my parents, like your your dad's parents, um, you have to remember, they they grew up, you know, um, your your grandmother, you know, Oma, she grew up as a kid during the Depression, and my parents grew up in Europe in the midst of World War II. And so they experienced poverty. They experienced leaving absolutely everything they had. The only thing that they took with them when they left Europe was their education, you know, their what they had learned in school, the values that were instilled by their parents growing up. Um, they were all very religious people, you know, like my mother and your grandmother, Oma were extremely religious people. They went to church. They believed in God. I think that instilled a lot of very strong values about how you act, how you treat others, you know, modesty, humility. Um, and so I think that generation in particular, because of the things that they went through, was very attuned to those kinds of beliefs and morals, you know, in their lives and they sort of live their life showing that. You know, and they didn't pay attention to the things that were materialistic so much.

Eddy Rose [00:18:55] Mm hmm. And did most people that you can remember from your grade school, like your classmates, were their parents working downtown? Or were their parents working locally or maybe in like, other industries? Like, do you think it was pretty common that most people were pretty well-off but they were living modestly?

Sandra Rose [00:19:15] Yeah, I think so. I mean, a lot of people had--they were businessmen. You know, again, when I was growing up, a lot of the women stayed home. It was kind of unusual for there to be someone who had a mom who worked. I had two friends. One of my good friends in grade school. Her mother was a doctor. Um, and so she was working all the time. And then another he was, you know, he was a friend, but not close friend in grade school. His mother also was a doctor. And so, you know, like, it was interesting. You wouldn't really see those moms around very much. But most every other mother stayed home and raised their family like my mother did. She was educated. She had a master's degree, but she ended up staying home to raise her children. That was kind of like what you did. And then the men worked.

Eddy Rose [00:20:12] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:20:13] Um, and so and most of you know, most of my friends had dads who were engineers or they were doctors or they were businessmen or they were an architect or they owned a construction company or, you know, something? Some people worked downtown and they took the train. That's why Western Springs was a nice place to live, because you could walk to the train station, hop on the train and get downtown, you know. So some people also were attorneys and they worked for law firms in the city, but then other people worked in businesses that were in the suburbs.

Eddy Rose [00:20:53] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:20:54] Um, so it just varied.

Eddy Rose [00:21:00] And do you think that. Or do you. Um. What was it like then? Do you think having parents that were immigrants was was that that wasn't very common for the rest of the neighborhood, was it? Or do you think you were? Do you feel differently about that? I mean, obviously your friends like Ciocia. Right. Their parents and her, too, but. Yeah. What was it like having immigrant parents in a town like that where most people like that?

Sandra Rose [00:21:44] Oh, no. I mean, most people were American around here, at least. But when I think about my class at Saint John of the Cross, you know, there were quite a few people who had some sort of, um, whose parents were from other places, Like two of my friends at St John's. They were Cuban, and their their parents were from Cuba. Um, there was another close friend that I had who her, her parents were Filipino and her dad was a doctor. And, um, and, and then, you know, Isabella's parents obviously were from Poland. Uh, and I'm trying to think if there are others, I think that's pretty much it. Um, and then everybody else was, you know, they were all American people for several generations, you know? There was a guy, [Redacted], in my class. His parents weren't from Lithuania, but his, like, grandparents were from Lithuania. So and, you know, we would joke about, like our immigrant parents because they had an accent. You know, they had like, certain expectations of you. You know, you're going to speak Lithuanian at home, you're going to do the Lithuanian things. You're going to like go to Lithuanian school, you're going to go to the scouts. But that was also fun because you met other kids like you who were born here but raised by immigrant parents. You had all similar kinds of like experiences.

Eddy Rose [00:23:21] Right.

Sandra Rose [00:23:22] And then a lot of the parents knew each other because they all left at the same time. They were all the same age when they left. They all got to know each other in refugee camps in Germany. And, um, and then, you know, came over the same way on a boat, you know, and kind of made their way. So people had very similar lived experiences and, and their children had similar experiences.

Eddy Rose [00:23:48] Right. And but do you think it's it was interesting, though, because when you saw the change that when you got older and you were looking to buy a house and obviously people your same age who were your classmates and other people, but when they started buying houses, they weren't as modest or, you know, they wanted to buy a bigger house. What do you think like was a generational change that you think maybe really was different about viewing about like that kind of, um, you know, way of looking at, at money and, and buying houses? Why do you think that changed?

Sandra Rose [00:24:25] I don't know. I'm not sure. Um, you know, your dad and I we're still sort of of the same mindset as our parents to some extent. You know, we have a big house and everything here, but it's not as big as other people's homes in Western Springs are. Like, our

street is a little more modest than, let's say, you know, Forest Hills. Right. Um, and so when we were, when we came back with you guys once we were moving back from Indianapolis.

Eddy Rose [00:24:56] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:24:57] We were actually looking for a house that was, you know, um. At that point 700 thousand dollars. And you couldn't find one. Because the builders were only building houses that were \$1.2 million more in Western Springs because that's what the demand was.

Eddy Rose [00:25:18] Mhm.

Sandra Rose [00:25:19] And so I remember calling a realtor or calling a builder and saying, you know, we, we saw that there's a lot for sale for this amount of money. We're thinking about buying it. Would you be willing to build us a house for, you know, seven or \$800,000. Like we don't want to spend 1.2 million. We don't need a \$1.2 million home.

Eddy Rose [00:25:41] Right.

Sandra Rose [00:25:42] And he he basically told me, we don't do that and good luck to you. And he hung up.

Sandra Rose [00:25:51] And I was like, What the heck? You know, I mean, we had the money, you know, but that's just the demand. And he was like, I'm sorry. There's just not a demand for that in this neighborhood. People don't want that kind of house. And I was like, Well, we want that house. And we would pay you for it. And and he explained to me, you know, it's hard to build a house for that little. And, you know, people don't want a small house if they're building something new, they want a bigger house with a lot of space.

Eddy Rose [00:26:23] Yeah.

Sandra Rose [00:26:24] And so the interests weren't aligned. So we had a hard time finding something that was going to basically meet our needs and be realistic, you know, in terms of a builder. Um, and so we, we managed to find something kind of in the middle with the house that we bought and that you grew up in. It wasn't like the \$1.2 million house, but it was more expensive than \$700,000.

Eddy Rose [00:26:51] Right.

Sandra Rose [00:26:51] And, you know, it kind of met our needs without too many extra bells and whistles and put us in the neighborhood that we wanted to live in. And so that's how we picked it.

Eddy Rose [00:27:03] And do you think when people started buying houses, do you think they were like buying lots and like splitting them up into more houses? Because because now it looks like Western Springs pretty packed, Like I'm looking outside the window and there's not a lot of yard space and...

Sandra Rose [00:27:16] Right.

Eddy Rose [00:27:17] But were these lots always the same size?

Sandra Rose [00:27:19] This neighborhood always had these size lots. Um, there are lots that are bigger, you know, And those are the ones that are, like, in Forest Hills. Because those were just... That size lot was allotted for those homes. When I grew up, that neighborhood was very modest. Like, I grew up in the bougie neighborhood, which was Springdale like. So people thought, "Oh, if you live in Springdale, you must have a lot of money." Like, that's what people thought. But the

houses weren't that huge. The lots were just a little different. It wasn't a grid street system. They were kind of curved. There was a park, you know, it was sort of like this, different styled neighborhood, you know. And so for that reason, people thought it was a little more upscale. And the houses were a little different from the older parts of Western Springs in that they, you know, some of the Western Springs homes like on our street, were traditional kind of bungalow houses. Those have been sort of torn down and changed now, but. But if you go down like a few blocks and over, you'll see some of the original homes still these brick bungalow houses. And that's kind of how it looked in this neighborhood. So Springdale was different because it was all new. They were all new houses built in the 1960s or seventies because that was a farm. And so the farm was sold to a developer and the developers started building homes in that area and they created this other neighborhood in Western Springs.

Eddy Rose [00:28:55] Gotcha.

Sandra Rose [00:28:56] So that's why, you know, so Western. So Springdale became kind of this new, more quote unquote upscale neighborhood. And it wasn't--the houses were more of that kind of like seven or late sixties, early seventies kind of mid-century style house that wasn't the same style house that was built originally in Western Springs, you know. Um, but all the big lots in Forest Hills were, were just slab ranch or split level houses. They were small houses on big lots. And so when I grew up, like if you lived in Forest Hills, it was kind of a normal neighborhood. It wasn't like a fancy neighborhood. Yeah, now it's a fancy neighborhood.

Eddy Rose [00:29:46] That's interesting because, you know, like in when we were in our class and we were kind of studying that time period, a lot of like what we were learning about was kind of this idea that like it was consumerism with like buying lots of things or like having lots of appliances or like, you know, getting like the home with AC units and all that, and that was all linked together where, you know, builders were pushing that same agenda, too. Where having like, oh, you up, you want AC in your home, things like that. And I'm curious like maybe right that you said, oh, the builder he wouldn't even build our house for \$700,000. Yeah. And so I'm curious like do you think that, um, when people were buying those homes, do you think they were like, like, why do you think your parents bought that home there? Do you think they were thinking about, like, living in Western Springs? And the location was really important and they wanted like a house just the size for their family, and that was pretty much it.

Sandra Rose [00:30:51] Yeah, well, they picked Western Springs because it was a good location for them. They knew some people in the area. In fact, I think the guy who built their house was friends with one of their Lithuanian friends and that's kind of how they found out about it. And it was a good location because it was really, very equally distant to all these things that they were involved with. So it was about half an hour to Marquette Park. It was about half an hour up to Lutheran General, where your grandfather worked. It was 20 minutes away from Cicero, where the grandparents all lived. There were good schools. It was right by a lot of different highways. There was a train. You could get downtown. So it had a lot of conveniences. And, you know, it was nice neighborhood. And they were looking for a place where they could send their kids to good schools, too. So, you know, Western Springs was a good location because it had a good of course, there was St. John of the Cross and they were happy that there was a Catholic school walking distance from there. So my sister and I both went there for grade school and then the public school, you know, high school was really good. So we went there for high school. And you're right, by 294 and I-55 and, you know, the Eisenhower Expressway and all these, like good, easy thoroughfares were closeby to get to everything that you needed to get to. The airports were the same distance, Midway, you know, and O'Hare. So it was a very good location.

Eddy Rose [00:32:35] Right. And also because of like Catholicism, having the church was pretty important. Do you think like--was most of the community then Catholic as well, or?

Sandra Rose [00:32:47] Oh, no. I mean, a lot of people, of course, in the Springdale neighborhood were Catholic because it's so close to the church. But no, there's a lot of other religions here. A lot of people. There were some Agnostic people. There were people that were, you know, Presbyterian or Lutheran or Episcopal or you know, because there's all those churches in Western Springs. There's even a Baptist church.

Eddy Rose [00:33:12] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:33:14] Um, so yeah, so pretty much, you know, most of the religions were at least Western religions, I should say, were well-represented in this area. Western Springs has a lot of churches. All those different denominations have churches here. The only thing that was missing really was, you know, Eastern churches, like there's not a Buddhist temple or a Hindu temple or something like that. At that time there really weren't very many Asian people living in this area. Now there's a lot more. But um, so yeah, so for the people who lived here, it had the different religions available and the churches that they wanted to go to.

Eddy Rose [00:33:56] Mm hmm. And was it pretty common to go to public high school? Like there were a lot of people were they going to Catholic high schools, too, or?

Sandra Rose [00:34:02] Yeah, sure. The same Catholic high schools were around. Some of them weren't coed. So like, Nazareth was just girls. I think it changed to coed when I was starting high school, maybe the year before or the year after. I don't know. Right around that time it switched to coed. Benet was a very good school. I almost went to Benet. I got into Benet and I thought about going. But to get to Benet, I would have to catch the bus at 630 and I was not a morning person. And so I thought, "I could get an extra hour sleep if I go to LT [Lyons Township High School]. So I'll go to LT. And then some people went to Ignatius, but that was just men. They didn't take girls back then. So just the boys went to Ignatius, and you could take the train to go downtown. Um, I'm trying to think. And, then, Saint Joe's was boys. So some of my classmates went to Saint Joe's, which was in Westchester, and then there was Immaculate Heart of Mary, which was right next to Saint Joe's and that was all women. So those were all the Catholic high schools that were around back then.

Eddy Rose [00:35:14] And do you think there was like any difference in like kind of when you went from Catholic to public school. Right. Going from Catholic grade school to public high school, do you know. What did you think was like maybe one of the biggest changes you saw? Or was there really not any change at all between maybe like the people or like kind of the values people had going to school?

Sandra Rose [00:35:39] Oh, I thought there was a lot more diversity of people at LT. I mean, it was a big school.

Eddy Rose [00:35:47] Yeah. How big was it?

Sandra Rose [00:35:49] So, uh, well, my sister's year, she graduated in 1975. I think her class had the all time record for enrollment and she had 1500 students in her class. Um, and then when I graduated, I think we had 1100. So, you know, 1100 students in one graduating class is a lot of students. So, I mean, there were people I never knew or met. In my in my high school class. But, um. But there was a very broad diversity of students. Um, we had, you know, there were Latino people and black people and Asian people and all different kinds of religions, you know, and some Jewish kids and, you know, Christian, a lot of Christian kids. And, um, and then there were people that were coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, you know, different neighborhoods that were part of that LT district. And so you were exposed to a lot of different kinds of people in high school.

Eddy Rose [00:36:59] Mm hmm.

Sandra Rose [00:37:00] Um, and it was such a big school. There [were] so many different activities you could do. There was theater. There was art. There was, you know, music and choir and dance and of course, athletics of all different kinds, you know, like a badminton team. I mean there were just lots of things that you could sign up for and do there. Um, I loved my experience at LT. I thought it changed me. You know, it just exposed me to a lot of different kinds of people. Um, it forced me to be less shy. Um, I really kind of came out of my shell going to LT because you were just forced to be more outgoing, so you wouldn't get lost in the shuffle of stuff, right? You had to find your way. And so, um, I really, really loved that high school. It was a good experience for me.

Eddy Rose [00:37:58] Mm. And then when you went and then you went to college as well. And like, with a lot of people after high school, like, where did you go to college? I know that, but.

Sandra Rose [00:38:07] I went to Indiana University, and don't even ask me why I picked that. I'm not really sure. There was not a lot of thought that went into where I went to college. For some reason I was just intent on leaving the state. It was just important for me not to go to school in Illinois, which was not a very mature way of looking at things. I think in retrospect, you know, that was just a stupid thing. Like, I don't know why I felt that way, but I felt like I needed to get away from home. And the only way that that would happen is if I went out of state. So I went four hours away to Indiana. Um, and, you know, I chose Indiana because it wasn't too far. It was drivable. Um, it also had good programs and the things that I was interested in. So I like biological sciences and it had a great music program and it had opportunities for me to continue dance because I was very into dance when I was younger. I did ballet and jazz and, you know, I was in dance teams. I wanted to continue to be doing those things when I went to college. So Indiana gave me the opportunity to do that. And I knew a lot of people who were going there from high school. So I felt like I would already have like a group of people, a community there that I could tap into, um, if it was hard to make new friends or something like that. I would always have people that I knew. So there were I think like 40 people from my graduating class at LT that went to Indiana that year.

Eddy Rose [00:39:47] And do you think most of your class was going off to college, or?

Sandra Rose [00:39:51] No.

Eddy Rose [00:39:51] Well, you say it was the opposite?

Sandra Rose [00:39:54] So Lyons Township was interesting because it was two campuses, um, because it was such a big school. It was during those baby boomer years, you know, it outgrew the capacity of the original school, which was located at North Campus. And so then they had to build the South Campus, which was built, I think, in the late sixties or something. That's why it has that different style look to it. It has kind of that sixties look. So that became the high school where the freshmen and sophomores went. Then, the juniors and seniors went to North Campus. And then there was a little bit of overlap like some of the activities were at South and you know, for athletics and some were it north, like North Campus had the swimming pool.

Eddy Rose [00:40:41] Right it had the pool.

Sandra Rose [00:40:42] And that's where you went. The basketball was all north campus. And then at south campus they had the football and then there was like girls volleyball itself campus. So different activities were done at the different campuses. The music was all at North Campus. They had the, you know, band and the symphony and orchestra and stuff was at North. You know, all the dance stuff was at North Campus. Um, so it just depended but, but for the classes freshmen and sophomores were at South, and, then, juniors, seniors were at North. And there were a lot of kids that didn't go from South, like they stopped their sophomore year, and, then, they started working at the age of 16.

Eddy Rose [00:41:28] So your class that you entered with was 1100.

Sandra Rose [00:41:31] The class I graduated with was 1100. I don't know how big it was when we started.

Eddy Rose [00:41:38] Of those like, maybe like if you had to, you know, just come up with a fraction of people who were going to college.

Sandra Rose [00:41:44] I don't know how many went to college. I mean.

Eddy Rose [00:41:47] Just like what you think it might've been. Like, what did it feel like when when you were graduating? Did you feel like most people were, no? Right. You said you said most people were.

Sandra Rose [00:41:57] If it felt like most people were. Because most of the people I hung out with did. I think there was only one girl that we kind of hung out with a little bit, not a lot, who didn't go to college. She got pregnant senior year, and, then, she never went to school. Um, but everybody else did. Um, everyone else I know, you know, finished universities or colleges. And then some people went on and got other degrees. Um, so to me, it felt like the vast majority of kids did go to college that I graduated with. But I didn't--I hung out with people that probably were more of a similar socioeconomic status as me, you know. And their parents were probably similar or similar to my parents in terms of their level of education and stuff. So it kind of made sense.

Eddy Rose [00:42:54] And that was pretty typical to lots of people kind of did that right, where they kind of grouped themselves together in a way.

Sandra Rose [00:43:00] Yeah, I guess. I mean, some of it also had to do with the level of classes you were in. So, you know, I mean, if you're in like superior and honors classes and stuff, which is what most of the classes were that I was taking. Then, all those kids were going to college.

Eddy Rose [00:43:15] Right.

Sandra Rose [00:43:17] Um, you know, if you weren't in those classes, it was either because you didn't have a good basis when you graduated from grade school. You didn't go to a grade school that was that academically forward. And so, then, you started at a lower level, and it's hard to get into a higher level when you start at a lower level, you know. Um, and so I didn't meet with those kids. I wasn't in classes with those kids. I just, you know, so I didn't get to be friends with them.

Eddy Rose [00:43:52] Right. That's because, like you said, SJC was like a strong education, you thought, or strong base for going into high school, right?

Sandra Rose [00:44:02] All the schools in Western Springs were good. Um, so, you know, McClure was really good. I felt like when I went to L.T., the kids from McClure actually were more advanced educationally than I was at St. John's, in certain areas. I think that their writing skills were better. They had more opportunities to advance in math than we did. I mean, it was fine, but I felt like, you know, comparing the people that I met who went to McClure, they seemed to be more prepared for high school than I was.

Sandra Rose [00:44:39] Not that I wasn't prepared. But, you know, you just kind of saw how people did in classes and stuff.

Eddy Rose [00:44:48] Yeah, I think that's interesting, right? Because when I went to SJC though it was--I almost felt like, well, my friends were also kind of the same. I had friends the same kind of way you did right where it was like, you know, you pick people who are kind of in the same focus

as you or able, you know, I was kind of close to Jacob, 'cause family friends and that, too. But, I think like right towards the end of it, you know, I felt like I wasn't you know, I wasn't getting pushed enough. So then I started taking math classes at the high school. Right. And so I'm just curious, like, if that like, if maybe there was a change or something at SJC where people felt that way, or there was coming off, but maybe just like a few people. Mhm. You know, it changed. So then once you went to college though. Right. You were in college and then you, you started to think like okay, like what made you choose to become a doctor? What made you choose to go down like that profession? Because you said that most of your, the women in your life. Right, they would stay at home or they wouldn't, you know, be working. What kind of made you be like, "Okay, no. I want to go work. I want to be a doctor. I want to have a full profession, you know, work a ton. What kind of like--what kind of convinced you to go to do that? Maybe with your parents being really educated and your mother? You know, she was really...

Sandra Rose [00:46:12] My well, my mom was very educated. And she started medical school in Germany. But, then, when they immigrated, you know, they had the opportunity to come to the States and she had to quit. And so it--she, you know, could have gotten into medical school here. But I think her circumstances were such that perhaps that wasn't the best idea for her. You know, she was courting, you know, her like future husband who was a doctor already. He had finished med school in Germany and was already kind of doing internships and things like that. And so she knew he was going to be a doctor. And so she she chose to pursue a master's degree, which wasn't going to be as rigorous. And, then, she could still do the science she wanted to do. And she worked for a while after she got her master's while my sister was little. But then she just saw how difficult it was to not be home. Her mother helped her a lot with my sister, but it was just really hard for her to leave her daughter at home and work. Um, and, then, so many other people weren't. And she felt a lot of social pressure to stay home.

Eddy Rose [00:47:40] Hmm. That's interesting. So she felt the social pressure to stay home from other women around.

Sandra Rose [00:47:46] From other people.

Eddy Rose [00:47:47] Yeah, other people too, period, not just women. But in a sense, did she feel like she had to work in a way where, like she didn't feel like she had to work to support the family?

Sandra Rose [00:48:00] Right. I mean, she did at first. At first, when my dad was a resident, he wasn't making any money. And so her income was supporting the family. But, then, when she wasn't working, she missed it. My mother always regretted not not going back and pursuing her career. And she you know, she didn't regret raising us. But she regretted and I think quite frankly, resented that she ended up having to stay home, that that was kind of forced upon her. And she was a staunchly independent woman and she really hated being beholden to her husband for money, for support. That's not who she was. That wasn't part of her fiber. She was a staunchly independent, very smart woman who, had she been a doctor, would have been a very successful doctor. And so she instilled in me that knowledge that you don't have to be beholden to anyone. You know, you're smart and you can create a path for yourself. And you should never feel like you have to rely on someone else for financial help. You should be able to use your brain and work and feel that freedom of financial independence. And so she always told me that.

Sandra Rose [00:49:53] And she, you know, I was really into dance, and I wanted to be a dancer. And I got a job at Great America, you know, for summer stock to be a dancer there. And she didn't even tell me that I got the job because she didn't want me to do that. And I found out from a friend that I had been picked and I didn't even know, like, later that year after the summer was over. And I was very upset. But, you know, she was like, "you're not going to make a living being a dancer. You know, like, that's not a long term career. When you're 25, your career is going to be over. So pick something you can do for the rest of your life, you know?" And so she sort of got

me thinking, "Okay, what other things can I do? I always thought I could be a doctor, when I was younger. My dad told me I could be a doctor. My mother told me I could be a doctor. When people were picking, like, what careers they wanted when we were in grade school. You know, girls would say, "Oh, I want to be a teacher. I want to be a nurse." I would say, "I want to be a doctor." And people would laugh at me. And I would look at them and I would go, I can definitely be a doctor. Um, there was this game called Operation that we would play. You know, it's like a-- it's got this body and it's a battery operated thing, and you're supposed to like..

Eddy Rose [00:51:13] Yeah, I've seen it. You guys have it here.

Sandra Rose [00:51:15] We used to have it. I don't know if we have it still, but we had it.

Eddy Rose [00:51:18] It's the guy.

Sandra Rose [00:51:19] It's the guy. He's a goofy guy. And you reach in with tweezers, and if you hit the side, buzzes, you know? And I was always really good at that game. And I remember playing once with some boys and they were like, "You can't play operation because you can't be a surgeon." And I was like, "What are you talking about? I can so be a surgeon." And I'm a surgeon. [Laughs] That just made me mad. Kind of wanted me to prove to people that I could do it.

Eddy Rose [00:51:44] And then, yeah, when you were graduating college and you were deciding that you were going to be a doctor. How many of, like, because you were in a sorority, right? Yeah. And so did you think, like a lot of your peers and, like, your fellow, um.

Sandra Rose [00:52:00] My sorority sisters?

Eddy Rose [00:52:01] Yeah. Your sisters? Were they, like, choosing careers like that or.

Sandra Rose [00:52:04] Um, you know, I don't think anything. Nobody else in my class, in my sorority class, grade, whatever, went to med school, there was somebody who did go in, and she worked for Eli Lilly. She was a scientist. She didn't get a Ph.D. or anything, but she she might have gone on to get a masters. Um, and then most of my other friends went into business, so they became accountants or they went into finance or something like that. Um, they worked for different companies. Um, so they were business people. I didn't really know anybody in my story that went to med school, but I have guy friends who went to med school.

Sandra Rose [00:52:47] Um, so, you know.

Eddy Rose [00:52:49] And once you were in med school, how many of your fellow classmates were women?

Sandra Rose [00:52:55] 25 out of 104.

Eddy Rose [00:52:56] Wow. And all of the doctors that were, like, there, you know, teaching, the professors of medicine, were they all men, or, mostly?

Sandra Rose [00:53:05] There were some women. It was mostly men. Um, there you know, there was a fair amount of discrimination against women back then.

Eddy Rose [00:53:18] Yeah. How so, if you don't mind elaborating?

Sandra Rose [00:53:21] Um, you know, people would make comments. Um, you wouldn't be given as many opportunities, you know, like, the guys were always invited, you know, especially with the surgical specialties. Um, the guys were invited to, like, play squash with the surgeons or go

out to a game with them or, you know, socialize with them. But the female students never were. And that kind of changed the opportunity for you. You didn't get to know people, you know. You didn't feel welcomed. And so, if you didn't know the professors as well, they weren't as likely to write a letter for you, you know, for a residency program. So those things had an impact. Um, and I really liked surgery, but I felt like I didn't really belong. It was very much, um, you know, a males club. In fact, there were no women from my year that went into surgery. Um, I was the only one who went into OB-GYN in my class, women, only woman. There was another classmate who went OB-GYN and that was a male. And we were both residents together. He was a really nice guy. Um, and, and so, you know, the women went into, like, radiology, anesthesiology, internal medicine, pediatrics, derm, um, psychiatry. Um. That's kind of it. They didn't really go into the surgical subspecialties at all. Um, so it's changed now a lot, I mean. 60% of the class is women now, so it's very different.

Eddy Rose [00:55:12] And that's interesting that it's different. I mean, it's like just through our conversation, talking about kind of like, the values that were instilled by your parents. But also kind of seeing like what the, like the rest of society was saying or, you know, holding against you in a way because they had, you know, quote unquote a better idea of how it should be. Um, but I mean, and I wonder like if, you know, like having, like the parents that you had, right. Who the people they were, being immigrants and your mother being really independent, um, if that like, was really just like a really, you know, big reason why you were able to kind of like push through all that. Um, yeah.

Sandra Rose [00:55:57] I mean, to some extent I still have. When I was in college, I wasn't really sure that I was good enough to go to medical school.

Eddy Rose [00:56:04] Yeah.

Sandra Rose [00:56:05] Because there was sort of that there was still that sort of double standard. Like, maybe women shouldn't go, you know, maybe you should stay home. Maybe you should pick a field where you can stay home with your kids and with your children. So there was still a little bit of that kind of culture then. And it was actually one of my boyfriends who told me I should apply to medical school. And had it not been him. I might not have applied.

Eddy Rose [00:56:32] Wow. Wow.

Sandra Rose [00:56:33] You know, I was thinking maybe I'd go get a master's degree in genetics or something and be a genetic counselor. And that was sort of what I was thinking that would do, um, but, he was like, "Why?"

Eddy Rose [00:56:44] Yeah. [Laughs]

Sandra Rose [00:56:44] You're doing just as well as everybody else in this class. Like, why wouldn't you apply for medical school? You're like--you like that stuff. You're interested in that. Why wouldn't you apply? And I was like, "You know what. You're right. You're right." You know? So it was thanks to him really, that I ended up applying.

Eddy Rose [00:57:05] I see. Do you also--do you think that, um. Like what kind of like sentiments do you think? Like when you were in college, that was like, really, really changing? Like for me, I feel like, you know, as I've gone from high school to college, like some of the biggest sentiments that I've seen people care about a lot more is like activism or like trying to be more inclusive as much as possible, even overwhelmingly. What do you kind of think we're like some of the biggest swings you saw in just like, you know, how people were kind of viewing like going into the workforce or like what were like maybe some like the biggest changes that your generation felt like they were going to make in, in a sense or I don't know, maybe that's too broad, but like, what do you think like people's mindset were when they were kind of entering into the workforce then?

Like was it common for a lot of women to go for professional, professional, more professional jobs in a sense. Or?

Sandra Rose [00:58:06] Yeah, I think most of my friends, most of my girlfriends were--they all got jobs of some sort, whether it was in business or, you know. Some of them stayed home for a while. They got jobs where they, you know--they were a nurse or they took time off from their career to raise their families. Um, you know, I hate to say it, but I don't think my generation was very deeply thinking about social, like social justice. We were just having a good time. And just trying to finish school and get a job. Like, I hate to say it, but I don't think. I don't think we were very, in general, very socially thoughtful people, which is sort of an embarrassing thing to say about my generation. But I don't know. Your dad could probably chime in on that. I think you guys are way more thoughtful than I ever was at your age, and I was just really doing my classes, figuring out when I could go out and have a good time.

Eddy Rose [00:59:23] Yeah. [Laughs]

Sandra Rose [00:59:23] And try to find something that would eventually help me make enough money that I could, like, pay my bills. [Laughs] That's pretty much it. You know, worrying about the poor or being, like, socially inclusive wasn't really a thing. I mean, the only thing I would say that I learned more about as I was like, in college and, then, after college was being tolerant of people that weren't heterosexual.

Eddy Rose [01:00:01] Mhm.

Sandra Rose [01:00:02] So I became much more exposed because of friends that I had who came out, and they were gay. Um. I would say that to me was probably what I learned most about like outside of my own comfort zone. You know, just like realizing, "hey, my really good friend is gay and he likes men and that's great." Yeah, you know like I never wanted to date him. Like, we were just friends. And that's fantastic. Like, I'm happy for him that he's found his people and that he feels comfortable in a place. Cause many, many people then were really discriminated against harshly when they were gay. And I thought that was very unfair. So I, you know, like, who cares who you want to go out with? They're not asking you out.

Eddy Rose [01:00:55] Right.

Sandra Rose [01:00:56] You know? I mean, who cares? I still feel that way now. And so that's probably the only thing I really. Of all the like social justice things out there. Mhm. I was much more--I became much more open as I got older to just LGBTQ people and that they have every right to do what they want to do. And I liked hanging out with them. I thought they were really fun. They saw things from a different lens they like, you know, they just were fun people to, to spend time with.

Eddy Rose [01:01:31] You know, I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing that your generation wasn't focused on it. I think, you know, just based on circumstance, you know?

Sandra Rose [01:01:39] People were very closeted back then.

Eddy Rose [01:01:39] Yeah, people were closeted because people weren't as connected. You know, I, I don't think people were able to get those ideas out there. And, you know, with the Internet, you can post anonymously and do those things more anonymously. And so I think that just kind of made awareness much easier. So I don't think it was necessarily a bad thing. You know, maybe without the Internet, that never happened. Our generation totally could be different. Um, yeah, but.

Sandra Rose [01:02:06] We didn't have the Internet. We didn't have any social media. I mean, we had landlines. We didn't have cell phones. That's how, you know, primitive it was back then. Um, and actually, you know, in the eighties, when I graduated from high school and college and started medical school, that was when the whole AIDS thing started. And people were really afraid of AIDS and that created a lot of like social discrimination against gay people because, you know, people thought you could just get AIDS by hanging out with somebody. It was ridiculous, you know? So that stuff also contributed to a lot of, um, discrimination against gay people. Gay men, especially. Not so much the women, but the gay men.

Eddy Rose [01:02:53] Well, thank you for letting me do the interview. Is there anything else you want to say in regards to what I may have missed that you think could be important for posterity reasons or whatnot?

Sandra Rose [01:03:11] No. Gosh, we covered a lot of things today. Um, I mean, I think, you know, it's important for you, yourself to know what kinds of people you come from and digging deeper into your family tree and learning more about those people from which you came on both sides of your family, what they were like, what kind of experiences they had, um, I think is really good. And so I hope these conversations pique your interest and curiosity and finding more about your family. Um, and, and I also just want to say that I'm so grateful to you and Joana because I think that the two of you are very--have inspired me a lot to think differently about things and to be open to more things. Um, because you both are such thoughtful, kind and very principled people who are very accepting of so many different kinds of people. So I thank you for that.

Eddy Rose [01:04:24] Aw, thanks, Mom.