

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Janis Sanchez-Hucles

Interviewed by Alexandra Rutherford

San Antonio, TX

February 4, 2006

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JSH: Janis Sanchez-Hucles, Interview participant

AR: Alexandra Rutherford, Interviewer

AR – Okay, so what I'll have you to do first is state your full name and place and date of birth.

JSH – Sure, Janis Valentina Sanchez-Hucles and I was born October 29, 1951 in New York.

AR – Okay great. Well let me start with an easy question, I think it's easy anyway. When did you first get involved with Division 35, the Society for Psychology of Women. How and when did that happen?

JSH – It's interesting, I've been asked that sometimes by folks who have just gotten involved more recently. I think I went to APA in '85, I believe it was in Los Angeles, and somebody told me something about women in psychology and she grabbed me. Yes, I remember, it was somebody who was working for the Center for Disease Control I believe, and she said, 'Come on and go over to Division 35.' So I went and...was very intimidated, because all these people that I had read about and that were famous were sitting around the room. I did not open my mouth, I just listened. Then I think the person who brought me didn't stay active in the Division, so I think that I left for a while and I was active in SEPA [Southeastern Psychological Association].

And I was slow getting mentored, and the whole idea of going to conventions and doing presentations was a little bit slow in coming. So I went to SEPA, gave a few presentations, and was able to meet Pam Reid [Pamela Trotman Reid].

AR – Oh great.

JSH – And she was one of my first real conduits to the Division. She was so supportive. I was a discussant one time and she came up to me and said 'That was a great job'; she just kind of built my confidence. And finally after a few years of seeing her at SEPA, she said, 'I'm going to be president of Division 35 and you need to come and join Division 35 and start a task force.' And I said, 'On what?' She said, 'It doesn't matter. I'm going to be president, I'm going to have a task force, and I want you there.'

AR – Great.

JSH – So I found that very amazing.

AR – Yeah, yeah.

JSH – But you know, when Pam says things, I listened. So I found myself going to the meeting. I think the meeting was in New York, and since I'm from New York, it was nice because I wound up going and staying with my parents and going to the meeting. And again, it was an eye-opening experience; incredible dialogue, incredible discussion. And I had a task force. I think that task force was looking at the lives of ethnic minority women and mental health needs.

AR – Oh great.

JSH – So I started putting together some resources for that and people were incredibly supportive and one thing just led to another. Pam gave me that assignment and then she asked me to simply facilitate a discussion on urban initiatives in psychology, because that was a topic that had come up. And after I had facilitated the discussion, she said, 'Great job.' Dorothy Cantor was elected president and Dorothy Cantor asked for individuals to nominate someone to serve on a task force on urban initiatives, and Pam being the mentor and facilitator that she is said, 'Janis, I'm sending you forth.'

And it really started for Division 35, for me then to move on to my first task force, which became a committee, and I became a chair of that committee, and I wound up getting involved in council from Division 35, other committees, and serving on presidential task forces. I used to have this standing joke with Henry Tomes because he kept saying, 'I need to get you more involved in APA' and I'd say, 'Henry, I'm really involved as it is!' But it all started really from Pam reaching out and suggesting that I come to Division 35.

AR – Yeah. That was really powerful to have that connection.

JSH – Yes.

AR – Well tell me, that would have been, would you say about 20 years ago?

JSH – Actually it was 1990.

AR – Right, so that was your kind of second...

JSH – Yes.

AR – And you were asked to, or you decided, to put together a task force on ethnic minority women and mental health.

JSH – Yes.

AR – And at that point, in your recollection of the Division's history, how much attention did Division 35 pay to ethnic minority issues?

JSH – I can't speak for before I became involved, but I know that in '85 there was a group of women there, and there was a Section on Black Women, Section 1, and I did go to that meeting. I know that there was some attention being paid to diversity in the mid-eighties at least. I think though, that when I went back in 1990, we weren't really throwing around terms like multiculturalism and diversity. And in fact, for my own writing, research, and teaching, I found that there were very few resources on ethnic minority women, which was why I was putting together some materials. And I think just a few years later Bev Greene and Lillian Comas-Diaz came out with their great book. But at that point I was having a very difficult time finding resources. So I would say that I don't think there were a lot of dialogues about diversity and multiculturalism. I don't think there were very many women of colour around the table.

AR – Right.

JSH – And I think that's one of the things that Pam did. She really reached out to women of colour to try to get them involved in the division.

AR – Right. The reason I was actually thinking about this is that I was just listening at the tail end of today [5:19] and summarizing the themes, and multiculturalism, diversity, inclusiveness, are so prominent right now. But there's a history to that, because it hasn't always been that way.

JSH – Yes.

AR – So it's kind of interesting getting people's perspectives on that. I know the Section on Black Women started fairly early in the division's history.

JSH – Yes.

AR – But then that wasn't followed until somewhat later by...Latina...

JSH – Yes.

AR – And then the other sections. Well, the Asian American women are still...

JSH – Right, it's not a section yet, it's still a task force.

AR – Yes. So I was just curious about that.

JSH – Yes. It's still evolving.

AR – Yeah. So let's talk more generally about your identity, first your identity as a feminist. How did that develop for you?

JSH – That's an interesting one too because I grew up during the civil rights era and there was very strong prohibition against thinking about sexism and identifying as a feminist. The notion was that race came first, it was our primary oppression, and that you were a traitor to the cause [6:21] if you were concerned about women's issues. And I think that in college, you know, we did the protesting and the sitting in. And I remember being troubled by the thought, but I think that I had not been...I really wasn't conscious yet of how gender mediates so many experiences. But I think that I started paying a little attention to that in college, not a lot though. I think in graduate school, as I started reading more and doing more research, it became more of an interest. But I have to credit the folks at Old Dominion University. Nancy Bazin was our first director of women's studies, and she would doggedly invite me to come and give seminars for women's studies. And in order to give the seminars, I would have to go out and read. And as I started reading at that point, I really felt that this was a missing piece, in terms of my development, and that it was impossible for me to ignore sexism; that I had to look at the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and geographic region. That started coming together for me. And so I think that was why when I went to 35, that it felt like a home to me, because it was one of the few places where I felt that I didn't have to divide myself up. I felt that in other places, I'm involved in a lot of coalitions that deal with race, I'm involved in a lot of caucuses that deal with gender, but in 35, I don't feel like I have to sacrifice one for the other.

So I feel as though coming to 35 had a very inclusive feminist agenda. I think that individuals felt comfortable talking about difficult subjects. I think what's great about 35 is that it's not as though we do everything right, but I think we're willing to take the time and energy to process things, to consider issues, and to try to get better at being more inclusive and to see multiple perspectives. So I really feel that it's really a home that really does embrace intersecting identities. [8:33]

AR – One of the things that you mentioned was having difficult dialogues.

JSH – Yes.

AR - I know that there's a fairly recent period in the division's history, which was actually just when I started getting involved so I don't actually have a memory, the context, but I know that there was a period, I guess it was during Jan Yoder's presidency, I can't even remember, where the division went through some difficult dialogues. Can you talk about that and give us some context about how those came about and what happened.

JSH – Well I'm not sure that I can focus specifically on one person. I would say that during the time I've been involved, there have been many difficult dialogues.

AR – Okay.

JSH - And I credit Division 35 because I sometimes hear stories about when issues come up in other divisions, that it's really swept under the carpet, it's discussed in the hallways, but it's never discussed around the table. And I think the leadership in our division, as well as the members...there's always been somebody or some group of individuals who has said, 'This has happened and we need to talk about it.' And it's been difficult. There have been strong emotions, there have been disagreements, but I really feel as though the context is that we're willing to take the time and the energy to try to see different sides and to see if we can work to some resolution.

I think the issues at times have involved people making a thoughtless comment. I would say that at times what has happened is that I don't think we've always mentored people as much as we've needed to. So when someone would come in in a particular position and there would be some misunderstanding, and when race was involved, in particular when race was involved I would say, there would be the conclusion that the division or someone had been racist. And so I think that time had to be taken to really unravel...that in many cases it wasn't necessarily racism - there really was a misunderstanding, but the participants were of different races.

So I've seen a lot of those. There have been different incidences that have come up and I think that sometimes we hold our breath at a meeting to see if we'll get through the meeting without there being something that precipitates a difficult dialogue. But I think the advantage of having those difficult dialogues is that it has convinced many of us that we can survive them. That although they're difficult, they're productive, and they give us skills that enable us to be even more effective with other difficult dialogues. I think that for me, having watched them, I am much more sensitive now to looking for the cues that something may be developing, trying to figure out when we can take a break, trying to figure out when we need to do something around the table versus in small sessions, or one-on-one. And I've actually told Division 35 on several occasions that I think we've developed some real great skills and competencies that we should write up, and that at times might be useful for helping other groups.

AR - Yeah. I've kind of noticed, and I hope I don't embarrass you, but I've noticed that you play that role very effectively in our division, of being someone who can coordinate those dialogues and bring those things up when they need to be brought up. That's really neat.

JSH - Well thank you.

AR - Well let me go back again to something you said earlier about your identity as a woman of colour, especially growing up during the civil rights movement. Can you tell me how that, that identity, not only as a woman, or a feminist woman, but as a woman of colour, how that has influenced your thinking in psychology, the kind of work you do, and so on.

JSH – Sure. I have a Cuban grandfather and I think my maternal side is southern and my paternal side is more New York, Cuba, Caribbean. [12:46] And I grew up in a very large, warm, extended family. I'm the eldest of six, so I have some parental-child issues and mother complexes, but I remember coming home from graduate school, someone dropped me off and said, 'Everyone should come home to a family like yours, because everyone comes out and hugs and kisses.' So I think my context was one of understanding relationships. I'm really interested in understanding relationships and I really am very curious. I'm a why person and I frequently get in trouble for asking why questions. I've always done that all my life. My first plans were to go into medicine, I was interested in pediatrics. And I think I really had that goal until my senior year of high school, when I met a clinical psychologist who came for career day. And when I listened to what she did, it was my first time, because when I grew up there weren't TV shows that showed psychologists on TV. I had never heard of clinical psychologists until my senior year in high school. And I was very intrigued because she seemed to bring the scientific inquiry, the why, the theory, the concepts, to human relationships.

So when I went to college I switched into psychology and I followed psychology. And I remember one other incident was my cousin Cheryl who had gone to Morgan State, she is a bit older, and I think it was about seventh or eighth grade, and she showed me this huge volume on Freud. And I remember just starting to read it and thinking this is really intriguing. And it kind of made me start thinking about relationships and motivation. So I think with that kind of background, when I heard about the clinical psychology, it really was a connection for me, and when I started taking courses in college, I really loved it. And then I think what happened for me was that I started thinking, okay, where do you go with a psychology degree? And I heard more about clinical psychology and I think my first mandate was, as I looked around, most of the people of colour that I knew had no interactions with psychologists and with mental health professionals. And so I felt as though perhaps one thing I could do would be to become a psychologist, but then to translate that information into a form that would be useful to people of colour, because I felt like they were disconnected. I felt like there was a lot that could be offered but in my community of colour, people never talked about psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health workers. You know, if you were sick...it's sort of like the movie *Soul Food*, everybody has an uncle Pete that was sort of unusual or weird, but the notion that you would seek help for them, you didn't really talk very much about.

AR – Right.

JSH - So I think that for me, my interest was to understand more about treatment options, intervention options, and to be able to make them appropriate so that we could service more diverse individuals. I was interested in making research that more relevant to people of colour and I always had this important desire to not to write articles and research findings that only other psychologists read. I really wanted to be able to find a way to take the things that we knew and to present them to people in diverse arenas so that lots of people could benefit from the knowledge we had.

AR – I see. As you pursued a career in psychology, and clinical psychology specifically, did you have mentors?

JSH – Yes, and I would say that I think it's been an interesting process. I love going back and trying to think about mentors and role models. I would say that the nice part is that I went to Swarthmore College and they had wonderful faculty, very supportive individuals. I think that what I learned early on is that if I wrote a term paper, an optional term paper, I was able to get to know the professor better, I could learn more about the discipline. So I had a wonderful opportunity to grow there and I'm very thankful for that. But I was also very intimidated, particularly as a person of colour, at Swarthmore. I did not do a lot of the babysitting of the faculty, or getting to know them socially. So I feel that I wasn't doing a lot of research - that was very intimidating for me; the idea of doing research with a professor. So I think that when I went to graduate school, I still was a little bit intimidated and distant from professors. But again, I went to University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and there were some faculty there that were very, very supportive. My major professor was Dr. David Galinski who was very encouraging and very supportive. Benedict Graylittle, Joseph Lowman, these were three folks that I worked with very closely who I would say, just kind of encouraged me to believe that, you're going to get through this and you're going to be fine. There was never really the sense of, there's going to be a problem here, we just expect you to be successful. And I think that was very affirming for me.

I would say that during the time I went through graduate school though - again, I didn't do the kinds of things that I now try to do with my graduate students - I think part of it is that I didn't reach out for it. So I think that they were very supportive and I think that, for instance, some of the folks I know in graduate school now have become more mentors later on, but maybe I didn't know enough to ask them how to be mentors to me when I was in graduate school.

AR – Yeah.

JSH – Originally I planned to go into community mental health and work full-time at a community mental health centre. But right as I was finishing up my dissertation, the funding for those centres died. While I was finishing up my dissertation I wound up applying for a job at a college, just part-time. And fortuitously, Old Dominion University was looking for people who were more clinically oriented and had a lot of interest in practitioner skills. But I tell people all the time that it was just the grace of God that I got through the interview. They were very accepting, and, I'll just put in nicely, they were willing to consider diversity in their hiring decision, because I had never been mentored as to what to do for a job interview in academia.

AR – Right.

JSH - And that's not someone else's fault, I just didn't understand all the dimensions that were involved, all the things you were supposed to do, all the things that you were supposed to prepare for.

So I would say that I probably did not get a lot of mentoring until I actually started working, and then I think my first mentors were my peers. We had a junior faculty club and some of my peers who were hired the same year had had much more mentoring than I had and they actually mentored me and gave me advice. And then as I started reaching out to Division 35, they were wonderful. I found mentors in Division 35 so that when I went up for tenure people told me, well this is what you have to do. I would say that the other group of mentors that I had were people like A. J. Franklin and Nancy Boyd Franklin, who were friends of mine. I went to college with Nancy, I introduced her to A. J., and they would always help out for every important professional decision or guidepost. So I think that those were two people that I always considered family friends, who were there. But I would say that in terms of professional mentoring when I was going to graduate school, that was a little bit harder for me.

AR – Yeah, right.

JSH – And I still think - I had an experience in administration not too long ago [20:46] I was really surprised to find that it still seems to matter who your mentors are. And what I found was that those individuals who had white male mentors wound up being much more protected, made many more advances, than those of us who have to rely on peer mentors, same gender mentors, or maybe same race mentors.

AR – Yeah. Were there other students of colour at UNC Chapel Hill when you were a grad student there?

JSH – Well things that were always a surprise to me were [21:19] that even though I went there in the seventies and finished in the eighties, I was surprised that when I first went there, there had not been a person of colour who had graduated with a doctorate. And that really surprised me because I didn't feel like there would still be firsts. I think I found out as I was finishing up that someone who entered the program around the same time as I did [*was also finishing up*]; I think she finished that May and I finished in August. So I think she was the first person and I was the second person, and this is in 1980.

AR – Right.

JSH – And so it still surprises me that the progress had been so slow. [21:56]

AR – I'm curious, how did you get from New York to North Carolina.

JSH – Good question. I think that what wound up happening is that I'd always been in the northeast and I would up applying to a lot of schools in New York. And I'm really kind of a wuss when it comes to venturesomeness, but I think that I really thought that I should try something a little bit different than the northeast. And I had visited Virginia with my partner, who later became my husband, and I think that I loved Virginia. I actually didn't have the money when I was in college to go around and visit graduate

schools. So what I did was I talked with some of my friends who had a lot of money to visit and I sort of benefited from them. So one of my friends told me, 'You know what, I think you'd be great at Chapel Hill.' We talked about the different places we were applying, we had some similar interests, and she said 'It's a real clinical place, they'll do research, and it's a beautiful campus.' So I really think that in my mind I started thinking, you need to try something different, number one. Number two, you may wind up living in the south, and I had a lot of stereotypes about the south and my family had a lot of stereotypes about the south. So I said this would be a good challenge for me, to try graduate school in the south. And number three, having grown up with cold dreary winters, I was ready for sunshine and warm weather. So I was willing to try Chapel Hill and it was a huge culture shock for me, but I'm glad I went there. I felt as though I learned a lot about a different geographic region, and because we live in Virginia, I think it was really good preparation.

AR – Right, right. And then to keep going on, chronologically, you applied at Old Dominion and you were hired?

JSH – Right.

AR – And you've spent the rest of your career there, as far as I can tell?

JSH – Yes, and it really is still a shock to me because I didn't even apply, and you know life is so strange, they didn't have a job. I just happened to be going to - I went to Old Dominion University, to another university, just to see if I could solicit participants for my dissertation research. And we talked about that in these two places and I said, 'Oh by the way, I would love to do some part time teaching if that's available.' And what happened at Old Dominion University is the two gentleman I was meeting with, Tom Cash and Dan Bardell, were just really encouraging and they were like looking at each other and they go, 'Gee, this could be interesting; female, African American, Latina, she just sort of fills a lot of spots here.' And the university was considered then an urban university and there was starting to be more females and more people of colour attending. And actually, the chair of the department, Ray Kirby, was the person who had the vision, when they came back, to say, 'You know what, we should pursue this.' So I didn't even do a formal job application. I wasn't responding to an ad, I just inquired about part time teaching. And that was why it was a little bit quick for me, because one minute I'm applying for part-time teaching and now all of a sudden there's a possibility of a tenure-track, assistant professor job, and this is a person who had never considered academia as a full-time job.

AR – Right.

JSH – So I tell my students all the time that when you go to graduate school and you say to yourself, 'Oh gee, I don't need to pay attention to research, I don't need to pay attention to statistics, I'm not going to be using this', you don't know.

AR – Yeah. How was that transition for you, from being a person who really saw herself working in a community mental health centre and translating the tools of psychology so that they were relevant for people of colour, to being in an academic post, now admittedly, a clinical post, but still, how did you make that work for you?

JSH – It was really challenging to my sense of self initially, and because I had never sat around thinking that I would be working in academia, every time the chair said, ‘Let’s meet,’ I really had this fantasy that it was like going to the principal’s office and he was going to say that there was something unacceptable about my work. So I sort of lived in fear for awhile. One of the things that made it easier for me was that after I was hired, they asked me to work quarter-time in the university counseling centre. So I think that actually helped my transition because it allowed me to do clinical work [26:28], supervision, and stay in touch with people who provided direct services. But the other side of it was that I found I loved it. I found that I loved teaching, and I always loved teaching. When I was younger, with being the big sister, I would always play school and I was always the teacher. So teaching was wonderful. The students were exciting. I really got involved very early on, because of my ethnic background, service is something that I love doing, and so I got invitations to do everything in the university and everything in the community, and I enjoyed that. I got the opportunity to do training, and then the research part; my initial contract really didn’t push the research. It really said, you know, major clinical responsibilities, teaching responsibilities. But what I noticed in terms of my evaluations was that although I did those things great, I saw that the better financial rewards went to people who started publishing. And although I may be a slow learner, I did learn that you need to look at what the reward contingencies are.

So I then started working with some colleagues, and they said, start out, you know, do some collaborative research. And I started doing that and I think it was back in 1983 that I got together with some folks from the health sciences and we wrote a grant for training folks in the health sciences, and started to do some research in that area. So again, I feel very fortunate that I had supportive colleagues who started me on the process of writing grants, getting published, and doing research. So that part came a little bit slower, but you know, it’s fascinating to be able to have the opportunity to read articles, to read books, to try to translate that into articles that are going to be of use to other people, and to inform the teaching. So even though it was not something that I planned on, I found that it was really a natural fit for me.

AR – Yeah, yeah. Well let me get you to reflect a little bit on this idea of making clinical psychology, or applied psychology, relevant for ethnic minority populations. Where do you think we’re at with that project? What’s your assessment of the challenges and the advances in that area?

JSH – I think that we’re making a lot of progress because I started working in private practice a few hours a week in 1980. And when I started in 1980, my case load was predominantly white. In fact, one of my few black couples, I was seeing the female and she wanted her husband to come in, and the way she got him to come in was to say, ‘Dr. Sanchez hardly sees any other Black people, she mainly sees white people, so that means

that she's really good.' So I remember in 1980 it was hard for me to get people of colour to come out.

Now I would say that the majority of my clients are people of colour. I think that what that reflects is that people of colour are a) more willing to seek services beyond their family, the ministers, the community, and b) I have a lot of individuals who call me and say 'I want a woman of colour as a therapist.' And so I think that there is a great deal of sophistication and a greater sense that I can ask for what I need and get that. So I think that we have made some progress. I also think that even in the black press, in the media, we're talking about mental health issues, we're talking about HIV status, we're talking about depression, we're talking about relationship issues, we're talking about homosexuality, and anxiety, and we're even talking about the mind-body connection, so that we increasingly have physicians who are saying to me, who are saying to their clients, 'You know, there might be something going on with this stress, maybe you should see a psychologist.' I have dermatologists, you know, Katherine Treehurn in our area who refers clients to me, because many individuals who are experiencing hair loss, or skin problems, are experiencing stress.

So I feel, personally, that the African American community has made tremendous progress. I also wound up seeing Latinos/Latinas and I think that it's been a little slower growth, for where I am, in terms of the acceptance of looking for help. But I live in an area where there is a lot of military and so a lot of these individuals are encouraged, and they are going to get the insurance to pay for it, so I've really seen a growth in terms of my populations, in terms of availing themselves of mental health services.

AR – And what about resources for therapists who want to work with an ethnically diverse client base, how has that developed?

JSH – What do you mean in terms of resources?

AR – I mean in terms of training for people who want to work with ethnically diverse populations, because the United States and North America are becoming increasingly diverse. A lot of the themes that are coming out of these interviews... Laura Brown said something like, multiculturalism is a force that is not going to be stopped and psychology has to keep up with it or else it's going to be irrelevant.

JSH – I guess I still feel some concerns. Even though we hear the term multiculturalism a lot, we hear diversity, my concern is that most of our research really still is based on middle income, white, males. In terms of teaching, you know there's a whole generation of folks out there who weren't trained in multiculturalism and diversity, who are teaching our courses. And so I think that there are a lot of folks who are really not including these different perspectives. So the training really does concern me. I think that we're writing articles, we're talking about guidelines, we're trying to explain how to implement these guidelines, but I think that there are some people who are very open to this and I think there are a lot of people who really just think that this is going to go away. And we know what the demographics are saying, but I think people still ignore that. So I really am

concerned about how...I don't know the answer to, how do we make sure that we are preparing culturally competent researchers, teachers, trainers, therapists. I think that some places do a great job; I think that some places do an okay or hit-or-miss job, and I think some places are not doing anything at all.

AR – Yeah, yeah. That was certainly, just as a personal aside, which we will probably edit out, but the clinical training program I went through did that line in the accreditation report that 'Oh, well, we don't have a course in multiculturalism, but we talk about it in all our courses' which was a complete lie. I mean that would be ideal, if diversity was incorporated as a core feature of every single course. But I mean, there was nothing. And now as a faculty member I look at that kind of stuff and I just think that it's so irresponsible, it's doing a disservice to your students.

JSH – Yes. And to the consumers.

AR – And to the consumers. And Toronto is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Anyway, I'm not going to go on.

JSH – But I think that you raise an important issue when it comes to cultural competence, because I remember one of the definitions Bev Greene and I came up with in one of our publications was that the major issue is that it's of service to the consumer, it is for the protection of the consumer. And I really think that people want to talk about academic freedom, and I shouldn't have to include this material, or if it is included there is no accountability guidelines for us to assess whether someone has been able to demonstrate their, sort of, minimum proficiency required. So I think that we are still struggling with how do we assess cultural competency, how do we define it, how do we know when someone has achieved enough of it for us to allow people to work. And I think one of the things that I'm also intrigued by is that we do focus a lot of the attention on European Americans being able to treat diverse clients of different races, but the part that I'm intrigued by is that there is an assumption that people of colour are proficient to treat whites. There's very little that gets done with the other side. Now again, I think that people of colour usually have to be bicultural or multicultural, so some of that makes sense, but I hope that one of the things that will happen in the multicultural movement is that there is a recognition that all of us carry certain biases and baggage and that we need to look at that interaction very closely to make sure that we're providing effective treatment, no matter what our demographic variables are.

AR – Yeah, that would be a sign that we really hit the...

JSH – Yes.

AR – Let me switch gears a little bit. I noticed from your CV that you are a member of the Association of Black Psychologists as well. How prominent has that organization been in your career?

JSH – Well actually I would say that I probably have been a member more recently of our local Association of Black Psychologists. I have not been involved very much nationally.

AR – Okay.

JSH - I actually, though, helped start the ABPsi chapter when I was in graduate school down in North Carolina and then we also helped start a chapter in Virginia. I think that it's been great to bring together African American psychologists in these areas, to be supportive, to be able to provide referrals. And I think that there are a lot of resources that ABPsi has in terms of getting their messages out that helps the African American public. But I have found that I can be supportive of ABPsi, but because I got involved in APA, I have found it difficult. Some of my colleagues, with much more energy, have managed to do both. But at a certain point with our children growing up, I decided that I had gotten involved in APA, and for me, it really did allow me to deal with the gender piece as well as the race piece, and that was very important to me. So I have probably spent much more time with APA than I have with the ABPsi activities.

AR – Right. Well that leads to my next question. You have been so involved in so many different aspects of APA, not just 35, but briefly skimming over your CV, you've obviously been on council, you've been a member of CWP.

JSH – No, not CWP. BEA.

AR – BEA, yeah, Board of Educational Affairs, the Committee on the Structure and Function of Council, I mean these are just a few. So you've been heavily involved in APA at a lot of different levels. What have your experiences of working within APA governance been like? What have you learned? What have been some of the challenges as a feminist woman of colour working in APA governance?

JSH – Well the wonderful answer is that the reason why I do it is because I love it. I have told people over and over that coming to APA, whether it's Division 35 or most of the different committees, allows me to be who I am. It allows me to dialogue, use theory, use facts, use the skills that I have as a psychologist to come up with an agenda (38:17) and try to implement them. I would say that obviously on council, during the time that I was on council, there was a lot going on that was political and you had to figure out when to stand up, when to sit down. I would say that, again, there were a lot of groups that I have participated in, in which being a feminist made people look at me with a little bit of suspicion. But I would say that there is enough of a presence of other women who have feminist interests, so I never really felt marginalized or isolated.

AR – Okay

JSH - I think my experiences with APA have been wonderful. First of all, I think their staff is incredible and probably never get the credit that they deserve for the incredible work that they do and the way that they always, sort of, go in the background. So I feel

as though I've learned so much from APA staff, number one. And I think that the individuals who have chosen to volunteer for these committees, I have learned so much from them. And I have been mentored in many cases by the individuals that have been on the committees. When I was on the urban initiatives committee, Dorothy Cantor was president; wonderful mentor. That whole committee, I learned things from them. So for me it's always been very reciprocal.

I almost feel guilty in the sense that maybe I'm doing some service for APA, but I feel like I get more out of it than I've been able to really contribute. People also always tease me; I feel like Shogun (39:45). People say, don't you want to be president of this and president of that, but I really love being able to make a difference, however small, on trying to develop an agenda, trying to communicate an idea. I love it when we try to collaborate within APA, and particularly when we take that message outside and try to collaborate with other organizations. And that was one of the things I really loved with the urban initiatives committee, that we went out and did things with people in education, we went out and did work with police officers, we went out and dealt with mayors. I love the idea of helping people see psychology in a broader sense; that it's not about shrinking heads. That there are so many skills and competencies that psychologists have that really cut across so many disciplines and so many professions.

AR – And some of your recent work, I mean you have a lot of different areas that you cover, but it seems like one of the themes is race, ethnicity, gender, and the intersections and so on.

JSH – Yes.

AR - One of the things you've been doing lately is talking and writing about feminist leadership, and it certainly appears to me that you are a model of feminist leadership. So what kind of advice would you give feminists, young women coming into psychology who want to develop as, kind of, potential leaders?

JSH – Well, I think that even your question is a wonderful framing in the sense that, I think, as you frame that question, I still don't see myself as a leader, number one. And number two, I don't think I've ever entered anything wanting to be a leader, and in that respect, I think that I'm like many other women, and particularly diverse women. And one of the things that we really see happening in the book that Jean Lau Chin is doing, with Bernice Lott, Joy Rice, and myself, is that many women wind up doing what we like doing, doing what we think is important to do, and other people call it leadership, whereas we're just calling it doing what we need to do. So I would say to other women, find your passion, find out what you love to do, and then figure out how you can do it the best way possible. Now the part that I would add based on my own experiences is not to be afraid to step out of your comfort zone, because I think that that is what I've had to do. I didn't realize this until my mom was teasing me one day and she said, 'I can't believe you give speeches in front of big audiences', and then I sort of thought, 'I can't believe it either.'

People are surprised that I'm an introvert, but I talked to my roommate, one of the future leaders, Edna Esnil, and we were just talking about finding your voice. And I told her that when I first came to Division 35 I didn't open my mouth. Now people tease me that they kind of want to rein [42:47] me in. But I feel like it's just a matter of, if you care enough about something, you're willing to take the time and energy to work at it, and you wind up asking that first question, making the first comment, volunteering for a project. I would encourage people to find a mentor and I think it's almost a catch-22, because when you really need a mentor, that's when I think it's hard sometimes to understand how to ask for it. But I would say to look for people who seem approachable, and even sometimes when someone doesn't, to ask maybe for specific questions. I find that asking me to be a mentor, personally, is probably not as useful as your saying to me, 'Janis I need help with X', or, could you help me understand how counsel works, or could you tell me how to write a report, or how to get a budget request approved. So I understand that sometimes people just feel very overwhelmed when people say, could you mentor me, but I really think that if people can figure out what it is they need help with, even if it's to ask someone to give them a little time to help them figure out what they may need help with. But I would say to not be afraid to step out, not be afraid to be out there alone sometimes, not be afraid to maybe collaborate with other people if you share some interest, and that you might be really surprised at what you can do if you take the risk of being willing to be upfront a little bit, and be willing to be seen as a leader, even though that self-concept may feel very foreign to you.

AR – Right. Let me ask a little bit about how you balance the demands of your professional career with your personal life. I know you have a family, and you're really involved with your family, well just because I've heard you talk about your daughter and her wonderful accomplishments. I have that APA Monitor article that came out recently about your work with athletes and getting more women of colour entered in athletics, and so on. So let me ask the question, how do you balance? How does that work for you, balancing personal and professional? [45:01]

JSH – Well I think that's an ongoing challenge and I cannot say that I've always done a very good job of it. I think that for me, I'm always amazed at how people look at me. I remember when my career first started I had several friends say to me, 'Oh, you're such a workaholic, you're so career focused', and that's interesting because for me, my family has always come first.

I think that I have had two children who have been All Americans in more than one sport, so I feel as though what I try to do is I closet that one. I only recently tell the APA people about that. I don't tell the people at work sometimes about that because there are these different personas that you have to have when you're a soccer mom, or a basketball mom, or lacrosse mom, versus when you're a psychologist.

So I think that there's always competing priorities that all of us face. I think that one of the things that I've started trying to do better is, because my children became so interested in athletics and I wound up being appointed the faculty university representative for athletics at our university, it seemed natural for me to start thinking

more about how to do workshops, maybe even do some writing, about the connections of sports psychology with some of the work that I do. So I think I've tried to look for where there's overlap and to try to be more efficient by combining my interests in ways that maybe I can get published or maybe I can do a presentation. So I think that's one thing that I try to do.

I also try to let some of my different interests...allow me to be recharged and to be interested. I tell people that what I love about my job is that I get to do so many different things and what I hate about my job is that I get to do so many different things. So for me, as you can tell from my CV, I have a hard time saying no to things. I have a hard time...I've never been a person who could say this is my one area of research. I really do like to be open and spontaneous about looking at different things. I would say though in terms of balancing things, I have a very supportive partner, which has been great. I think that I probably went through a period when I was working on being a professor where I feel as though I didn't do such a good job of balancing. [47:18] I think I did a lot of the stay up too late, pushing. I did not do a lot of the eating properly, exercising properly. So I think that I go through periods where I don't think I'm very balanced, but I also have found that there are folks from APA that have helped me to say, 'okay, you need to make sure that you're nurturing yourself.' I've had great conversations with Norman Anderson about meditation. When I met him back before he was as famous as he is now, we had a conversation about a movie that had a lot of spiritual truths in it. And I really hear a lot of people in APA talk about exercising, meditation, and I think that that's what I've tried to include in my life in terms of balance. I believe in prayer, meditation, exercise, trying to do things in moderation, which is not very easy for me. And I just think that I keep trying to figure out how to get it better as I go along.

AR – And how has your university been in supporting you as a woman professional?

JSH – I have been very very fortunate in that because I came into a department where they had only had, I think, one female with a PhD, prior to when my cohorts and I arrived. And I think that person wound up leaving and being unhappy. So when I entered with three other female cohorts I think our department had already said, 'Okay, we didn't get it right the first time, what do we need to do this time?'

AR – Right.

JSH – And what was kind of unique was that when I started work at Old Dominion University my daughter was a year old and I wound up having my son three years later. And at that time, I was the only female, young female, with children. But they were supportive. I didn't feel like there were conflicts. There was flexibility in terms of when I taught classes and I didn't really feel that there was a major conflict. I think that my partner and I sort of arranged our schedules; he's a university professor as well. So I think that we were able to work it out and I think that we felt pretty fortunate in some ways that there were times that we could really be there for our children and yet we could balance responsibilities of work. I do think it was a lot harder trying to deal with the picking up of the kids after school, and the carpools, and the practices, that kind of thing.

AR – Yeah.

JSH - But I got some very good advice from some friends at our children's school that just reminded us that the children would grow up faster than we could believe and that you could not postpone being there for the activities that were important to your children. And so I made that a priority and I am so glad that I did.

So I really felt that I had the opportunity to balance family and work and I think that being able to be happy with my family life made me better at my work, and being able to do so many great things in my work really benefited my family life. [50:36]

AR – Is there anything that I haven't asked about, about your career, about your experiences as a psychologist, that you feel would be important to share in this outlet?

JSH – I would say that probably the biggest thing I would like to share...I think there are two messages that I would like to share. The first message is that I do a lot of work trying to encourage women minorities to enter the sciences, to enter information technology and computers. And one of the things that I try to explain to these students, and mainly to administrators and professors, is that the wonderful things that we have found that work for women minorities, work wonderfully for majority members and for men also. So I think that the multicultural movement, the diversity movement, it is not something that subtracts in any way. It really enhances and provides benefits to everyone involved; it's not remedial in any way. [51:40]

I think the second message I would give is that you should not let anything stop you from reaching your goal. And I just think that it's very easy for those of us who may be female, disabled, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, poor, rural, whatever the dimension is, I think you may have been told by someone along the way that you weren't going to be able to achieve your goal. [52:15] But I really think that if you are willing to stay focused and if you look and stay alert to people who will help and support you, then I do believe they will appear. And I feel as though I would have never believed that I would have had such an enormously satisfying career that allows me to do so many things that I love. But I don't think that I would be here if it weren't for all these individuals along the way who stepped in at the right time, who offered me the kind of encouragement or knowledge that I needed. So I really hope that the take home message for anybody watching this is that there will be people there who will help you to meet your goals.