

Nicole Hudgins Interview

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SPEAKERS

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Interviewee: Nicole Hudgins

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Do a quick intro. If that's I'm going to do a quick introduction so that we can have recorded exactly what we're doing today. Good afternoon, this is Jevona is January 16, 2024, at 2pm, I'm with my professor Nicole Hudson via the Zoom platform. And we're going to begin our oral history interview for the University of Baltimore stories, the 100th Anniversary Oral History Project. The purpose of this project is to celebrate the university's Centennial by preserving the memory of those influenced by the University of Baltimore over the years, we will be creating a digital archive and an exhibit and making these recordings available online. Good afternoon, Professor Hudson's How are you today?

Nicole Hudgins

Very well, thanks. Good to be with you.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

To be with. Okay, Professor Huggins, you know, it's kind of a little standard, I'm pretty new. But I'm also got a little get a little bit of flavor on the from this past history class of having to get through your oral, your oral stuff, some sort of prepped, at least comfortable with speaking to you can't say that about the rest of the world. So, I'm going to start with some wonderful questions. It's about 19 of them. And if you're ready,

Nicole Hudgins

I'm ready. Sure, fire away.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

So, my first question, Professor Hudgens. Where were you born?

Nicole Hudgins

I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

You were Yes.

Nicole Hudgins

And I came to the United States with my family when I was three.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Wow. Professor Hudgins. So, all this time, all these years? If you've been in my life,

Nicole Hudgins

then yeah, that I'm African. What can I say?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Wow, Professor, we never had this discussion and Okay. Wow, it's so awesome. Look at you. You do have an African nose. Can I say that?

Nicole Hudgins

I mean, Africa is a very multiethnic continent.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

that with lots of different noses. Yeah, but you have that you have that you have. You have the most distinctive one of them all. You have the standard South African distinctive nose, but honestly, I've been trying to figure out because I didn't find that your nose was like a nose. That was like a European nose because of the thickness. Right? So normally, you know, a thicker nose kind of takes it to a different region, I guess, because of all of the wonderful air and fruits and vegetables that come from out of the thicker nose regions.

Nicole Hudgins

You're going to learn all my secrets today.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yes, I am. So, thank you for letting me know where you Okay, specifically in South Africa, which area of South Africa that you grew up in?

Nicole Hudgins

Well, it's the city of Johannesburg, which is not the capital. I guess the capital is Pretoria, but it's probably the biggest city in the country.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Wow. And so, and both your parents are in Johannesburg.

Nicole Hudgins

Yes. And when they were in school before the end of apartheid, they were forced to learn Afrikaans, so they know Afrikaans.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And how about yourself? Do you know little Afrikaans?

Nicole Hudgins

No, I've been growing up it was the language my parents spoke when they didn't want us to understand what they were saying. Yeah, I never had to learn a word,

Jevona P. Anderson EI

The parents' language. But she knew that you knew the body language.

Nicole Hudgins

Yes, you got it.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

This is very much a wonderful delight to learn that about you. It makes me feel so much closer to you now for all of the reasons. Okay, so moving on just a little bit. Where do you live now coming into your life now?

Nicole Hudgins

I've lived here in Greenbelt, Maryland for like 17 years. We live in a co-op that was built. Right as World War Two started in expectation of a lot of war workers coming towards DC to do jobs. So, we've moved here, we're in a townhome and the whole community was designed for families helping with you know, home front work during World War Two.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Oh. Wow! Yeah, that is the Greenbelt community.

Nicole Hudgins

yeah, it's called Greenbelt Homes Incorporated.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And do you think that's also? One of the I think is one of the important reasons why the FBI will relocate into that area?

Nicole Hudgins

Well, we shall see. I think they're telling us that they don't want to be here. So maybe they'll end up in Virginia? Well, we'll have to see.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I thought Greenbelt wants them. I didn't know that Virginia wanted them.

Nicole Hudgins

I think they want Virginia; I don't know how anybody else feels.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I understand, hey, well, either way, I, you know, I worked with in Washington, DC for the FBI for seven years. Oh, my goodness. It started out as a teenager with my oldest brother. And he never left. We started there, like at 17, 18, 19 years old. So, he's turned 60. And he's still there since like 17, 18. And he loves it. Computer Engineer, but you know, it's easy to go up the ladder when you work for the FBI. You just got to stay there. Excellent, excellent. Question, do you drive into UBalt [University of Baltimore] at any time, or you just online.

Nicole Hudgins

These days, I'm online teaching web courses and zoom, mainly because of, I have poor health, so that it makes it more possible for me to do my full-time job as a professor in that format.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And uhm, I appreciate you being a full-time online professor. Thank you, I appreciate that. You, you are a part of how I've kind of converted my brain a little bit into the virtual world. And, and I really, really love it a lot. I really do. I love it a lot. It has its drawbacks, when you have to be around the public is just, you know, the public just, I don't know, you just we just look at them differently.

Nicole Hudgins

I know you have a question further down about you know, how teaching has changed. And with online courses versus face-to-face courses, there are always pros. And there were always cons. And you know, it just works better for different kinds of students.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Do you find that the student body up today that we are more virtual focus? Or?

Nicole Hudgins

I do? Yeah, I do. You know, I don't know if it's good or bad especially since the pandemic, the majority of students, which we have, who are adult students working full or part time, they make the online and zoom courses, the most popular and the ones that fill up the fastest. Because it makes their life easier. They can work and care for their families and pursue their degree, you know, without the frustration of trying to get to campus at a particular time.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, absolutely agree with that. That's a part of my process as well.

Nicole Hudgins

Speaking for myself, it's also a lifesaver for the disabled, who you know, for whom transit, and transport is quite harrowing.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And you're my second professor, I had Professor Donald Haynes. He's in heaven now. And it was a pleasure and an honor being his virtual student. And, you know, and he, you know, it was just nice to be with him. He wasn't the virtual world was. I think it's very important and she saved not just the

students, but we have professors that we need. And the virtual world is very important. I needed him to help me get through my policy understanding. And yes, he was an absolutely amazing policy professor. I mean, amazing.

Nicole Hudgins

Yes, because you learn that just because you're online or on Zoom doesn't mean you're unavailable, right? So, these days, instead of setting particular office hours, one day a week, as you know, I give my students access to my calendar and they can set a meeting anytime they want that's free. So, you know being present and availability is still very important, if not more.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I think it's more I, we push that button to your professor, and you're right here. And we get to drive you crazy. No different than if we walk in your door and knock on the door every day. I think that we get your attention more here than if we knocked on the door. Because at the door, you could be like, Shhhhh pretend we are not here! Yeah, I think they're very beautiful. Um, okay, Professor. Let's see here. What, where did you go to school? Let's just kind of just focus on high school. And then let's talk a little bit about college.

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, so I grew up in Houston, Texas of all places. And I went to a kind of small Episcopalian private school for about sixth grade through 12. And then I headed to Northwestern University, which is just outside of Chicago, Illinois, for undergraduate college. And do you want me to go on or?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

When, when? Because you share? Oh, I'm seeing some of the things here. Okay. And so, when you were at Northwestern University, wow, Professor, you have always loved history.

Nicole Hudgins

I confess that love of history was established in my heart, very young, because at my school growing up in Houston, I just had wonderful, charismatic, knowledgeable teachers, who taught history who looked like they were having so much fun. And I thought to myself, I want to do that, you know? So, I had that in my mind. You know, quite young.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Absolutely. And Professor, you know, I can cheat a little bit, because I do know you a little bit up in personal professor. Yours, tell me a little bit about because I'm seeing when you really like you when you went to that your PhD level, not skipping your masters. But I'm just kind of seeing how you brought something together, that you spoke about? A lot to all of us. Could you talk about that? Because I see that you've put history and photography together. What, how did that happen? How did they become married?

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, so I did my master's and PhD at the University of Virginia. And after my master's, I kind of decided I didn't want to continue with that subject, because I just thought that the sources were a little

sparse, or at the time I felt that they were so you know, we're getting a history PhD, you really have to consider carefully what your dissertation project is, because you're going to be stuck living, breathing, eating, drinking, dreaming the subject for five years, you know, so, so I thought about it, and I realized, you know, I always loved old photographs.

They always hit me as so mysterious. And make me so curious. So, I you know, I turned to photography, because I knew the topic of historical photography would sustain me, you know, intellectually and keep my interest for the long haul that is doctoral work and doctoral research and writing that that comes with that. I'm just very, very interested and I was right, and I was able to finish Thank goodness.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And Professor when it comes to your photography, what's outside of your historical lens and photography? Is there any other type of you know, like, pictures that you like to take, like, outside of you? Yeah.

Nicole Hudgins

You know, over the years, I've developed taste, you know, for Contemporary Photography, in figuring out what I like in terms of photography as an art or photography as a documentary medium, but I always Jevona, I always have to tell people I have no photographic talent whatsoever that I can't claim any of that but I do have an appreciation. Because I study its history. So, I appreciate photography. And really, my focus is how photography has been used?

You know, how have people used photography? That's kind of my ongoing main question that then goes to things like World War One, and things like women and photography, and you know, things like motion photography, all of the different projects I've done. But I'm pretty clumsy with a camera myself, I would say.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

But what I do know is that you're definitely in proper selection of understanding the usage of photographs from a historical lens. You sure, I'm talking professor, I got your words all in my mouth. This is all just from this past semester.

Nicole Hudgins

Oh, maybe it'll help.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

It's those, is from you. Like, really, I'm looking at your historian toolkit. And all of the beautiful, you know, just the different historical photographs, and even how you will,

Nicole Hudgins

yes, right. So you remember, we read that book about non textual primary sources, and I kind of encouraged all of you guys to think about images, how were they made, why were they made, how were they used and because most all of you use images, in your genealogical paper, but the, the

tendency is to use it to just stick it in there as an illustration, rather than deconstructing its origins and what it was meant, what the message was meant to be. So, I was trying to get you guys to think about that a little more.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, I thought that was really, really great. And it was, I thought it was really great. And a great new door that you gave us to access to simply do genealogy, like, because, you know, so many of us was, you know, it was very hard with finding the actual words, but it was so much easier to like, find a picture, even if it was a picture, like for me, for the time period that I was looking for, you know, like great mom picture may not be around, but and I thought that was really, really great. And I appreciate you for that, like she has just been the new way of doing things being older. That's seeing, I'm looking at now I want to go into your career a little bit with the school. So, when did you actually join the University of Baltimore? And when you did, what, what was your position?

Nicole Hudgins

Well, my prehistory before I was hired is that I did adjunct at UBalt [University of Baltimore] a couple times, probably, probably around the year, I don't know, maybe 2000, let's say early 2000s. But then later, when I had completed my PhD, I applied for Assistant Professor in the history program at UBalt [University of Baltimore], and I was hired the fall of 2009 as an assistant professor, so that's what people call the tenure track, right? So, the professor is hired as an assistant. And if she does everything that she's expected to do, then she goes up to be promoted to associate after six years. So, I started on that track.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Very good. Jessh Professor, you know, I'm following your, your track a little bit, I think. I just really admire you as my professor. But let me keep going. I don't want to get all mushy here. Because as I'm reading, and learning so much, learning about you differently. It's just, I just, you've always been one of my professors that I really, really very fond of because of how you have always approached me like I just come to you with the Moorish American stuff. I come to you with anything that I could find in a corner, and you just helped me dig it out and make sense of it.

Nicole Hudgins

When are you going to graduate?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

2025, and I aced that upper division. Writing I had to get that done and I aced it.

Nicole Hudgins

Okay, so you're going to be around for a little bit.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I got a little while little ways to go. I don't, I don't feel like I'm, you know, well-seasoned yet. Especially when it comes to my writing skills. So, I, you know, but I learned, I still got time. Let's see, back to your career. So now I see two things. What's your position? Currently?

Nicole Hudgins

I am at the end of the tenure track. I was promoted, again, to full professor. So that will be the final academic position for an instructor.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And I didn't know, but you're the directory [Director] of the history program.

Nicole Hudgins

I have been in the past, I've been the director of the history program twice in the past, currently, the director of another program called the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Hmm.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Very familiar with that program. How do you feel about the introduce the interdisciplinary program,

Nicole Hudgins

I have been teaching the required courses in that for quite a few years. And we always have fun. And students who, gosh, you know, they've collected and accumulated credits and partial programs and different careers and stages of life. And, you know, they all want to complete their bachelor's and feel like they've learned something and feel like they're prepared for succeeding in their next stage of life. So, you know, we have, we have good discussions, we all excuse me, and we all read something, some things in common. And hold on just a second. Sorry that I didn't have enough water, I ran out of water. Um, yeah. So, I've known you could call my title professor of history and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Now Professor Question, what drew you to the University of Baltimore?

Nicole Hudgins

Well, my husband and I had moved from Virginia to Maryland, in about 2003. So, he got a high school teaching job here. So, my plan was to find an academic position, somewhere around here. And it's actually a good area to job search, because you can look in Virginia, you can look in Maryland, and you can look in DC.

So, I applied to jobs in that area. And the position that the University of Baltimore came up in, in about 2008. And I had, as I mentioned, I had already adjunct at University of Baltimore, sort of teaching one class at a time here and there. So, I applied for that. And I was thrilled to get an interview and an on-campus visit. You don't know him because he retired a few years ago, but it was Jeffrey Sawyer, who had been in the history program for many years, who interviewed me and took me on a tour of the neighborhood around the University of Baltimore. And, you know, I was lucky enough to get the job.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

That's really awesome.

Nicole Hudgins

It was a good experience!

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And you've been with the University of Baltimore for a number of years.

Nicole Hudgins

Yes, I was trying to figure it out. I started 2009. And it's 2024. How much is that? It's 15

Jevona P. Anderson EI

15 years. That's quite a while? And do you see yourself continuing on for another 15 years or so?

Nicole Hudgins

Maybe let's see how I do. It's sort of health dependent. But I'll tell you, I'll never get tired of UBalt [University of Baltimore] students. You know, they're not all perfect students. But you know, the mass of the individuals in all my courses are interesting, thoughtful, creative, informative. Men and women of all ages from as you've seen, very useful [youthful?] to past retirement.

And of all the places I've taught, and that includes UVA [University of Virginia] that includes UMBC [University of Maryland Baltimore County, where else and UBalt [University of Baltimore] I just, that group of people in the classroom UBalt [University of Baltimore], is the best out of all of those for me, in my opinion. So, for that reason, it would be unlikely that I would move to another college around here, because I've sampled a few and I know what the students are like, you know what I'm saying?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, yeah, we're this always tell everyone I say the UBalt [University of Baltimore] students. At the end of the day, you know, all the other things, but we the shy students.

Nicole Hudgins

Oh, you think you're shy students?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Although we might share our thoughts. And, you know, because, you know, professors, like you really pull everything out of us. Like, you really, you guys really go in, and you pull out that knowledge, you pull out their wisdom, you pull out their confidence.

Nicole Hudgins

That's, and I've learned that the quiet ones often have the neatest things to say. So, I tried to develop techniques to encourage them, because appearances can be deceiving.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

You do that all the time. Like that's a that's, that's one of your greatest qualities, you really, you do that you sit close to the screen, like you are right now. And you can directly put all your eyes, you put it, and then you're just like so.

Nicole Hudgins

So, what did you think about that? Yeah, what did you think Jevona?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Well, why? Well, can you tell us where you got this from? Well, share your screen.

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, and what else is that? You know, I'm constantly learning from my students either point of history, but also other things like how to do things on like, technical tips and news that I didn't hear about, and suggestions and recommendations. You know, my students are constantly feeding me, which is really nice. So that's why I haven't gone anywhere. Because, you know, I like the classroom atmosphere here.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

It's really nice. And you kind of just shared what, if you have some other things that you like to share in regards to your experiences teaching at the University of Baltimore. You know, I know how to talk and carry a conversation. So, you know, we have gone from started might have started number one, but I'm pretty sure we've answered all these questions. But just kind of want to just add a little bit more, you know, you take some time and share a little bit more.

Nicole Hudgins

Well, the history program has an annual event, bringing back our alumni, a couple of alumni to campus to talk to the present-day students. And so, these alumni have now established all kinds of interesting careers. So, it's really, it's wonderful to see them successful and using their knowledge, you know, in museums, in historical societies, in classrooms, you know, high school classrooms, in libraries, in their own businesses. In graduate school, I've had several students go on to graduate school to become historians.

So that's really fulfilling for me. Events like that, where my students and Dr. Davis and Dr. Yi's students come back and share their experiences and their wisdom and how they parlayed the knowledge and skills in that in the history major or minor, to fulfilling careers that make them happy in the life that they've chosen. I thought to myself, this must be a special place that people graduate from here, and they stay part of the community. So, there is a family vibe on its best days.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

You know, you were a part of the reason why I have taken on the challenge of the role with Fatima [Fatemeh] and Aiden.

Nicole Hudgins

Are you doing this through class? Or is this a separate job?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

This became my work study job. Cool. And my guess is, I like history so much, I was just trying to figure out, you know, how I can kind of have a little bit of outside of classroom experience, and uhm, Aiden and Fatima [Fatemeh], they, you know, just give me an opportunity. I don't mind the ground level, it's good to see, like, really what we're doing. And so, I can really know what I'm talking about.

Nicole Hudgins

I think you're going to learn a lot.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, it's, it's some of the historical pieces. It's really fascinating to me that has happened in Baltimore, specifically, before I was born.

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, have you have they discussed with you, of what these oral histories are going to become? What they're going to?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Uhm, they're going to become a part of our centennial. And 2025 when we celebrate 100 years, all of the oral history interviews are being uploaded to our website, so that we can have access to it, you know, to public and have access to it in the future. But that's what this is really all about.

To really get the background from our professors and alumnus and students and, you know, to really share their experience about the [University] you know, about UBalt [University of Baltimore] all the greatness that we have and all the greatness that will happen in the future. As you can see, I'm pretty partial. I am, and most of my friends graduated from Morgan State, my dad. My dad graduated from Coppin. But I constantly have UBalt [University of Baltimore] conversations with them.

Nicole Hudgins

Well, it really is a city that learns. I mean, there's a lot of choices out there.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah it's a lot. So, what changes have you observed during your time at the University of Baltimore, if any?

Nicole Hudgins

Well, I, you know, I would say my time, in many ways, has seen more continuity than change. In the sense of how things look, and the way things are done, there's a lot of continuity, continuity, which in some ways is comforting, but in other ways can be frustrating. In the sense of there is always an ongoing conflict between a vision of the university as a public good, versus a vision of it as a business. And it's not just UBalt [University of Baltimore], it's all over the country, maybe all over the world. Uhm there's those two visions may be to some extent irreconcilable.

But on the plus side, there have been positive continuities in my 15 years here. I've always, for example, worked with awesome librarians, who you know, work together in that library to make sure

that my courses are a success, and that my scholarship is a success because I get what I need. I've always worked with compassionate problem-solving IT [Information Technology] professionals and OTS [Object Transaction Service], who have solved my problem and got me going again. And as I said, every semester I get a group of fantastic students now that's not to say they're all 100% Fantastic, but, you know, it's a good cohort of majors and minors and non-majors who put in the necessary work to, to take charge of their learning. So, I'm pretty content.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I think you might have covered this, but I think we can draw on it a little bit more. How has the university transition to a four-year institution affected the history program?

Nicole Hudgins

The question, did you ask Dr. Davis and Dr. Yi this question?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

No, this is your question.

Nicole Hudgins

Oh, because I just would have been curious to know what they said.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I haven't interviewed Dr. Davis yet. He's kind of thinks, thinks that he's going to skate around from me. But eventually, I'm going to show up at his classroom door and be like Dr. Davis, when I first started at UBalt [University of Baltimore] and we came in the building prior to COVID. You are my first history teacher, he taught me my first history class on a collegiate level.

Nicole Hudgins

Well, he needs to be interviewed for sure. So, I think I was hired because they switched to a four year. So, all the teaching and service work that I've done, has been with that. Arguably, it was a misstep.

And the reason why I say that is because that two-year finishing program sort of made unique among all of the choices and gave us a very close relationship with all of the community colleges. And by moving to four year, we gave that up and became competitors with Towson, and UMBC [University of Maryland Baltimore County] and Morgan State. And that might have been a bit too much to swallow. What do you think? Did? Does that sound right to you?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, I could, you know, it's I'm kind of hearing that just in a pattern, even in the law, law school, right, that the transition with you ball going from two to four years, it's been, it's been a great consistent change. But it's been very challenging to make that happen.

And that is because of what you said the four-year institutions were already here with their, you know, standard fraternity sorority, and we've come in through the door, you know, brand new, and shall we, I'll Mayor became our president of our school. So it was, you know, it was a lot and, but I do agree that the

four-year transition, and where we are now. You know, we are a great public, higher academic, collegiate institution. And we both definitely inherited from the law department, hearing it from you, being in the environmental science department, produce a lot of successful students from out of UBalt [University of Baltimore].

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, but of course, it wasn't President Schmoke who, you know, made that change it was the president before him. Okay. Yeah. And, you know, having kind of reasoned it out the way that I did. I will say, on the other hand, that probably the best teaching experiences I've had, was being a member of what UBalt [University of Baltimore] calls a learning community, which is specifically for freshmen, and so you kind of team up with another professor, and they go to his class and then they go to your class and, and they're really they relate to each other.

So, I did that a few times, and I really enjoyed planning a learning community with a colleague. For example, Dr. Scalet, was a philosopher. I did one with him, and seeing the excitement, getting to know the freshmen, you know, as young still young new students on campus so that that's really fun. I just wish that they could have gotten more of them. But I think it's tough in this competitive market.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah. Yeah. I don't know. Maybe the AI [Artificial Intelligence] might adjust some things for us a little bit, my brain the competition down a little bit. I'm hoping for AI [Artificial Intelligence] to do some really positive changes, period. I'm looking forward to it. I'm one thing my baby brother, my youngest, I call my baby brother, but we're older. But I have a little baby uhm my great niece.

And she just turned one, but he was speaking on for children that are that age in the future, they are mapping out their academic growth through the AI [Artificial Intelligence], specifically establishing their learning style. So, it's about but you know, like I said to him that it wasn't AI [Artificial Intelligence] in the past, but it was we definitely stopped focusing on the learning style of an individual. And that is, for me, working with young people. I clearly will say, I saw it in special ed [Special Education]. But I also see it in general ed [General Education].

So, it's, it's, it's a learning style that we have to get back to because everyone learns differently. And if we don't focus on the learning style, we're going to continue to have people feeling like they can't learn. So, you know, he shared that with me. And she's one. So, AI [Artificial Intelligence] is focusing on that type of adaptive way of learning.

Nicole Hudgins

I think about that Jevona too, especially when I plan my fully, fully online courses, my asynchronous courses, how do I ensure that different kinds of learners get their time to shine. So, with every module on Sakai or its Canvas now, week, by week, I sort of give a reading opportunity viewing opportunity or discussing opportunity, you know, so that people who learn in different ways by seeing or by reading or by talking it out, they have the opportunity to let their strengths, help them out. So, I think about that a lot.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

And it shows to, like you, you really tap into all of the senses of how a person can learn. You know, I've been your student for a while and you know, me, you know, I'm someone that I've just, I'll take forever on a sentence. But that's my learning style, you know, and in the door, you know, you keep that door open, because a part of what's needed for me or the type of learner that I am is some visuals. You know, I Okay, what are we okay, we give me a you know, I'm looking like, Okay, I got a bunch of words. Okay. So, can I see some pictures that go along with that? Right, my doors?

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, you, you and millions of others.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Exactly.

Nicole Hudgins

And, yeah, I mean, you guys, it's so important to talk to you guys. I was listening to the radio this morning. And they were talking about young voters and calling up young voters to kind of get them excited about the candidate, right. And one of the people they interviewed said, well, we under 25, many of us, we don't answer the phone. Correct. And that was, but you know, so that's why people can't get them that way. Right. Yeah. Yeah. So, learning changes and communication changes and interaction changes. And you and I might be kind of the same age, right? We have to incorporate these changes into our understanding of, of the world. Exactly.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Exactly, and my friends that are like 25, 24 they say to me that I need to pick up the phone. They said, I said to you, you're older. I said what is the difference does it make they were like, you know, the young texting thing, that's our thing. I'm like, I don't get it but so I'm over texting the 25 they don't want us to do that. But they want us to, you know, you know? I tell you because they do like if you start texting them a lot. The older people and then you know, the young people that's, you know, working with, you know, trying to be the best that they can be.

They really do have a little bit of an old spirit about them after a while. They're just like, Can I hear your voice? I'm like, Oh, okay. So, you know, it takes a long time before they show that appreciation that they'd like to hear the voice again. But, in I overtaxing to I just the same way I like to talk about texts, texts, texts them. And then after a while, they're like, you know, Miss Anderson or Miss Jevona. You know, we would like to hear from you, you [you're texting] way too much. And

Nicole Hudgins

You're the person in their life that, you know, that they can get a call from whereas all their peers' texts. By the way, on also of the subject of technology. This semester is the first semester that on I think, two of my syllabi, I'm incorporating an assignment that uses Chat GPT.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Oh wow, this is really good. This is really good. All of your students this semester is going to be like, yay. Yes, so 21st century.

Nicole Hudgins

I, you know, I try, but it will see it will be experimental, and we'll see how they do with it.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

They're going to do great. Because, you know, you're, I don't know, I'm old school, but you know, I'm, I'm the future. So, I know, they're younger than me, they are going to be just extremely excited. And they won't have to figure it out as much as because they're probably practicing right now. So, Professor, I have two more questions. And this one I am really, this one is a really, yeah, I didn't know. Um, because you don't talk about yourself in class.

Um, you are, you're simply our professor, and you are there to make sure that we know what's going on. And I just want you to know, you know, those little secrets that you've shared, where your birthplace you know, it's, you know, especially being a history teacher, it's just, you know, it's just, there's a good place just to know, like, all of that. And I'm not trying to force you to tell us everything about yourself. But I knew nothing about you, other than you are being my history teacher.

So that was really nice. And a photographer. And I didn't learn about that until this semester, and I was like, professor doesn't talk about herself at all. Um, so your work has spanned a fascinating range of topics from the ethics of war, photography, to the role of women in history of photography. Tell us about your publication. And your journey as a writer, like a publication, Professor, how is it we don't know that you have a publication? Like we didn't even we were just with you this past semester. We were talking about publication. It's kind of close.

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah. So, when I tell everybody to find scholarly publications, I know all too well what that has to have in peer review and all of that. Well, I guess my like, the first big work was my dissertation, which was my dissertation was a two-volume dissertation on the history of photography in Victorian Britain and France. And I was pretty satisfied with it. But it was only years later, contemplating it, that I was sort of thinking about the fact that all of the characters in my dissertation were men. And kind of asking myself, well, why was that the case?

And so, I got interested in gender. And my first book, I was writing about women and photography during World War One. So, you know, a generation or two later after the people in my dissertation, there was a lot of photography produced during World War One, I mean, just piled mountains of photography, but very little, by women. Even on the home front, though, you know, there was very little photography archived that was created by women.

So again, I was confronting this question of why was that? You know, you would think that during World War One with all of the men conscripted to fight on the Western or the Eastern Front, that women educated women, women with skills would have been utilized for photography needed on the Homefront, but that was not the case. And then, most recent, and then and I expanded on that in my

second book, which is called "The Gender of Photography", looking back in the 19th century, at what was masculine and what was feminine about early photography, and that's what my second book is about.

And I bring in all these very kind of interesting examples from what I call the North Atlantic world. So, photographers working in the United States, Canada, Europe and Britain. And I use the Chinese Taoist concept of yin yang to talk about the gender of photography, and its masculine and feminine traits. That was 2020. And now I'm kind of working. For the first time I'm editing a multi author, book that that is a history of photography that aims to answer the question, what did it mean to be a man in the history of photography? What privileges and what pressures shaped a mans career as a photographer in the Western world, from about 1870, to the present?

And so, there's a large literature on women and photographers, but there are no books about men photographers, why is that? Because 90% of the books about photography are about men photographers, right? But what about looking at these photographers as men? What was it about? As I said, their privileges and their pressures on them, that made them use the camera the way that they did? So that's the most current project I'm working on.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Very interesting. Professor, did you find that, like, with black and white film, that type of filming with that, you know, how you the hand, roll it type of, uhm, did you find that there was a lot of males that were creating those films back in that time period, or women are part of creating those films?

Nicole Hudgins

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. If you look at Eastman Kodak, or, you know, some of the big firms in Britain and France, there's a whole labor force in that workshop or in that building, who are women and girls, you know, helping to manufacture plates, manufacture film, develop film, mount pictures, assist in a sitting for a for a portrait, working all kinds of jobs in the in the Victorian photography studio. So, the answer is absolutely yes.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

It's very interesting.

Nicole Hudgins

A job that women were often hired to do, was we call retouching, which is what sometimes when you see a really old photograph, you'll see a little bit of hand painting on it. A blush on the cheek or your sash around the waist. Women often did the hand painting.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

I did about 12 credits from photography from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Oh, yeah, I was really pursuing an art degree. But when we got to fine arts, that's when I was like, I don't think I'm this type of artist right here. Like, I need to draw a cup? And we can't do my Miros' [Joan Miros'] work. I

can't just take something and some lines and draw a line here. So, it didn't I didn't learn until I kind of walked away from it that I can just simply be what I am, which is an improvise artists, just like some of the great artists of the world. But when you go to mica, it's not a focus on in improvise art. It's a focus on can you draw a cup.

Nicole Hudgins

I never knew that you had that experience and Mica.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

That was in my, and I'm a I'm pretty, pretty good at photography. Like, but I just love art, you know, anything that's dealing with, you know, I can keep it still and I can snap it or, you know, like I said, and improvise is no different than me, you know, standing looking at the tree and just drawing the lines and going back and put color to it. And create my own thing. But you know, all great minds have to have an art professor. Like that. Yeah, well, we go crazy.

Nicole Hudgins

And lately I've been seeing thinking not only do all soul minds have to have art, I think that we have to have music too, don't you think?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yes, I'm a DJ. And I'm a music and I'm a harmonic is a ukulele player, a piano. And I also played Kalimba. And I taught myself all but my youngest brother's a world travel musician. So, I just kind of stay in the spirit of that, that's what he does. But I am an artist. And whatever that art is, I'm a part of that. And music is music. Because I don't know, because I feel some kind of way about, you know, the things that's going on in the spiritual or religious, I was like, music is my thing. That's where I find all of those, those worlds.

I, it's safer. In the world of music, I said, music has religion, music has spirituality. So music, if it's not music, then it's a leaf outside, or pebble on the ground, you know, something like that, you know, and especially dealing with history, because history is politics, I feel. And it's got to have that balance away from politics, or it just messes with you.

Nicole Hudgins

But you know, at the same time, the other thing that really drew me to history and keeps me in history, is the romance of history, that the opportunity to use one's imagination, to think about the past, and the poignancy of thinking about those men and women who struggled before me. who survived life and triumphed or failed. And each one living and dying are crossing the ocean to come to America, to ultimately kind of produce me and you, and you know, to think about their loves and their losses and their traumas and their you know, it's it hits on a romantic nerve in me.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, that's a beautiful way to work towards our closing out. One final question, Professor, is there anything else you'd like to share to say about your time at UBalt [University of Baltimore]?

Nicole Hudgins

And not a whole lot. I you know, I just hope that the health of the university and its students keeps going and we keep learning together. And it remains as diverse and inclusive and stimulating as it has since 2009. When I got there.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Really nice. I think that covers because I was learning because you brought up Dr. Davis. And there was a there was a question on here, but you kind of answered it in your own way. But

Nicole Hudgins

Which was that?

Jevona P. Anderson EI

But I want you to hone in on it. Because when I asked the question about your; how has the university transition to a four year institution affected the history program, and you brought up Professor Davis, Dr. Davis, so I wanted to just ask you, because I thought that was very pleasant in a nice play on how the History Department team worked together. And I thought it was very delightful that you asked me that question. Why so what did he think?

Nicole Hudgins

Oh well, and Borum as well, you know, accent actually, Dr. Yi has been at UBalt [University of Baltimore] longer than me. So, she actually much more than both Josh and I would be a good person to ask because the problem with Dr. Davis and me is that we were not here before it was a four year so we don't we don't know what to compare our experience to.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

That's really a great way to answer that question because they really kind of wanted to find out your interactions, your memories. Specifically, and surrounding your colleagues, because you shared a lot about us. But just kind of, there were any specific memories of your interaction that you might wanted to share with surrounding your colleagues outside of Professor Yi, and you know, what you've just shared? Is there any extra?

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, I mean, you know, I learned how to be a professor at a university, in a division in the College of Arts and Sciences that used to be called legal, ethical and historical studies. And in that division, were philosophers, Legal Studies, experts, and historians. And we were, we were kind of together and had monthly meetings.

And by observing and by participating, I gradually learned how to serve my program, how to serve the college, how to serve the university, and I'll tell you Jevona. It was a very gray crowd, because you had mentioned Jeffrey Sawyer, who had white curly hair. Thomas Carney, who has just passed away, rest in peace, who was a sweet, loving guy, and would do anything for his colleagues. And he had white hair to white beard. And then you also had Fred guy, who was philosophy, who also had white hair. As you know, so I was for a long time, I guess, maybe BoRam. and I were the youngest faculty in that

group. And we really got the benefit of the wisdom of the elders. And there was a Betsy Nix [Elizabeth M. Nix] to us since retired, who knew everything you could, you could know about Baltimore, and its institutions. So you know, a lot of them in the last couple of years have retired.

So, we've really lost a lot of institutional memory. I mean, I think, Fred Guy [Alfred H. Guy], I think he was for well over 40 years. Wow, that's a long time. So actually, I should tell, I should tell Fatemeh that, you know, if you can get a hold of him. I mean, he could really tell you how it used to be. If you can, get in touch with him. But you know, Jeffrey, and Tom, they had been there, you know, Dr BoRam.

And Betsy, they became tenure track. But they had been there much longer than me, having started out as what was called contract employees that got annual contracts. And then they were converted to the tenure track. So, it was very ideal for me when I arrived, because I was surrounded by historians and philosophers who had a lot of teaching experience and knew a lot about the university. So, I was very, I was fortunate.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

It's really good. So

Nicole Hudgins

yeah, I miss all those guys.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

The silver haired guys

Nicole Hudgins

The silver haired guys.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Are they all pretty much retired now?

Nicole Hudgins

Yeah, Thomas passed away. Jeffrey's retired and Fred is retired.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

In their retirement, they're doing pretty well.

Nicole Hudgins

Far as I know. I haven't spoken to them in a while. But this this conversation definitely makes me feel I need to reach out to them. I think I think Fred, I think he's living his best life. I think they're traveling all over the world. They've got grandkids and doing all kinds of things with their house. Jeffrey, you know, his, his leisure activity has always been painting. So, I'm sure that he's painting, and he also went to art school before he went to, I think, the University of California for history. So, I yeah, I think they, they both had fantastic careers at UBalt [University of Baltimore] and are having good retirements too. And as emeritus professors, you know, they stay in touch with the university. They still have their university

email and library privileges. So, I think UBalt [University of Baltimore] does a pretty good job of transitioning employees to their retirement.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Yeah, well professor I want to thank you very much for today. This has been an amazing interview as my first one, thank you for getting me comfortable for the future interviews, I love learning so much about you, you are a very, very special, especially for me, because I've been with you my entire time of being at UB [University of Baltimore], UBalt [University of Baltimore]. And I really appreciate our interview today because it allowed me to learn so much more about you. And but one thing that was very defining for me, is your passion to be a professor at UBalt [University of Baltimore]. And, and keep opening those doors for all students. You know, that's something that I heard a lot in this interview today.

And, and I think for me, that's what makes you a great professor. Because that's what I experienced with you, when I'm in class, your absolute love for us as your students, and your absolute love to be a history professor that uses, you know, all of the different ways to evoke the different personalities, so that we can learn that that [different] that understanding of the different learning styles is what I have the ultimate respect for when it comes to you.

And it's also a part of one of my reasons why I didn't give up being an older student. Hmm. Yeah. Because I, you know, it happens, you know, especially when you're older, and you're trying to work on a bachelor's degree, and you know what I mean. But I that's what I appreciate you for many things I appreciate.

But that's one of my main things that I appreciate, is your ability to, to get that student that is older or younger, that doesn't know that they can do it. After a couple of weeks with you prying the way that you do, reading our work the way that you do put in your remarks those direct straightforward comments that we need to have so that we can just get out of our feelings and just to go and find the material. And you discover that we didn't find the material.

And you know that about us because that's how learning style and you discovered, oh, this student I might need to just go ahead and give them the link. Because you know, like once we click on, click on the link, you've already set it up for us to know how to move forward in that subject matter. Now, the next part of it, we might the topic, new topic might come into subject matter. You might need to get the link again. I think grow your marvelous.

Nicole Hudgins

I thank you for saying that. That means everything to us professors. And it was an honor to participate in this oral history for the centennial.

Jevona P. Anderson EI

Thank you very much Professor, you're awesome.