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Lynn Haas '64-Gail Goodell '59

Lynn Haas

Gail Goodell

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Lynn Haas: So, if you will introduce yourself.

Gail Goodell: I'm Gail Glidden Goodell. Actually, my first name is Sarah, but I never use it. I'm class of 1959.

LH: Wonderful.

GG: I'm here for my 60th reunion.

LH: Wonderful. That's terrific. Good for you. I hope I'll be here for that too.

GG: Oh, you will.

LH: And I'm Lynn Haas, Lynn Parker Haas and I'm class of '64. So, this is- it's- it's turning out to be fun. The first question- I'll just go down them. I think- I think some of them are more interesting and the last time we kind of got off track. It just happened and that might happen again, we'll see. Why did you decide to come to Connecticut?

GG: When I was a senior in high school, I had a friend who was a sophomore here and she invited me to come down for the weekend. She really wanted me to come and I fell in love with the place and I just didn't want to go anywhere else. I applied to two other schools, but Connecticut was my first love and they gave me some nice financial aid, which for that was an incentive. My dad said, "Go for it."

LH: Absolutely. Good for you. Did you know what you wanted to do?

GG: Well, when I arrived I thought I wanted to major in chemistry. I came down during that summer to talk to Dean Noyes. I don't know if she was still here?

LH: Yes, she was.

GG: And, so I had lined up all these courses that I was going to need for a chem major and one of them was German. And she said, "Don't you think you'd just rather continue with Spanish? You'd only have to take one year." And I said, "Well, I'm going to need German for Chemistry, so ..." Well, between German and chemistry, I nearly flunked out. So, I used to say during sophomore year I was on the dean's other list.

LH: Because of the languages, and your mind isn't that kind of a mind.

GG: No, no. I am not a language person. I like to travel and my grandchildren will say, "Nana, you go to all these different countries. How do you communicate with these people?" and I say, "Well, I know how to ask them in their own language if they speak English." And if they don't, I go to the next person ...

LH: until somebody can.

GG: And I found that most everywhere in the world ...

LH: There's somebody ...

GG: Most people speak English.

LH: I know. And it is a shame that we're not more versed in other language, but it has to start earlier than college or high school.

GG: It does. It does.

LH: Absolutely convinced of that. What surprised you, if anything, about the College when you were here?

GG: I think- I- I was in North Cottage freshman year and it was a small cottage and it was like a small, little family. The girls all got along, we had a wonderful time together and I think that really surprised me.

LH: What had you imagined?

GG: I- I don't know what I had imagined- I thought I would have trouble making friends, but there was not a problem at all.

LH: That's great. That's terrific, wow. I forget, North was across the street?

GG: No, North was- you remember Thames? The dining area? It was two houses north of there.

LH: Well, that was the next question, where did you live and what was your residential experience like?

GG: It was very good.

LH: Were you there all four years?

GG: No no. That was freshman year. One of the reasons I probably was on the dean's other list was because during freshman- freshman year during exam period I learned how to play bridge.

LH: Oh, my gosh, you were one of those. Up all night.

GG: Well, it didn't get that bad, but we would sit in the living room and play cards well into the evening, but it was a lot of fun. Sophomore year I was in Blackstone. It was called the Soph Quad at that time: Blackstone, Plant, and Branford. There wasn't a fourth but it was still called the quad. And then after that I moved to KB and was there for two years. Most of the- my friends from North and from Blackstone and Plant moved to KB, so ...

LH: Traveled with you.

GG: Yeah, we had a- a lar- KB was all our class, for the last two years.

LH: No kidding.

GG: Our class—the majority of our class—was in KB and Mary Harkness. And then there were a few others- well, some were in Emily Abbey and some commuters, but I think that was it.

LH: Wow, so that was ten years- well, no, ten years from the '69- so if you graduated in '59, that was- and I came in in '60. I'm just trying to get oriented with my own experience. What did you study? Did you stay with Chemistry?

GG: No, I- then I switch- switched to Math and that was almost as bad. And I ended up ...

LH: But you didn't need German.

GG: No, but I ended up with Economics, because someone told me nobody ever flunked an economics—what do they call that thing you had to take at the end?

LH: Oh, the- the- yeah the- it was on May 22nd for me. Comprehensives.

GG: Comprehensive exam. Nobody ever flunked the comprehensives in Economics. They said they- they never changed the questions, they just changed the answers.

LH: Oh, that's brilliant. So, whatever your answer was, it was going to be just fine.

GG: I guess. But, I- I loved art too, so art appreciation, art history and so I took enough art history courses to call it a minor but they didn't say you had a minor in those days. But, it was my second love, not that Economics was something I loved, but it did stand me in good stead.

LH: Great, I think that might be part of our next question. Oh no, before we get to that, were you involved in any social groups besides bridge?

GG: Well, no, I wasn't really. Freshman year I took fencing as one of my sports and we did- I remember going to Wellesley for a intercollegiate fencing match. That was fun. But, other than that, other than the social life ...

LH: Yeah, right. Which was big.

GG: Yes, it was.

LH: What was the campus climate like while you were here?

GG: Well, it was ...

LH: Do you remember any special events or controversies, they ask.

GG: We were the silent generation. There was nothing controversial about us. No, I can't think of any special events that happened while we were here. Well, I remember- this came to mind because I was just in the speech- talk given by a classmate of mine's son, who is now commander of the sub base.

LH: Oh yes, I was- I listened to that--most of that. I was out of here late, but ...

GG: Yeah, he- so, the sub base was right across the river and I can remember when the Nautilus, the first nuclear submarine was ...

LH: Commissioned?

GG: Commissioned over there, we could see it and we--somebody was saying this morning that we were told that if we were on the second floor of the dorm, be sure you pull your shades down because that- there are all those sailors right across the river.

LH: Oh my God, the things you remember. Now that's important. Did you? Pull the shades down.

GG: I was on the first floor, so ...

LH: You didn't have to worry about it.

GG: Didn't have to worry about it.

LH: I might just stand up there and wave. That's great. Can you talk a bit about your life after Conn?

GG: Well, I got a job. I was hired before I graduated by Proctor and Gamble in their market research department and it was very low level. We went to Cincinnati for training and then we were flying all over the country for two weeks at a time doing interviews with housewives about the products they use.

LH: Wow, interesting though.

GG: It was interesting.

LH: I mean, you're 22 years old and running around the country?

GG: Yeah, it was exciting for about six months. My roommate had gotten a job in New York City and she had an apartment there and every time I had a chance to change planes over the weekend in New York, I'd go visit her. And she finally said, "Why don't you quit that crazy job and get a job in New York." So I did and I went to work for Louis Harris, who was doing John Kennedy's political polls at that time and that was quite an experience.

LH: Yeah, I bet.

GG: Yeah, it was very interesting. Then I met the man who became my husband and that all went out the window.

LH: Did it? Did you stop working?

GG: I stopped working for a while. Actually, I did- continued to do some market research interviewing as a freelancer in different places where we were around the country. And then I

went- when we got to Texas, I got a job in the base hospital as a medical secretary and I found that very interesting too.

LH: What took you to Texas?

GG: My husband was in the Air Force.

LH: That's why you moved around the country?

GG: Yes, yes.

LH: Yeah, it's hard to keep jobs when you have to keep moving on their schedule.

GG: But my dad had said to me, "I want you to get a good education, because that's something no one can take away from you and it will stand you in good stead."

LH: Good for him.

GG: It really did. He had three girls and in those days it was unusual. And my marriage did not last. I was divorced when my kids were eight and ten years old. So, I raised those kids and I got a good job. I worked for a publishing company and went into their marketing department and it was great.

LH: That's terrific.

GG: Put two kids through college, pretty much on my own.

LH: Wow, good for you. Good for you. Wow. And yay, Dad. Really.

GG: My dad?

LH: Your dad. That's- that's terrific.

GG: He was an amazing man. He was ahead of his time in many ways.

LH: What was his work?

GG: He was a chemist.

LH: Was he?

GG: Probably inspired me to be a chemist.

LH: Did you- do you think your experience here helped with that whole life?

GG: Oh definitely, definitely, yes. I- I think being in a women's college where you're not competing against men all the time, you gain a lot of self-assurance. You know, you- and that I think more than anything is what gave me the impetus to survive—I shouldn't say the impetus—the tools for survival. I ...

LH: Tools, but also impetus, to not just turn to another man right away. Yay. Good for you. And so where did you settle? Where did you raise your kids?

GG: When I was married we lived in the Chicago area. And then I took the kids and moved back to my home in Massachusetts. Beverly. And I've been there ever since. Raised the kids there.

LH: And are they nearby?

GG: My daughter's now in Texas with her family, but my son is nearby with his family. So that's nice.

LH: Good, so you have somebody nearby. Great. What takes- took your daughter to Texas?

GG: Her job.

LH: Do you keep in touch with classmates?

GG: Oh yes, yes I do.

LH: How? Who? I mean, your roommates?

GG: My roommates, yes. I- I exchange Christmas cards with them. And if I'm traveling to a part of the country where they live, I always try to see them. I do have a classmate that I came down here with today, who lives in Newburyport and we get together quite often.

LH: Oh, that's great.

GG: We travel together. We celebrated our 70th birthdays with a trip on the Amazon.

LH: Oh, that's fantastic.

GG: And we celebrated our 80th birthdays by going to Venice.

LH: Oh, how wonderful. What are you going to do for your 85th?

GG: Well, we're talking about 82nd. I don't know about the 85th.

LH: We need to go in shorter terms now, don't we?

GG: Yeah, we might go to the Holy Land next year. I- I want to see Petra and that's close by. I took a trip to Egypt the year I turned 70. Well, yeah, that year I traveled on the three longest rivers in the world: the Nile, the Amazon, and the Yangtze.

LH: Good for you. Wow. And you're still interested in traveling?

GG: I am.

LH: That's fabulous.

GG: Love it. I love it. I still have a bucket list.

LH: That's great.

GG: I've given up on the idea of going to Antarctica but I'd still like to get to Australia and New Zealand.

LH: My braiding coach—I'm doing rug braiding now—she just got back from what sounded like a fabulous trip into Norway where she went up into glaciers, but it was just not way- the way I picture Norway. Anyway, you can think about that. In thinking about college today, is there something you wish students today could have? Is there something happening on campus now that you wish you could have experienced.

GG: Well, I know that when the College went coed, that was the way things were going and I'm sure it has strengthened this school, but I really feel sorry that the girls don't have the same experience I had. I just can't get away from the idea that you gain so much self-confidence when you- you're in a classroom where you don't mind raising your hand.

LH: And you don't have to think about how you're dressed.

GG: That's right. Exactly.

LH: Was it like that for you? I had a pair- I had blue jeans: blue jean shorts, blue jean skirt to go downtown, and blue jeans and you moved from one to the other.

GG: Just about, yeah. I- we- Bermuda shorts were big when I was here. But I remember one of my classmates, wore- she would roll up her blue jeans and put a wrap-around skirt over it to go to dinner.

LH: Exactly. God. But even that was good, right? How about is there something happening on campus or are you aware of anything?

GG: I think people did not go abroad during their college experience as much in our generation as they do now and I- that's something that I would have loved.

LH: Clearly you would. You get started earlier on your trips.

GG: Yeah, my daughter got into that fairly early on, so, she went to England for a thirteenth year of high school with the English-speaking Union exchange. So, and she and I are the travelers. My son is more of a homebody but I- I'm trying to inculcate the travel bug in my grandchildren. I've taken each one of them on an adventure, doing the last one this year. He's eight. We're doing a Road Scholar intergenerational thing.

LH: I did one with my grandson when he was twelve. It was fabulous. We went to go on the Michelangelo boat, riverboat, from Venice over to Verona.

GG: I saw that trip.

LH: It was so good.

GG: It looks wonderful, but the only two I've taken to Europe were- I took them when they were fifteen and I did it on my own. I took my granddaughter to Spain and we stayed in one place and took daytrips where we went to Gibraltar and Tangiers, to the Alhambra and to ... I've forgotten the third place. And I took my grandson to Rome last year and there again we stayed in one place and ...

LH: And traveled out.

GG: Well, we did a lot of day things in Rome. We did take one day trip to Pompeii and Positano. It was a fantastic experience.

LH: So what are you doing with the eight-year old?

GG: We're going to Santa Rosa, California and the trip is called Heroic Hounds and it's about training dogs to be canine corps, seeing-eye dogs, service dogs, rescue dogs. He chose it. He- he loves his dogs.

LH: That's great. That's terrific. You'll love it.

GG: I think we will.

LH: My daughter-in-law went through that training at, I don't think it was at the same place you just said. Canine companions. She had a- she's a counselor, so she has a trained dog that she works with with the kids.

GG: Oh, that's wonderful.

LH: But, yeah. The training programs are just- you'll love it. That's a terrific idea.

GG: One of the things they tell the kids is bring a book and then one day we go to a shelter and read to the dogs.

LH: I think that's for the kids, not the dogs, but maybe not.

GG: I don't know.

LH: I don't know. Is there anything else you want to add to this, do you think? Are these questions good questions?

GG: They're good questions. I can't think of anything else I wanted to add. I remember there were a lot of traditions that I don't know if they still have them. We used to have Compet Sing, Junior Show, Senior Melodrama. I don't know if these are things that you had, but they were a lot of fun. And Mascot Hunt, do you remember that?

LH: Vaguely.

GG: Yeah, that was- that was between the sophomore and junior class, I think. But I was- I was in the Junior Show and the Senior Melodrama. That was a lot of fun.

LH: Well, this has been a treat. I've loved meeting you.

GG: I loved meeting you, talking to you. This was fun.

LH: Was terrific fun. Thank you.

GG: Thank you.