Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Martha Banks

Interviewed by Nadia Hassan, Alexandra Rutherford & Wade Pickren
San Antonio, TX
February 1, 2006

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MB: Martha Banks, interview participant
NH: Nadia Hassan, interviewer
AR: Alexandra Rutherford, interviewer
WP: Wade Pickren, interviewer

MB: My name is Martha E. Banks. I was born in Washington D.C. but grew up in Newport, Rhode Island.

WP: Do you mind stating when you were born? You do not have to, but it is good for oral history. It is good to know that.

MB: I was born in July of 1951.

WP: Great. Thank you a lot. I would like to start talking about where you are now in terms of your work, your professional work with your firm. Then, we can segue to talk about the issues that you have worked on over the years. I know you have been very active in APA in a couple or at least three divisions. So, talk a little bit about your professional work right now.

MB: Right now, my primary work is as a researcher. I am in a process of doing the very final stages of the revision of the *Ackerman-Banks Neuropsychological Rehabilitation Battery*. This is a comprehensive neuropsychological screen I designed for psychologists who are not necessarily in neuropsychology, but it is the first battery – to the best of my knowledge – that has included an ethnic minority normative sample.

WP: But, kind of behind that, before that is your training. To be doing this kind of work, you had to have some speciality training. Can you talk about that?

MB: Ok! My real impetus for going into neuropsychology came from my assessment professor in graduate school, Allan Berman, at the University of Rhode Island. He did all of his assessment training really looking at [and] trying to tease out any kind of brain dysfunctions that might be part of the explanation for dysfunction. So, I have really been particularly interested in that, but I also have an ethical perspective that it is not appropriate to simply assess a person but to really try to work on a way to get them into rehabilitation and figure out what will work for them. So, the battery is really designed to help people get from assessing what is wrong and then moving directly into rehabilitation

WP: It sort of indicates a kind of pathway to rehabilitation.

MB: Yes! The results actually include a spreadsheet so that people can look at the spreadsheet, look at strengths and weaknesses side by side and determine what they might use to help rehabilitate the things that need rehabilitating. It has a checklist that actually makes recommendations for which disciplines to work with.

WP: Wow! That is impressive! And this is the first? Your approach is the first one to include work on ethnic minorities sample or participants that you work with.

MB: Right! It is normed on a clinical sample, and 17% of that sample is African American.

WP: What led you in that direction of working with an ethnic minority sample, on wanting to do that?

MB: I have been very frustrated that there just was not anything out there that was normed on ethnic minority samples.

WP: Yes. Is it your sense as well that this is not just in neuropsychological assessment but in many areas of psychological assessment?

MB: That's right!

WP: And therapy as well.

MB: That's right! And it is really particularly difficult right now as we are starting to talk more and more about empirically-based practice. It is very frustrating that there are not culturally relevant assessment techniques and treatment techniques for a lot of the people who are in need of treatment.

WP: I think Stan Sue said once that, about empirically supported treatment and whether they were culturally sensitive or not, he said [that] of course they are culturally sensitive for those of European American descent.

MB: That's right!

AR: I am really curious about, sort of for personal reasons because I do a lot assessment, and I have been really frustrated about the lack – I mean – the kinds of tools that we are using just seem so out of sync with the people who are coming for help. So, can you go back, and even a little bit further and talk a little bit about how you got into neuropsychology and kind of what went into your interest in psychology and then neuropsychology?

MB: My interest in psychology really started at the undergraduate level. I was at Brown University and the way that they presented psychology there was they started with an introductory course that involved every faculty member in the department, and each faculty member came in and taught for one or two classes about his or her research area. So, we got nothing but enthusiasm for the entire semester! And, it was very wide ranging and I am very easily bored, so I really enjoyed that particular class because it was such a broad range. Then, as

I said, when I got to graduate school in assessment, my assessment professor was very much focused on neuropsychology and it made sense to me.

AR: There is an emerging discourse across from all of the Divisions – 35, 45 – about intersecting identities. I wondered if you would talk a little bit about that, about being a woman in psychology and also about being an African American in psychology.

MB: Ok! Perhaps it is a good place to talk about my initial experience with APA. The very first time I came to APA was also – I believe – the very first meeting of the section on the psychology of black women in division 35. And I walked into APA and found a home! So, I have been very involved with Division 35. I stayed involved with the section basically throughout the time I have been in APA which is now about 23-24 years. Wow, it's a long time!

AR: How did you find out about the section?

MB: My very first day [at] APA, I read the program cover to cover, yes! So they had programs, and actually one of my fondest memories is that I met a colleague who was born the same day I was. I worked with the section and served as president for, I believe, two years and I have also served as award chair for two of the awards.

AR: I have been looking a little bit lately in the Division 35 archives and one of the things that I have been especially interested in is the section on black women. At what point in the division history that became, you know, it became obvious that there was a need for a section [of the sort], and it was pretty early. I have a question but I can't remember exactly but in the late '70s…

MB: I believe it was in the late '70s that they had the first task force and that develop into a committee, and by the early '80s it had blossomed into its section.

AR: So for you that was your first APA experience!

MB: That was my first APA experience!

AR: And it felt like you found a home! That is so neat! Can you tell me a little a bit about maybe your reflection now, having been involved for so long with the section, what is your impression now of what the section is doing [and] what role it plays in the division?

MB: I think the section still plays a very critical role. I find that Division 35 tends to go in waves and it depends on who the president is and what her initiatives are. I say her because so far all of the presidents of 35 have been women. But there are some of the presidents who are particularly interested in looking forward and being very inclusive, and we have had other presidents who have been more focused on really involving their friends in doing things the way they used to be done. And so, I think the section has had to stand as a really firm focal point to make sure that we had inclusiveness for African American women.

AR: And somewhat it seems, at least, like a trail way for some of the other sections.

MB: That's right! I recall a point – I believe in the early '90s – when we had what we called a collaboration for ethnic minority women. I served as the lead collaborator again for a couple of years trying to make sure that everybody was a aware of what the possibilities were and that we were inclusive.

AR: You mentioned that, kind of your first exposure to APA is when you found the section. Can you talk a little about the development of your feminist identity? Had that always been something that you felt strongly about?

MB: No! I would have to say I had much more of racial identity before that. But, as I said, that first APA that I came to, there was a Section on Psychology of Black Women [which] was housed in the Division of Psychology of Women, it was not housed in the ethnic minority division.

NH: You mentioned before that your measure….

MB: Basically, the test developed and the normative sample developed across eight years. My business partner and I simply took advantage of our clinical practices, and that covered North Carolina, three different places in Ohio and Pennsylvania. So, it was just a matter of coming out of clinical practices, in hospitals, in out-patient clinics and in private practices. We built the sample over the years from clients that we worked with and other people worked with.

NH: It sounds like it took a lot of effort to be willing to do it!

MB: It did! Well, it was important to us because we wanted something that was efficient and that made more sense that anything that was out there.

NH: I don't know if you can tell us about your graduate student experience, how the atmosphere was?

MB: Let me talk a little bit about my undergraduate experience because it provides a context for the graduate experience. My undergraduate experience involved really taking a look at a broad spectrum of courses, and of disciplines and I was really encouraged to really integrate a lot of things. So my undergraduate experience included not just a major in psychology but I took a lot of courses in linguistics including psycholinguistics, which was wonderful for learning about different kinds of aphasias. That worked really well into my neuropsych interest, and I also minored in music and was able to do my graduate research, both my thesis and my dissertation on perception of emotions in music.

Many years later down the road I did research looking at how brain functions impacted perception of emotions in music. But, when I got to graduate school, they wanted me to be extremely focused in one area. They were very unhappy that I had an interest in music, which meant I had to bring in people from outside of the department. I was either the second or third black student in the program, and I have to say that because I am not sure, there was one man ahead of me and he never graduated. They kept him for many, many years so I was the first

black graduate. They told me there had been a woman before me, but they also told me that she had died under suspicious circumstances. The story was so elaborated, I was never sure whether it was true or not. But it was a very hostile, very hostile environment. They gave me difficulty about many little things, like the fact that my quantitative GREs were higher than my verbal. And they said, you known, I'll never be a psychologist. So, I have been spending a lot of time proving they them wrong!

AR: We actually now look at grad applications, we are pleased and delighted to get students with high quantitative. I guess, we so often get the opposite.

MB: But they were, you know, it was a clinical program and their focus was on clinical practice and not on research. I really wanted again –from that Brown experience – I wanted to do both.

WP: I would like to go back to something you said earlier. You mentioned that you formed a racial identity before an identity of feminist. Can you talk about the sources of you developing a racial identity?

MB: Well, it helped a lot that I have a cousin who was very active in SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) when I was growing up in Newport, Rhode Island, which was not particularly ethnically diverse. For the most part, I was the only black student in many of my classes. This was not just in elementary school, it continued all the way through high school. So, I did not have a real sense about gender role issues at all expect for guidance counsellors who told me when I said that I wanted to be a doctor, they said, "No, you want to be a nurse." You know, I did not take that as a gender issue as much as I took it as [an issue that] this is one more way that they are trying to discourage a black student from going as far as she can go.

WP: I want to follow up on this, because I think – for this project anyway – it is really relevant. We are about the same age, you know, I was born in late 52, so we were in high school around the same time. I was in Florida, Erie, and you were in Rhode Island, so in some ways we kind of share the same sense or awareness of this cultural upheaval. We had the civil rights and so on. So, I think in particular I am thinking about [the fact that] that is a very sensitive time for a person's development in teenage years, and the idealism etc. You had a cousin who was in SNCC, some of the things you might have been reading – I mean there was such good stuff you look back on now: Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcolm X, I wonder were those some of the people who were influencing you [and] that you were reading?

MB: I was not reading those. That material was not really available in Newport. I really had, you know, I had the support of my family. My parents actually were at Brown basically a quarter of a century before. My mother and I used to share graduation and reunion anniversaries. I think that there was a lot of real push within my family toward success. In terms of heroes, I mean, it was very frustrating. My heroes were John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and it became clear that if you were really a good person you got killed. Mixing that with the optimism of the time, it was very confusing. [In terms of] my family, I saw a lot of disagreement within the family about my cousin's involvement in SNCC. [There was] the question of, you know, yes the nonviolence pretty much was agreed upon as the way to go, but do you actually go down and put yourself in danger. So, I was getting a lot of very mixed messages. And, I dare say that the news coverage at

that time, in Newport anyway, was rather limited. I mean, Newport did not have a TV station, it was coming out of Providence, but the news coverage was really limited.

WP: Coming forward from that time, you were an undergraduate and went to graduate school. Did you develop or have colleagues of color or other students and friends of color that you can then count on for encouragement?

MB: I was in the – what is still the largest – first large class at Brown that included black students. That was my first opportunity for exposure to a lot of African Americans, all in college and all with high aspirations. That was not really the case very much in Newport. I went from that kind of an atmosphere to a very small African American population when I went to graduate school because the University of Rhode Island [was] not nearly as progressive. I also had a sense of my role in the world as a student. I had always thought of being a student as something you did that was very safe and secure and the Kent State killings happened at the end of my first year. And so that, it's like, "Ok! I am no longer in a protected environment." I thought I was going to be in a protected environment for four years and that was eliminated. There were not a whole lot of black faculty and my family was really focused on career, practical career, career, career, and very discouraging of my being involved with other courses outside of my career. They were very unhappy about my minor in music because I clearly did not have whatever it took to be a full time musician and make a living at it – and still don't! So, I was not involved with a whole lot of courses. I was not involved with the black studies courses that were available on campus at that time. [That is] something that I seriously regret, but I was younger, I was naïve, and my parents were paying for my education and I did not feel like I had a lot of choice.

AR: Picking up at what you have just said, at the time that you were a student, taking black study courses did not seem to be something that was open to you, that you could not …

MB: As an undergrad!

AR: Yes, as an undergrad. But of course now you teach. How did that come about?

MB: Yes! Well, it came about primarily because I started at the College of Wooster in 1989 teaching in the Psychology department. The Psychology department, you know, they were looking for a developmental person and they also were looking for somebody to teach Black Psychology. It was a little bit of a challenge because since I had had never taken a Black Psychology course, which by the way I really wanted to take in graduate school but there was not anything available, actually there was nothing available in the State at that time. So, basically I had to learn Black Psychology, I mean, I had been doing readings, I was a member of the Association of Black Psychologists, and I felt like I had gotten up to speed. Reginald Jones actually had his third edition coming out, and it was not ready. He was such a nice man he actually provided me with [advance proofs] for all of my students.

AR: It must have been very exciting for them.

MB: It was very exciting, it was very exciting for them but the psychology department – and this is a historical thing – the psychology department was very hostile! [They were] not welcoming

of black faculty, and I stayed there for two years which was the longest that any black faculty member of that department had stayed. And, one of the things that they did was they argued with {25:14} me. They saw that there was a bound thick set of Xerox copies in the bookstore, and said that I was in violation of copyrights because I had too many articles bound for my students and they should be going to the library. Clearly they never picked it up and looked inside, and I invited them to sue for copyright violation which surprised them, and of course they did not. I very much enjoyed teaching Black psych, and the second year that I was there I had 62 students in my class which is – you know, in a very tiny liberal arts college – that is kind of unheard of when they say that the average size of the class in nine! But, as I left recognizing that I really did not need to be in that kind of hostile environment, I said, "If you move Black psychology over to Black studies, I'll be glad to come back." It took them 13 years and when they did, I moved back! I went back and so for the last two years, I was a visiting associate professor the first year and they promoted me to full the second.

WP: I noticed one of the courses you taught at Wooster, [and] I love the title, [was called] "Should I Call My Bank, My Parents, or My Lawyer?" The course looks like it is about health disparities. Can you talk about that a little bit? This is an area of quite an interest to me as health disparities.

MB: Ok! I really enjoyed that course. They have a first year seminar that all of the students have to take. They limit the classes to about 15 to 17 students and it is primarily a writing course. When I was at Wooster the first time, the Dean had focused the course on race, class, and gender issues and when I got to teach it again last year, I had no idea that they had changed so I used that same kind of focus and basically spent some time really looking at my students' backgrounds and assigned each of the students to one of four ethnic groups, ethnic minority groups, and had them do all of the writing for the course from the perspective of a person in the assigned group. I tried to assign them to groups that I thought they had minimal contact with. It was a fascinating way to teach. They found themselves having to advocate for groups of people in which – in many cases – they had never met anybody.

NH: I have two questions. [For] the first one, it sounds like you have been in a lot of hostile environments. How did you cope for so long? How did know when to make that decision to move to another environment?

MB: Well, sometimes it is hard to make the decision because you do have to live! There is something about eating, sleeping, shelter! But, I did have some options. The first time that I was teaching I maintained a day a week at the V.A. (Veterans Affairs) hospital where I had been working, so I was able to go back because of V.A. as a full-time clinician. Then now, for the last two years, again when I was teaching. It was on a part-time basis, I was visiting and I simply took some time away from my own private business to do that. In other instances, I moved early in my career. I did my internship in Des Moines. I had my first real job in Des Moines and decided I wanted to live in a larger city and I moved from there to a position in Omaha and found that Omaha was really kind of in the dark ages. And so, I moved to Cleveland and have been in that vicinity ever since.

AR: Can I ask a little bit about being in business? Because, I think as a psychologist and a person who does private practice, the business aspect of things really intimidates me! And you have, almost from very early in your career, it looks that you have been in business on your own and with a partner. What has that been like as a woman, as an academic woman being in business?

MB: It is kind of frustrating because after all these years it is still small business. I will tell you a little bit about why we got into the business. We were both in clinical practice, we were both in hospital practices and we were both frustrated because we wanted to do research. So, we did our research evenings and weekends, and I just got to a place where we said [that] it did not make sense for the hospitals that would not give us any release time to do our research to get credit for it. So, we started a company! A lot of our business is based on computer work. That is how we raise our funds – as we say – to support our research habit because we are for profit. It is very difficult to get grants! So, we do a lot of the computer work [and] we have been doing computer work and our collaborations since long before there was such a thing as the internet. We did a lot of file exchanges over the phone with the acoustic modems, which only historians know about, and did our work that way! In order to purchase equipment, it helped to be able to write it off if we had a business. And we actually did not incorporate until, I believe it was 1990, it was when we actually formally incorporated.

WP: I have noticed again from looking at your CV (wonderful that there is so much information CVs give), that you have been pre-involved with the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) in the Cleveland area, at least. Can you talk about some of that, about your involvement with ABPsi?

MB: My involvement with ABPsi is one of these on again off again kinds of relationships. When I wanted to join initially, when I was an intern, I was told I needed to have a sponsor and I didn't know any black psychologists who were members of ABPsi. During my internship I did have one black supervisor, but she also had not been able to join because she did not have a sponsor and the sponsor had to be a member. I had the same kind of situation when I was in Omaha. When I moved to Cleveland there was a chapter listed, and there was a contact person and I contacted him and he said that that chapter had not been involved or active for a number of years, so he said he would start it up again. In the 20 years or so that I have been in northeast Ohio, we are now on our fourth iteration. I am actually now on the program committee for the convention that will be in Cleveland this summer. So, it has been one of those things where I was involved with the chapter, because of the scheduling of ABPsi and the expense, and because of my extreme involvement in APA, I have had to make some hard decisions and one of those decisions has involved not really being able to get to two conventions in the summer. So, I have only been to one of the national conventions up to now.

AR: I have a question that is really based on my lack of knowledge (Wade is much more knowledgeable about ABPsi more than I am). I know that, in its earliest years, it was largely male. Is that correct?

{35:07}

MB: That's correct!

AR: Has that changed?

MB: I have seen it change and actually the national convention I went to, all of the officers elected at that time were women. But, the men were clearly still very much in control and held the power. That was in 1990. I really do not have a good sense right now. The president of the Cleveland chapter was national president a few years ago and I believe all the presidents since him have been men.

AR: I was just kind of curious.

WP: I think you were one of the founders of division 45 but you have been very involved. Can you talk about – form your perspective – the role of division 45, then the voice of ethnic minority psychologists?

MB: Division 45 is a very important voice and focal point for ethnic minorities. We were literally shut out of APA. In the late '60s they had a moratorium on divisions at a point when black psychologists wanted to form a division. It has been very interesting the way we now have a division that includes several groups of ethnic minorities, and that there is such a strong attempt to make sure that we have power sharing within that division, so we have rotation of the presidency among ethnic groups. We have representation of our members at large among ethnic groups, to ensure that no ethnic minority group is silenced within this group which serves as an important voice. I think it is particularly important that the division is large enough and is influential enough to have more than one voice on the floor of council. They have tried to make sure that as long as we have two representatives, that at least one is a man and one is a woman. That has been very important. There is one downside that I see, and that is that I think a lot of the divisions of APA look at division 45 as the place to handle everything involving ethnic minorities and cultural diversity. So, it kind of relieves them of the effort, the burden of making an effort to be more inclusive, and that remains a frustration to me.

WP: In other words, that is not their issue [to be] about inclusiveness. Now we have a division, so we don't have to do anything about it!

MB: Exactly! And, I find that extremely frustrating because not only is there the sense that they can push, that they can remain exclusive, but there is not even any kind of sense of obligation to be collaborative.

WP: The division is 20 years old this year. You have talked about it giving a voice and I love that expression, I think it is Pamela Reid who wrote that article about women of color: "Shut up and Shut out," I don't know if you know that article – now the division guarantees that people will not be shut up and shut out. But, along with that, what do you think are some of the other major contributions of the division's 20 years lifespan?

MB: Well, one of the things is that the division has made the point of focusing on its history, especially across the last five years, by institutionalizing the positions of historians and recognizing {39:42} that there are so many contributions that ethnic minority members of APA

have made over the years that have been ignored. We really have a task of not just looking at what is current but really bringing a good historical focus to that. I think that the division has also had to deal with competing interest of its members because, while many people find this as a nice home division, we also have interest in other areas, more traditional areas of psychology. It is a way to bring a lot of people together who can really integrate those various interests in ways I do not think really happens in many other divisions, including division 35 which – I think – has the same kind of opportunity, but I do not think 35 takes as much advantage of that as 45 does.

AR: I have kind of a "big perspective" kind of question. Looking at the field broadly, the field of psychology, what is your opinion, your perspective, on what psychology needs to do to make it more inclusive? We are talking about what needs to happen, I mean even thinking big.

MB: One of the things that I think needs to happen is that we need to pay attention to our largest, unrecognized divisions or groups which is APAGS (American Psychological Association of Graduate Students). I think APA is aging so significantly and many of the people who still run APA, or run the biggest parts of APA, are aging and really want to keep things the way they think they always were, and we need to really pay attention to our students and our early career psychologists, and look at what they are looking at. I dare say, you know, we have spent a lot of time trying to figure out why new people are not staying in APA. You know, there have been speculations about whether or not joining divisions, if you do not join a division you feel overwhelmed by the size of the association. But, I think that a lot of our students coming through and our early career psychologists are coming through training programs that are diverse. And, they get to APA, and APA still is not diverse, and so it does not look like the place they trained. It does not look like what they might have learned about, it does not look like the world we live in. I think we need to really, you know, make more space for a truly inclusive voice for those newer psychologists so that we can really start moving into the very end of the 20th century!

NH: I have a question for you. What kind of advice or recommendation would you give to students to become more involved in the APA? The thing is that division 45 just recently added a student task force committee, but how else can the students advocate for themselves?

MB: I think that it would be really nice if students could take that division 45 model and ask of the division: Can we do the same thing? I know that other divisions are slowly adding student representatives and there is a lot of fussing and arguing about. "Well, should the student be representative, be a voting member because technically they are not a member of APA?" I think it is time to get rid of some of those artificial divisions. It's a caste system that really does not serve much for useful purposes anymore, and I think we need to find ways to get students more involved that way. We now have a student observer for council and given that there are so many students, I would like to see an expansion of that. I think that there should be more students in the room, and I think it would be really nice if at least a few of those students had a voice, a vote on council. It is a little extreme, but you know, that's me!

WP: Martha, an area that you have done a lot of work in is in rehabilitation psychology. Can you talk a little bit about that? I know you have written, you have authored or edited a book, on women with invisible or visible disabilities.

MB: *Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities*. I think I mentioned before that I really felt it was kind of irresponsible and unethical to do assessment of people without coming up with at least a referral for treatment. So, that has been the way that I have worked and done all my clinical work. A lot of my clinical work was in geriatrics, and that involved neuropsychological assessment to determine whether people had dementia, and then trying to work with them and with their families around ways that we could assist them in being able to manage their everyday lives and for the families to be able to manage their lives too. The settings that I worked in were primarily rehabilitative kinds of settings. So that is how I got involved in rehabilitation. I have been in the rehabilitation division because somebody invited me to do the newsletter and since I tend to jump into things with both feet, I have been newsletter editor for – I think – it is nine years now, and I am the web maven, and I have served as member at large on the executive committee twice.

WP: Is it your sense that APA as an organization has paid adequate attention to issues around disability and rehabilitation?

MB: Not at all! Not at all! I need to separate the two issues because we are actually realizing that although division 22 is the home division for more people who identify as having disabilities than any other division, the division itself is very rehabilitation focused and it has been very difficult for people with disabilities to have a voice within the rehabilitation division, which is why a number of us are actively involved in starting a division on disabilities issues. I think we are probably about halfway through the signatures collection process for that.

WP: And the intent, among many things, would be to at least pressure APA to pay adequate attention to disabilities issue?

MB: To disabilities issues, to being inclusive, to doing outreach, to include potential psychologists with disabilities. We are currently are struggling with a lack of schools, graduate programs, and particularly internship sites that are not accessible in many ways. In APA itself, we are still having to deal with convention sites, conference sites that are not particularly accessible. It is not built in. There has been considerable progress but not enough progress. That is still an issue, so it is possible for someone to come to a conference, and just to give an example, the day before yesterday, at the conference here, I had to be escorted by security through the kitchen to an elevator in order to get to one of the sessions. That is the kind of thing that should not happen but is still happening, and APA has been really slow to pick up on that.

Another area that we are starting to see a little bit of movement around disabilities is that APA is starting to pay attention to making testing more accessible, so that the test can be handled in a way that we can come up with some standardized procedures that are appropriate for people with a broad range of disabilities. What is missing for that picture is how to adapt tests for standard administration by psychologist who have disabilities. This area has just been a real stumbling block and I have to acknowledge that even in my own work as a test developer, it has been really kind of frustrating trying to figure out what needs to be done in order to make it possible for psychologist with various disabilities to administer a test.

{51:22}

WP: You have a range of interests in the work that you are doing. It is really interesting! It must be fascinating for you. I mean, everyday you work against three or four major areas, I don't know if it actually works out that way but…

MB: It does!

AR: Well, I was wondering too, I saw that obviously you do – well, the heading on your CV is computer programmer and in addition research in neuropsychology – was the computer programming something that your trained yourself to do?

MB: Yes! It was more of an [evolution?] than anything else; although we have a computer company, and we actually provided APA's first workshop on how to use personal computers in psychology, neither my business partner nor I have ever taken a computer course! When I was trying to make money to go to graduate school – between college and graduate school – I managed to get a job as a data coder, which meant taking data off of forms and writing numbers onto these horrible sheets, 80 columns across, then somebody would key punch the numbers in and I started complaining. This is blinding work and we need to have a way when we get the printout, it should be divided into columns so that it makes sense with respect to what we are doing. And somebody said, "Oh! Do you know something about computers?" And I said, yes! And the programmer was about to take maternity leave and I got moved into that position.

We were using SPSS, and this was so long ago, we were using SPSS3, and with the understanding that the current SPSS is X, which is Roman numeral 10 version 14. "3" was a very long time ago! And, it just turned out that, that turned out to be a really lucky thing for me because when I entered graduate school, they were moving from big mechanical calculators that took up the space of about two typewriters into a mainframe computer, and they wanted to use SPSS. Nobody on the faculty knew SPSS, they accepted me into the program, and I wrote the homework programs for them. Although that was 30 years ago, apparently they are still using the same program. I wrote the programs, these were on punch cards and everybody in my classes just borrowed my cards. In order to protect myself, I had my name pop up in the middle of everybody's homework, and there was no question about whose homework it really was! And, I understand students still have my name! They run into me at APA and say, "I know your name from some place, it was on my homework!"

WP: We are running into our meetings. Are there things we have not asked you about that you think you should talk about?

MB: I cannot really think of anything. I have enjoyed the opportunity to be involved with a variety of divisions, I have had the opportunity to serve in a number of areas within APA, and I would have to say that of all the roles that I have had, the one I hold now as council representative for division 45 is probably [the] fulfillment of a career long dream. I was very pleased when I got to serve on CEMA (Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs), but being a council [representative] and representing, being [a] voice for ethnic minorities, has been very important for me.

WP: Thank you!

MB: Thank you!