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ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
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Susan Terranova

Interviewed by Jennifer Kinniff

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Johns Hopkins University
Oral History Collection

Interviewee: Susan Terranova (ST)

Interviewer: Jennifer Kinniff (JK)

Subject: Life of Susan Terranova¹

Date: May 10, 2017

JK: It is May 10th, 2017, and this is Jenny Kinniff, program manager for Hopkins Retrospective. I'm here today with Susan Terranova. Thank you for being here.

ST: You're welcome.

JK: Can we start by you telling me where you were born, and a little bit about your family?

ST: Sure. I was born in New York City, lived there until I was twelve. I have three younger sisters. I grew up in the city, my grandparents lived in Queens. We lived in Lower Manhattan. Summer vacations were going out to Queens, because that was like the country. Then my dad transferred jobs and we moved to Bergen County, New Jersey. And I went to high school there, and then moved on to Hopkins after my senior year.

JK: Okay. And what did your father do?

ST: Oh, my father was a mechanical engineer.

JK: So was mine.

ST: Oh, yeah. And the last place he worked was American Cyanamid, which then morphed into Pfizer drugs. My mom stayed at home until my youngest sister went to high school, and then she went to work for a local newspaper.

JK: And can you tell me what it was like growing up, first in New York, and then in New Jersey?

¹ Note: The interviewee reviewed this transcript and made light edits. The video of the interview will differ in places from this edited transcript.

ST: Well, Manhattan was kind of neat. We walked everywhere. The community was called Stuyvesant Town. It's in Lower Manhattan. We walked to school, went to the museums. Sundays after mass my dad would take us, in the winter time, after mass we'd go to Central Park and go ice skating in the ice rink. Both my parents were only children, so I didn't have lots of cousins growing up. We'd also go up to see the grandparents, usually several times a month. On the weekends.

We always considered that the country, because my grandparents had houses with yards. You know, we lived in a 14-story apartment building. That was elementary school. We moved when I was going into the sixth grade. Nice house in the suburbs, and by that time my grandmothers were widows, and they moved in with us. So we were three generations living together. I always thought that was normal, as a kid.

JK: Okay. And what was your education like, did you go to public school for high school?

ST: I went to Catholic school when we lived in the city. When we moved, there wasn't enough room in our Catholic school, we were on a waiting list. So we were in public school instead. And then once we were in classes and we had our friends, finally some spots opened up, but by that time we didn't move. My parents were pretty happy with the public schools where we were. That's where we stayed.

JK: And are you the oldest of four sisters?

ST: I'm the oldest of four, yeah. Heavy responsibility. A lot of babysitting for the youngest ones.

JK: And are you close in age or spread out?

ST: We're pretty close. I was six when my youngest sister was born, so I have a sister who is just a year behind me, one is two years behind me, and then my youngest sister is about five and a half years younger than I am. So we were pretty close. And again, because my parents were only children, we didn't have lots of cousins around, so we kind of grew up close.

JK: And so when you were in New Jersey and in high school, what was it like in your family when you got to the age when you were thinking about college?

ST: I think it was just kind of assumed that we would all go to college. That's what my parents were hoping for, and we all did. Our high school was a comprehensive high school. People went to college or joined the military afterwards.

JK: And how did you decide where you were going to go to college?

ST: That's kind of an interesting story. There were places that people in my high school just always applied to, but I worked in the public library in town, and one of my coworkers who had a brother who was here. And we were talking about college and she said, "Well you know, my brother is down at Hopkins, and they just went co-ed, and they really would like to have women there that aren't going to be pre-med majors. And why don't you apply?" And I had never thought about it because I didn't know that they were not an all-boys school anymore. Applied and got in and I guess the rest was history.

JK: And what were you looking for in a school? You must not have wanted to be a pre-med major, it sounds like?

ST: No, I knew I wanted to do international relations. I knew I wanted to study foreign languages. I knew I always wanted to do something that had to do with the Soviet Union, or communist countries, things like that. I didn't want a really big place.

[0:05:00] My high school had 2,000 students, and at the time, the undergraduate school at Hopkins was about the same size as my high school. The campus was about the same size as my high school. It had the program I wanted. There was a combined degree program with SAIS, I was kind of interested in that.

So it had a lot of things that I was looking for. It was far enough from home that I didn't think my parents would be showing up unannounced, but it was close enough that I could get back home pretty easily. There were people in the North Bergen County area that went to school here. And I had my colleague from work with the recommendation. So that's where I ended up.

JK: How did you get interested in international relations and the Soviet Union?

ST: I'm not really sure. We studied the Soviet Union in the 7th grade. I'm not really sure what prompted that. I just kind of knew that's what I wanted to do. I got really good grades in math and science,

but I hated math. So I knew I wanted to be in the humanities side, always. That's what was looking for.

JK: So Hopkins had gone co-ed. I think the first class of women came in fall 1970, so you were in the fall—

ST: Fall of '72.

JK: Right, fall of '72, so you would have been the third class of women. Did that give you pause at all? Were you nervous about that, or did you feel like it was just going to be okay?

ST: No, I wasn't really nervous, I was coming for a program. That was really kind of my focus.

JK: And so you got here, we'll test your memory now, you were a freshman in 1972—

ST: Correct.

JK: So tell us what it was like when you first got here.

ST: Well, orientation was just kind of drop off your stuff, get into your room. I remember my roommate, and I just remember, "Okay mom and dad, it's time to go." Gosh, I don't—I didn't know what to expect. I didn't have any preconceived notions of what college was supposed to be like. I was just eager to get to class. Get going, get started.

JK: And you were in one of the AMR dorms that was just for women?

ST: Right, I was in Adams 301, up in the top corner. And the roommate I had, we were actually roommates for all four years, that was pretty good. Showers were down at the end of the hall, that was no big deal either, because I grew up with three younger sisters, we all shared a bathroom.

JK: Was there anything on campus that was still kind of closed or limited for women when you got there?

ST: I really don't remember. Nothing that I wanted to do was closed to me, so maybe there were, but I didn't know.

JK: I want to ask you about your ROTC experiences. So I found an article that said you were actually involved with the ROTC even

before it officially opened to women, right? So can you tell me about that?

ST: Correct. Can I back up a little bit and tell the story? Before I got into the college search I had actually wanted to enlist in the military out of high school, but I wasn't going to be old enough to go on active duty without my parents' permission because I was a summer birthday. And my father was, "Absolutely not, you're not going to do that." So I was like, okay, there has to be some other way to get this done. And during orientation the ROTC had a booth, I guess there must have been clubs or things around or maybe sports sign ups or something like that.

And I started asking questions and found out that even though we weren't one of the official ten pilot projects, Colonel Parmely, who was the Professor of Military Science at the time, kind of a forward-thinking guy. Which was interesting because he was a Green Beret and Special Forces and all that. He was willing to take me on. I was interested, and he said, "Well, you can still enroll in the program and take the course, and we're really certain that after this first pilot year that it's going to be open to women everywhere, and you'll be in it, you could just keep going."

And I thought well, okay, sounds pretty good. And that's what I did. So he let me take the classes, drill, train, I did everything. And then in fact it was open to everybody the following year. I was already in the program and on my way, and that was that.

[0:10:00]

JK: Did you get credit for the course work that you did that first year?

ST: Mmhmm, yes. Military Science, I guess, went on my transcript. Yeah. So I just became a second year cadet. And the interesting thing is the draft ended my freshman year. So we went home at Christmas time, and there were about 120 cadets in the battalion here, the draft ended over Christmas, and we came back and there was hardly anybody. There might have been 30 or 40 people. Because if you enrolled in ROTC you weren't eligible for the draft and once that was gone, then so were the students.

JK: A lot of people started moving away?

ST: A lot, yeah. If you were a junior you had to stay, because you had a commitment, and the scholarship people stayed.

JK: So you were one of the ones who actually maybe wanted to be there?

ST: Yes.

JK: And what was it like being the very first woman? Tell me what it was like.

ST: Well, you're already one of the very few women on campus, so it was really just more of the same. I had to do everything they did. It's not like my training program was any different. And really once we came back, everybody's goal was to be a commissioned officer. And by that time, that was mine as well.

JK: And so the article I read in the Sun, it said something like—and this might have been just the way they phrased it—but it said something like “the training for women would be substantially the same as the training for men.” But once the program officially started, was there any difference in the training? I assume not in the coursework, but in the physical training?

ST: Well not in the coursework, but women always had a separate physical training test than the men, so that was in place. The only real training difference was when we went to Fort Bragg for summer camp. It really didn't affect what we did here on campus, because, you know, I went on long-range patrols, we did some of our training at Fort Meade, or in the Catoctin Mountains, up near Thurmont, near Camp David. So we did all of that. The real difference was when we went to Fort Bragg in the summer, but that had nothing to do with Hopkins. That was the Army training for cadets going into their senior year.

JK: I didn't know about Fort Bragg. What did you do at Fort Bragg in the summer?

ST: This was for everybody. It was a six week, “boot camp” isn't quite the right word, but it was just more military training for cadets who were going to be seniors.

JK: And it wasn't just Hopkins ROTC there?

ST: No, at that time there were three ROTC regions, and so pretty much everybody on the East Coast went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina for their training. And the year I went, which was the summer of '75, was the first year they had women there, because we had come through the program, and there were maybe 100 of

us, maybe 80. There weren't a lot. So our training was slightly different there, but not much. You know, we couldn't do offensive weapons and infantry kind of tactics.

JK: And did you feel like in the Hopkins ROTC that your fellow cadets accepted you as an equal?

ST: I think so, I didn't bother to poll them [laughs]. Most of the cadets in the program were actually Hopkins students. So there was kind of this understanding that if you got into Hopkins in the first place, academically we were mostly on the same plane. And honestly if you stuck through the program, that was kind of it. I did everything I was supposed to do. I had a really good rating out of summer camp. I think I was treated fine. I don't remember any incidents.

JK: I actually met someone at Alumni Weekend who was an ROTC cadet around that time, I think maybe a year or two behind you. He didn't remember you but he remembered your sister Beth, who was a year behind you, and I asked him what was it like, you know, women and men together in the ROTC, and he said, "You know it was fine, everything was equal," and he remembered an incident where Beth was superior to him in that structure. And a new cadet had come in and asked him something like he was in charge, and he was like, "I don't know, I just do whatever Beth tells me to do."

[Laughter]

And I think the incoming cadet was like, oh, I see how it is. Shouldn't assume that the man in the room is in charge. So he remembered Beth, and they had a good working relationship. And at the same time, in the fall of '72 you tried out for the rifle team.

[0:15:00]

ST: I did.

JK: So my question for you is, where did you learn to shoot, did you know how to do that coming in?

ST: I did not know how to shoot coming in. That was just something that—you didn't have to be an ROTC to be on the rifle team. I was kind of looking for a sport. I had fenced in high school. It was just a club team here, fencing, but I thought, "Well, okay, I have to qualify with various firearms for ROTC anyways." They were letting women on the, I mean it was a co-ed team. I don't think it

was ever—well I guess was a male team when only men were here. But there wasn't a women's team and a men's team, so I tried it out, and made it. I was pretty good and I got a varsity letter.

JK: That was one of my other questions. The rifle team was the first sport to award varsity letters to women, and you were the first women on the rifle team, so you must have been the first woman at Hopkins then, to get a varsity letter, I would think?

ST: I guess, I don't know. Didn't they play field hockey? I didn't really pay that much attention.

JK: But that's pretty cool. There is, I could show it to you after the interview, I found an article in the newsletter about the rifle team, and it was noting that you had one of the high scores in a match in the spring. And there was a quote from the coach that said he would like to see more participation from girls, "especially when you have a young lady just about whipping all the men."

ST: Yeah, that was kind of fun. [Laughter] And there were, I think, three women on the team. Another one of my classmates, and then my sister and I.

JK: You were on it all four years?

ST: For three, because when I went to SAIS I had to spend a lot of time in DC my senior year, because I was commuting back and forth between Baltimore and Washington. So I didn't have time for that, so I did three years.

JK: And tell me about—your sister Beth enrolled here a year after you did, right?

ST: Right.

JK: So how did she come to be here and how did you guys—

ST: Wow, that's kind of interesting, because she got in everywhere she applied. But again, it was far enough away from home, but close enough you could get back. Maybe she just wanted to follow me. I'm not sure. We'd always shared a room our entire lives. She ended up in my old dorm room. I'm not sure why she came. She also was a humanities person. Not into sciences or math.

JK: She joined the ROTC?

ST: She did. She joined ROTC, she joined the rifle team. We were not in the same branch when we were commissioned. I commissioned her actually, so that was really, that was kind of neat to be able to do that.

JK: What does that entail?

ST: I swore her in as a second lieutenant. You can ask any officer that you want. She asked me, so that was kind of neat.

JK: How did your parents feel about having two girls going through this military training?

ST: You know, I'm just not sure what my parents were thinking or why, but honestly by the time we went on active duty a lot of the anti-war sentiments were kind of settling, and I think my parents were actually really very proud that they had these daughters that weren't protesting, that were going to school, getting their degrees, serving in the military. Had good jobs, we had good jobs afterwards.

JK: And a lot of the, particularly in '70 and '71 but still in '72, '73, '74, there was a lot of discussion on the Hopkins campus about equal facilities for women, and access to things like health care on campus. The women's center started up. And I think a lot of the time when we start thinking about Hopkins history and Hopkins students at that time, we assume that all of the women students were really involved in advocating for that stuff. Were you a part of that crowd?

ST: No, I wasn't. Even in the military, when there weren't a lot of women, I wasn't. Because I just believe that you get where you are based on your merits. And that was pretty much it. I had bathrooms in Adams that were just for women. And then I moved into Wolman Hall, and we had our own apartments, so there wasn't a problem there. I didn't really need, I hardly ever used the medical services here. I got mononucleosis in my junior year, but I really didn't need to go to the clinic. So those things weren't of particular interest to me. I wasn't ever shut out of any classes, because as an international relations major, everything was pretty small anyway.

[0:20:00] In my SAIS program it was four men and four women. So I didn't feel that. I wasn't interested in that movement. Just get there on your own merit.

- JK: I think that's a useful perspective for us to have, because a lot of times people who are really involved in the protesting—the loudest person gets the most attention—but it's interesting to know that there's other women on campus too who were going through the program—
- ST: No, I didn't want that attention. I just wanted to do what I was doing. Complete my program. And then move on.
- JK: And tell me about the joint BA/MA program. So did you enroll as a freshman, already accepted into that program?
- ST: No, you actually don't apply until the end of your sophomore year, you applied. I think most people came from either foreign language, political science, or international relations. So you would apply, because there were courses you had to have taken, a grade point average you had to maintain. And then in our junior year we had a seminar that was called [inaudible]. And then your senior year, you were in DC for most of your courses. I still had the ROTC commitment, because that was a four-year program. So I stayed in Baltimore and then commuted back and forth. Yeah, that's how it worked. If you were in the combined degree program. You could always apply in your senior year, and go for the regular two years at SAIS, but it was great to cut a year off of grad school, and have dual enrollment, I guess.
- JK: That last year, your senior year then, where you were in ROTC and also going down to DC, did you feel like you were already graduated in a sense, or that you weren't as much a part of your senior class, because you had one foot in—
- ST: Well, because I lived here and I still was with all of my roommates, I had that connection. But it was just commuting to school, that's really how I viewed it.
- JK: Did you drive down?
- ST: I took the train sometimes, I took the number 11 bus. I think it was the number 11, right by campus, down to Union Station. One semester I commuted with one of my classmates who lived in Cockeysville. And she was driving so I would just arrange to meet her. And we didn't have classes every day either, so I think it was usually two or three times a week that I was down in DC.

- JK: Did you spend any time in, I can't remember when they established them, but SAIS has—at the least the Bologna campus has been there a long time, but did you spend any time there?
- ST: No, I didn't go to Bologna. I wasn't a European studies person anyway. I was Soviet. I was doing a lot of course work on Canada, and at the time the Canadian embassy was right next door to the school. And I figured in the army I would get to Europe sometime, anyhow.
- JK: Tell me about here at Homewood or at SAIS, any sort of memorable professors that you had?
- ST: Gosh it's all really sort of a blur. I remember James O'Leary was the AB/MA seminar coordinator, I just remember him being very helpful, I wasn't trying to follow a particular professor. They were all good. Mostly they were all good experiences.
- JK: Was your focus at SAIS, was it on security specifically, or just sort of Soviet—
- ST: Oh no, so the SAIS program at the time, everyone had to have a concentration in international economics. Which I knew going in. And then you picked two other fields. Ideally you would pick a geographic region and then a more general thing like international politics or comparative government or something along those lines. I picked Soviet studies and then also Canadian studies. I was a little bit of an odd duck in SAIS, too, because people usually didn't take two geographic regions. I'm not sure what the program is now, but the international economics has actually helped me get a job later on, so that was very helpful and interesting.
- [0:25:00]
- JK: In what way did it help you get a job later?
- ST: I was recruited to go teach at West Point, because by that time women were admitted into the Academies. I think that started in 1976. So women were coming through but they didn't have a lot of women officers to come and teach, because they weren't commissioning a lot of women officers. So I already had a master's degree from SAIS so they could get me to come much earlier in my career than other people could come. And I was recruited to teach American government, which was fine. The summer before—you would arrive there in June, and you'd have the summer to prepare all your classes.

And while I'm preparing all of my classes, one of the people they had recruited to teach economics, was not able to complete that commitment. So they were short an economics professor. And they knew it would be much easier to recruit somebody for government than for economics. And somebody pulled up my transcripts and went, "Oh my gosh, you've got macro, micro, international, comparative." I probably had 24, at least, credits of economics, and they said "We need you to teach economics instead." And it's the army, you do what they ask you to do. So that's how I became an economics professor at West Point.

JK: And what year was that?

ST: 1982 to 1985.

JK: Okay. So let's talk about the time in between that. So you graduated from Hopkins in '77? Is that right, or '76?

ST: Well I was commissioned in '76. I was allowed to stay on and continue my graduate degree. You had to apply to ask permission to do that. And then I went on active duty after that. I was at Fort Campbell, in the 101st Airborne Division. And then went to Korea for two years. And while I was in Korea I got a letter from my branch manager, "We need you to go to West Point, what do you think?" And I said "Yeah, sure." It was less than an hour from home, my parents were still in north Jersey. So I said, well yeah, that could be pretty cool. So that's what I did.

JK: And did you enjoy serving in Korea?

ST: Yes! I was in Taegu. It was kind of like being in the suburbs. I was a finance officer originally, and I was working in the comptroller's office, so I had a lot of Korean civilians working for me. I had Korean military working for me. It kind of was a 7:30 to 5 job. And part of what I did there was to inspect other finance offices.

So I was able to see other places in the country, so that was nice. And I was tapped to be a USO escort officer for three weeks. You've got to make sure the college kids don't do bad things. But the plus side of that was I got to see a lot of Korea I didn't know existed and certainly never would have seen on my own. A lot of mountaintop sites, things like that. It was very interesting.

JK: Were you escorting someone famous?

ST: No, I was escorting a band from the University of Montana. Really just college kids in the summertime. But it was a lot of fun. I wasn't that much older than they were. And like I said, I got to see so much of Korea that I never would have seen. Now the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders go to the really good places [laughs]. But the college bands went to more remote sites that didn't get much in the way of entertainment.

JK: And so after that you came back to West Point for a while—

ST: Right, three years.

JK: What was it like teaching there? You were, in a way you mentioned that one of the ways you were recruited was because they wanted to see more women in these higher positions. Did you interact with a lot of female students while you were there?

ST: I actually didn't have that many students. What I taught was a required course for all sophomores. So in a class of 15, usually classes were 15 or 16, there might have been two women in a class. So there weren't many. I sponsored a couple of female cadets while I was there. That involved having them come to your home on the weekend, playing with your kids, invite them to different activities you were doing. In my own department, when I arrived there was one other female.

[0:30:02] Another one came the same year I did. The department had about 60 faculty. I don't remember there ever being more than six women there at a time while I was teaching.

JK: You just mentioned something about your family too—

ST: My children were born all over the place. One in Korea, one at West Point, one in Germany, and one at Andrews Air Force Base, when I came to work in Washington, DC.

JK: Wow. Was it difficult, or did you find that anything changed once you had children and you were serving as an officer?

ST: It was just like another family moving around.

JK: Okay, and you taught at West Point until 19—

ST: '85.

JK: And where did you move to after that?

ST: Okay, while I was at West Point I was picked up to be a Soviet, East European foreign area officer. Which actually was my goal. But when you come on active duty as a second lieutenant, you have to serve in a branch basic course. And for me that was finance, tied into the economics thing. So I was finally allowed to do the secondary track. So I was admitted into that program, and that involved some language training. And then an immersion experience.

So from West Point I went to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, to study Russian. And then from there two years in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, that was where all the Russian immersion programs were at the time. We couldn't get visas into Moscow, so we were in this really Russian immersion environment for two years.

JK: And from there, you were serving as a Soviet area specialist?

ST: Right, so then I came to Washington DC and I was a Soviet analyst, from '88 to '92.

JK: Did you ever get to at that time, or later, go to the Soviet Union?

ST: No, in fact my class had a visa denied ten times while we were there. Which is kind of a shame. The previous class was able to get in because our new embassy was being built in Moscow, so they were kind of able to tie into that. And the class behind me got to go to Russia because by that time relations were good, the wall was coming down. And things like that. But, no I've never been.

JK: You just had that unlucky spot.

ST: That's right, unlucky spot.

JK: And then in '99 you retired from the military?

ST: That's right.

JK: And tell me about that decision, why you decided that was the right thing to do.

ST: Okay, so by then I had to reinvent myself. Because now people didn't need Soviet experts anymore. I was not interested in becoming a Middle East, with an Arabic specialty, so I focused on Latin America. I had been in Bogota, Colombia, working in the

embassy, and I came back to the States. And I had orders to be the army attaché in Moscow, or the assistant army attaché.

I had to do some more training. But while I was in Colombia one of my children had become pretty sick, and we thought it was just something that when we came back to the States, she would outgrow it and everything would be fine. But that wasn't the case. So I realized that if we went to Moscow, we'd be commuting to Frankfurt for medical care. That wasn't very appealing. And my oldest daughter was going to start college, and I thought, "Wow, I remember going to college," but I don't think commuting to Moscow from the United States wasn't exactly in the best interest of anybody.

We'd all had this embassy experience and I'm like, "You know what? I have enough time, I'm just going to retire." And that's what I did. So I retired and started teaching Spanish in school. So that kind of was my segue into this second career.

JK: Okay, so you taught here in Baltimore, right?

ST: I did, I taught for two years at a K – 8 school in Annapolis, and then by then my daughters were out of high school and my sons were coming up. And my oldest son got into Mount Saint Joseph here in Baltimore.

[0:35:04] And so I said, "Okay, how are we going to make this work?" So I figured the only way to make that work was to get a job teaching at Baltimore myself. Which is what I did.

JK: Was that a difficult transition from so long in the military into a high school? I can see some advantages, actually.

ST: Okay, you know I worked in all-boys schools, so it was sort of a theme in my life. I went to this college that hardly had women, and then I'm in a profession that hardly has any women, so then just moving into an all-boys high school was like, yeah, I'd been in charge of teenage boys before, how hard could this be? So that was very different, and I tell people all the time, I never worked so hard as when I was teaching school.

Because the job never ends. For most of my career in the army, when the day ends you couldn't take that work home, what I did. So when you left you really were away from the office. But when you're a teacher, there are lesson plans to write, there are papers to

grade, there's research to do for what you're going to do for your next class. It was just never-ending.

JK: And so you transitioned. You were teaching high school for quite a while, and you received, I believe, a couple of other master's degrees along the way, right?

ST: Right, yes. So I was picked up to be an army exchange officer at the Naval War College, so I got a degree in national security studies and public policy. I graduated there in 1993.

JK: And what's an army exchange officer?

ST: Well the Naval War College is professional development for Navy officers, generally, but they do have ten or twelve, every year, ten or twelve officers from the Army, Air Force, Marines, and the Coast Guard, so I had to apply to be an exchange officer there. And I got accepted. So I was able to go to Newport. It was very nice.

JK: And then you also have a masters in Spanish?

ST: Right, I got a masters in Spanish from New Mexico State. I really did that for professional development. I was teaching Spanish because when I retired there wasn't any demand for Russian teachers, but Spanish teachers, everybody needed them. And I had been speaking Spanish for three years in Colombia. So I took the Spanish job. And then time progressed, and I'm like, okay, there was an opportunity to get this degree and I did. So, life-long learner, you know. I wish I had had any Spanish before I went to Bogota. That would have been very helpful.

JK: I'm sure you learned quickly once you were there.

ST: I did, because once I got the assignment to Colombia, no one's speaking Russian there, so "Okay, we'll give you a State Department tutor for one month, and then we'll let you go to Antigua, Guatemala for one month, and now you're a Spanish speaker." But I had a lot of Colombians working for me, so I was hearing it all the time. I got by. Yeah, I got better.

JK: Was is it a big cultural adjustment to be jumping from Korea to Germany to Colombia, in terms of working with the local people that were there?

ST: Korea was kind of interesting because it's 1980 – '82, so there was still a curfew all over the country. Ration control, for things like Tang. I mean I understood the cigarettes and the liquor and the Pampers a little bit, but why is Tang and mayonnaise, and freeze-dried coffee, you know you could only buy certain amounts of that. So I found that a little interesting. So that was sort of the culture shock there.

Being off the military base—I think it was the whole country actually, you couldn't be on the streets between midnight and 4 AM in the morning. That wasn't a problem for me. I'm home sleeping. So it was kind of interesting. And then they got the bid for the Olympics while I was still there. And I'll never forget, it was January 1982: "Oh we're going to be this Olympic site in '88, maybe we better join the modern world."

So the curfew came off, I started to notice a few things were a little different. But it was a very different culture for them in the 1980s. I'd like to go back now and see how it's changed. Then in Germany, I had lived in Germany before, so that was a pretty easy transition.

[0:40:00] Colombia? You know I knew about machismo, but again my job was with the embassy. That was kind of the circle that I was travelling with. We knew people that worked for Chevron Oil, for Caterpillar Tractor that were Americans. That was usually who our circle was while we were there.

JK: And were there army-sponsored schools that your children would go to?

ST: Oh no, in fact in Germany I put my daughters in the German public schools instead, because I had taken German forever, I could speak it, I wanted them to learn it. They were really young and I thought that was the perfect time. You know, learn it when you're four and six. So my daughters went to German school. When we were in Colombia there were no defense schools.

There was a school approved by the State Department that taught in English. It was for really wealthy Colombians who wanted their kids to go to school in the United States for college. So it was a bilingual school. So that's where, if you were assigned to the embassy and you were an American, that's where almost all the kids went. There were some homeschool families, but I wasn't in a position to do that. So they went to a Colombian school.

- JK: Wow, what an interesting experience for them.
- ST: It was, so they have funny stories. My youngest son, who was in the first grade at the time, didn't want to study Spanish. He used to hide under the desk and in the closet, things like that. He ended up being in their gifted and talented program, in spite of his hesitancy to learn Spanish. And then became quite fluent in it and took it all through high school and college, as a Spanish minor.
- JK: Has their international upbringing contributed to their career choices? Or are they following their own paths?
- ST: A little. I have a son who is in the Air Force, so he wanted to travel some. He's ironically stationed in Germany now, and he's the one that was born in Germany. So his life kind of came full circle. And he's travelled a bit, just as a tourist. My youngest son, when he went to college, took a travel study course every spring, so it might have been a class on education or sociology or urban planning or something, but there was a country that you traveled to.
- You gave up your spring vacation to then travel. His senior year he took a course on the history of Vietnam, and the spring break was a trip to Vietnam that was led—the professor had actually served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive. And I thought, well this is just so interesting, because that is part of what drove me to want to serve in the army in the first place. And that never happened, but now my youngest son is the one who is going from Hanoi to Saigon, or I guess Ho Chi Minh City now. So they travel. They like to travel.
- JK: And you mentioned that you're a lifelong learner before; you're actually currently in a—
- ST: Yeah, I'm working on a doctorate in education curriculum and instruction. Maybe somebody I'll teach online. That's my ultimate goal is to teach out of my kitchen, online. In the meantime I adjunct at the community college, and I'm teaching Russian and Spanish. So again, we've come full circle, Russia is back in the news, college students want to study it, and here I am teaching Russian after 23 or 24 years.
- JK: That's really interesting the way the demand goes up and down depending on what's going on.
- ST: Yeah, it's been very interesting.

- JK: And how would you say, following the thread of your Hopkins education through your career, how do you think it impacted or assisted in where you went in your career?
- ST: Well, having the degree from SAIS, as I mentioned, helped me at West Point. I was recruited because I already had a master's degree. And then my concentration at SAIS had me teaching economics using the international economics piece, and then when I applied to be a foreign area officer, I already had the Soviet studies in my background. I had Russian and German as my foreign languages. And I already had a master's degree.
- [0:45:01] And I was at West Point teaching, so for the army I had checked all those boxes, Hopkins gave me the education they were looking for, so it helped me get into that career field in the military.
- JK: Your class at SAIS was very small. Was there a stream, or was it typical for people getting their degrees at SAIS to go into the military, or were they more heading into the Foreign Service?
- ST: Foreign Service, World Bank. But I had as classmates people who were actually going to West Point to teach, so they had been selected but they didn't have a master's degree yet. They were at SAIS to get their degree in international relations, and then go back to West Point to teach.
- JK: Oh, so they were already active duty officers.
- ST: Yeah, they were usually captains with seven or eight years of service that had to get a master's degree. And one of my classmates I actually kept in touch with for quite some time, because he ended up teaching at West Point. He was gone by the time I got there, but similar paths.
- JK: Are there any other ways that you stayed connected with Hopkins after graduating?
- ST: I came back, I think, for my 15th reunion. That was fun. I think it was the only reunion that was after school was over and we were allowed to stay in the dorms if we wanted, which I did because my kids were all really young at the time. And then I think it was the 30th reunion before I came back again. Some of my roommates I kept in touch with on and off over the years. One of them has been in the Maryland area the whole time.

And then I recently connected with my college roommate that I hadn't seen probably in 25 years, the one that we were roommates the entire time that I was here. So that was kind of fun. And then at the 40th reunion, again I spoke with somebody else. We get together maybe every five or six weeks and go on a hike someplace.

JK: Oh that's nice. Is there anything else about your Hopkins experience that you would want to share that I haven't asked you about?

ST: No I can't really think of anything. The school is just so different than when I was here. It was almost like, not a country school, but it felt like being in the country in the city, because the student body was so small. It was like the size of my high school. And now I come back and I'm like "Where did all these buildings come from? Where's all the green space?"

JK: I do hear that a lot. Lots of groves and trees and things that have made way for buildings. Okay, well thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me today, I really appreciate it.

ST: Oh, you're welcome.

[End of Audio]