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Mary Brown Bullock,  
Alumna and Past President of Agnes Scott College

JAMES NEWBERRY, interviewer: All right, this is James Newberry; and I'm here with Dr. Mary Brown Bullock at her home in downtown Decatur, Georgia, on February 17, 2012. And Dr. Bullock, do you agree to this interview?

MARY BROWN BULLOCK: I do.

MR. NEWBERRY: All right, well, I appreciate it. Now, what year were you born?

DR. BULLOCK: 1944

MR. NEWBERRY: And where did you grow up?

DR. BULLOCK: I grew up in—my father was in the army, and my mother followed him around for a while. And he went to a seminary; and we lived in Gastonia, North Carolina, for two years. But when I was eight, we moved to Japan; my parents were missionaries to Korea. But we went to Japan first in 1953—no, '52. We went in 1952, because they were studying Korean; and the Korean War was still going on. In 1954 we moved to Korea, and that—South Korea—that was my home base for about ten years, although I went to high school in Japan part of the time. And then I came here to 30030 for college. So I came to Agnes Scott College in 1962.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, could you tell me about the experience of growing up, you know, as a missionary's child and in Asia?

DR. BULLOCK: It was great. You know, I wouldn't give anything for that. My mother says sometimes I was lonely in those years; maybe I was. But partly since I went on to study Asia academically, to have been there right after the Korean War and to see—Japan was still recovering from World War II—so to see this part of the world that is so vibrant today, but it was flat on its back then—I mean, the poverty was unbelievable—so now it really gives me a comparative framework for where they've come. And we—in Korea we lived in Kwangju, which was a regional capital. There were no other—very few other American

families, just a few. My mother taught me school. I used to tell the Agnes Scott admissions people, “You tell your people that have been home-schooled [that] your president was home-schooled.” [*She and MR. NEWBERRY laugh.*] And-- through elementary school. We’d play with Korean kids, you know. We didn’t travel around much, because the roads were all dirt roads. It took forever to get anywhere, but it was a great life. And then I went to high school in Japan, and that was a wonderful experience—that was an international high school.

MR. NEWBERRY: So were you fluent in those languages?

DR. BULLOCK: Unfortunately I didn’t become fluent in either. I learned Korean, you know, so that I could communicate and understand a fair amount of Korean. But in Japan this was a Canadian school, and they were very—with people from all over the world. They really were trying to prepare us for college, and most people were either coming to America or to Europe; so we had to take four years of French and four years of Latin, which is—sitting in the middle of Japan, it was really short-sighted. [*MR. NEWBERRY laughs.*] I regret that tremendously.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what were your parents’ names?

DR. BULLOCK: Brown--Tommy [George Thompson] and Mardia Brown.

MR. NEWBERRY: And where were they from originally?

DR. BULLOCK: My dad had been born in China, and his parents had been missionaries to China. And my mother had been born in Korea. Her parents had been missionaries to Korea, so I come from—both sides of my family—a missionary family. So they really knew Asia very well. My mother already spoke fluent Korean. My father spoke Kor—Chinese, but then he had to learn Korean.

MR. NEWBERRY: And were they both Presbyterian?

DR. BULLOCK: They were both Presbyterians, uh-huh.

MR. NEWBERRY: And did they have a sort of, you know—obviously they would have had some sort of international mindset, you know, growing up there.

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm.

MR. NEWBERRY: And so were they—did they feel that they were Americans abroad, or—

DR. BULLOCK: I think that's a good way to put it, Americans abroad. They made a point of trying to create their homelife for that of an American family. So we celebrated all of the American holidays—Halloween, July Fourth—you know, big deals, this small group of expatriate Americans. So they—I think they felt it was very important that we understood our American roots, even as though—even as we embraced this broader international community.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, what sort of a student were you? I understand you were home-schooled through elementary school.

DR. BULLOCK: Middle school, yeah.

MR. NEWBERRY: And then went to international high schools.

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: And so could you describe yourself academically at that time?

DR. BULLOCK, *laughing*: Describe myself academically? I was probably like—I was a fairly serious student in high school, not—My mother was teaching us, it was amazing. There was this home instruction course, and we could get through with lessons by noon; and so—and we came back to the United States for one year, and my mother was very worried that we wouldn't be able to do well. Well, we tested out of the class; but they wisely left us in the class, because we had a lot of social adjustment. But—and, you know, I was always interested in history, starting in high school. I had some good history teachers; I was very interested in European history at that time. And in Asia—that was—what was going on in Japan. But I can't say that I was an overly intellectual student. I was very involved in extracurricular things. And my big accomplishment was being editor of the school annual. You know, I used to say that I learned everything I needed to know about running a college from being editor of the school annual [*both laugh*—how to delegate, how to assign, how to keep things on time, you know.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. And so, you wouldn't say—or would you say that your parents, you know, really encouraged you in that way, or you were just living—you know, you became a college president, so was there a sort of--

DR. BULLOCK: Well, I think the influence on me there was probably my started a seminary in Kwangju, where we lived; and so a lot of our, you know, family conversation over many years was his, you know, how do you create an institution? And then how do you build a faculty? So some of the same issues, in very different circumstances, I dealt with at Agnes Scott. So I grew up in an environment of people involved, in his case particularly, running an institution—an academic institution.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. OK. Now, you chose to come to Agnes Scott--

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --for undergrad. And why did you make that decision?

DR. BULLOCK: My mother came, simple as that. You know, you're living seven thousand miles, six thousand miles away from America, you didn't visit colleges in those days. And then my mother had a wonderful college yearbook. I can still remember the cover: it was white with kind of columns on it or some such sort of design. And I used to love to look at that yearbook, and college looked wonderful, you know--a miracle, wonderful. I wasn't sure I wanted to go to a woman's [sic] college, but it—the fact that it was in a big city was attractive. And my parents did want me to go to a Presbyterian college, and so we looked at the different Presbyterian colleges; and this is the only one I actually applied to.

MR. NEWBERRY: And so that was the tradition, then, with your mother—even though they were living abroad, she came back to--

DR. BULLOCK: She had come back to college herself--

MR. NEWBERRY: --school in America--

DR. BULLOCK: --and lived here—you know, got married right after college and lived with my dad, you know, not ten years before they went to Korea as missionaries.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what was the reputation of Agnes Scott at that time?

DR. BULLOCK: It was—it had a very high reputation. People are surprised to hear this now—we looked down on Emory. We did not think Emory had as high—maybe I shouldn't say this—didn't think of it as high standards as Agnes Scott. And the faculty—we had many women faculty that—in those days women didn't easily get jobs in co-ed universities. Our women faculty had their Ph.D.s from Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Yale. So we had an extraordinary faculty.

And the tough academic standards—in my class five of us went to [graduate school at] Stanford--graduated [from Agnes Scott] in '66, went to Stanford. I mean, this was a class of two hundred. Two went to Harvard. You know, two went to the University of Japan. I can't remember the others—oh, Michigan. Anyway, people—we were—it was--no one ever thought it was strange that you were going to graduate school. It was just—you assumed that you--the better students would go to graduate school.

One of the differences at that time, law was just beginning to open up to women. A number of my classmates eventually got law degrees, but only one that I remember went directly to law school, you know, from Agnes Scott. Some did go into medicine; but again, medicine was just opening up for women. So the teaching profession, the academic professorate, was really what most of us were kind of looking at if we wanted to go on for some sort of graduate program.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. So you made that decision while you were an undergrad--

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --to follow a sort of academic route.

DR. BULLOCK: Again, in that era, most people, if you were going to go to graduate school, you just went directly. You didn't—I don't—I like what people do today. They take a couple of years and work. I think you have a better idea of what you want to do, but that was not the pattern when we were in school. You just went straight on if you were going to go on to graduate school. So I

think surely that, you know, by my junior year I knew I wanted to—well, even before then--I knew I wanted to study Asia.

And I considered transferring from Agnes Scott because it didn't have much in Asian studies. But then I thought, well, I lived all this—my life in Asia. I really should get a grounding in my own culture, so I decided to stay at Agnes Scott and majored in history and philosophy and so took a lot of European history particularly and a lot of philosophy. And I'll actually never regret that, because it really gave me a good comparative grounding for when I went on to graduate school.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. OK, and so you graduated Phi Beta Kappa—

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --and set out—

DR. BULLOCK: You've done your homework.

MR. NEWBERRY: --for California [*laughs*]

DR. BULLOCK: This isn't new to you [*laughs*].

MR. NEWBERRY: --and went to Stanford.

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: And what was the decision-making behind that, going to Stanford, in particular?

DR. BULLOCK: Well, I was very fortunate. I applied to, I guess, five graduate schools and was admitted to all of them. So I was admitted to Harvard and Yale and Columbia, Washington University, Stanford. And I had a terrible time making a choice. The faculty really wanted me to go to Harvard. Obviously it had—still does have—that, you know, top-of-the-line reputation.

But there are a couple of reasons I didn't want to go to Harvard. It was cold. [*She and MR. NEWBERRY laugh.*] I had had an interview at Yale--spent two days, I guess, at Yale. They flew me up for a scholarship interview. And it was a terrible two days. They kept asking me, "What does a nice young thing like you from the South . . .?"—you know, why does a woman like you want to go to

graduate school? I couldn't believe it! I mean, after—we never were treated that way here, and I was deeply offended by the sort of—types of questioning; and I swore that if Yale was the only place that admitted me, I was not going to go. So I'd already written off Yale. I was admitted to Yale; I've had a great time going back to Yale as a speaker and telling that story. [*MR. NEWBERRY laughs.*]

Anyway, I thought Harvard might be similar, and also I had not been able to take Chinese as an undergraduate, so I knew I'd have to begin my language in graduate school. You could never get into graduate school today without it, but at that time you could. So I knew that studying Chinese was going to be tough, along with the graduate program. Well, Harvard wanted me to come for summer school to start my Chinese language early. I was exhausted from four years of college. I did not want to go to summer school. I had a chance to go back to Korea to be with my family, and so I gave that the highest priority. And then some of my friends were going to Stanford; so that's why I went to Stanford.

MR. NEWBERRY: So over all that time in college at Agnes Scott, how often would you see your parents?

DR. BULLOCK: Not often. That was hard. I came as a freshman, and my mother went from Korea to Japan for my high school graduation; but my father didn't. You just didn't travel like that; it was expensive. So I started—I came here by myself; an aunt brought me. And my parents then came on furlough the next year when I was a sophomore. And they were at—Daddy was at Columbia Seminary. So actually I lived with them in Mission Haven [a community in the Winnona Park neighborhood of Decatur], which is right near Columbia Seminary, for my sophomore year.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

DR. BULLOCK: But then they went back to Korea, and I did not see them my junior and senior years at all; so that's—those were tough—and those were not easy years. So I really, really needed that time with my family that summer. I've never regretted that I went to Stanford. It's a beautiful place with a great

faculty. And it's interesting that I've met a couple of people that would have been in my class at Harvard, and one or two of them dropped out because it was too tough, etc. [*laughs*] So anyway, Stanford was good and rigorous, and I enjoyed those years very much.

MR. NEWBERRY: And I wanted to go back—you said that, you know, Yale, they admitted you, or they had not admitted you at the time? Or they interviewed you and said--

DR. BULLOCK: At the interview, right.

MR. NEWBERRY: --why do you want to go?

DR. BULLOCK: Right.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. But they did later admit you?

DR. BULLOCK: They did when--after—so I guess I did OK in the interview, but--you know, I was admitted, I was given a very nice scholarship. I also was very lucky—I got a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, which enabled you to go. It covered all your expenses for your first year of graduate school, and you could take it anywhere in the country. So, you know, we didn't have any money; that was really essential to getting me started into graduate school. So I took it to Stanford, is where I took my Woodrow Wilson Fellowship.

MR. NEWBERRY: And was this—were you the sort of person who was constantly driven and motivated? I mean, how did you sort of sustain that lifestyle? It seems very rigorous. You know—from a person who's in that state at the moment.

DR. BULLOCK: You know, when I was at—pardon?

MR. NEWBERRY: For a person who's in that state at the moment [*laughs*].

DR. BULLOCK: Where are you?

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, I'm a first-year grad student. But it sort of seems like—

DR. BULLOCK: Where are you in school?

MR. NEWBERRY: Georgia State



DR. BULLOCK: You're in Georgia State. Well, you know, these are the best years of your life; so you need to remember that. Actually, you do have more flexibility than you'll ever have again. But you have to discipline yourself and, you know, fill in, make sure that hours count because there's so much work to do, you know. You work at night and on the weekends, things like that. College I—college I worked hard, but Stanford I really--that first year was really tough. I met George [Bullock, her husband] that first year actually.

But I was studying—taking first-year Chinese. I'm not a language student; it was very hard. And then I was taking regular graduate courses. And none of the other graduate students were also taking first-year language. So I found that very tough. I did study. Anybody that knew me at that time, including George, could tell you I studied all the time, that first year in particular. And I did end up having—taking second-year Chinese the next summer. I thought I'd died. You know, just a full year of graduate school and then a full summer of intense, four-hours-a-day class in Chinese and then four or five hours of work. But, by the time I got to my second year in graduate school, I'd kind of gotten the hang of it.

And one of the good things that Agnes Scott taught me was to—Agnes Scott never allowed Incompletes of any kind. I mean, a parent could die, you could be dying—you couldn't take an Incomplete [*laughs*]. So you always finished the work of the semester or the quarter, because the penalty—you failed, you know, otherwise. So I always finished my classes at Stanford—sometimes barely. But a lot of people had gotten used to the system of deferral; and so they would take an incomplete in graduate school, and then those Incompletes would pile up. They'd have to go back and finish those Incompletes. I never had that because the sort of discipline that Scott taught me. You know, I just kind of—you know, I used to—I still tell people in graduate school, "Just stick with it." You know, the brilliant people can't take it, and they leave, [*DR. BROWN and MR. NEWBERRY laugh.*] you know, but the

regular people just stick with it. Do what you have to do, you know, each semester. You'll get through it, you know. So bear that in mind. [*Both laugh.*]

MR. NEWBERRY: That's great advice. So you have a master's and Ph.D. at Stanford, and that was in Chinese history?

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what sort of—what sort of classes were you taking? What sort of issues were you exposed to? And was there any traveling to China?

DR. BULLOCK: Not at that era. Actually it was an incredible time to start studying China, 1966. It was the year that the Cultural Revolution broke out. People kept saying, "Why are you studying China? You'll never get to go there." But my first semester I took a regular course on Japanese history. We had to study Japanese and Chinese history--my exams covered both—and then a seminar on modern China with lots of readings. And because I was in history, but the people—I didn't study much ancient history, early history, although I had some exposure. So it was mainly eighteenth--it was really mainly from the—really nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. And I was fortunate in that my main professor, Lyman van Slyke, he wrote about the Communist period, which at that point wasn't that old. But most historians didn't write about the PRC [People's Republic of China]. If they worked on twentieth century, they worked on the first fifty years. But van Slyke had this sort of broader perspective, and so that gave me more exposure to studying Communist China than I probably otherwise would have had as a historian.

MR. NEWBERRY: So your focus is more on the People's Republic.

DR. BULLOCK: My research focus—well, I can't even say that. My research focus was long focus, just on the Republic of China and mainly on U.S.-China relations during that period. But because I spent so much time going to China and working on China issues from the mid-'70s until I came to Agnes Scott, I have a lot of exposure to contemporary China and got involved in a lot of academic activities. So I know the issues, and I know the literature. So

that—I'm not trained as a political scientist, but at Emory I'm in the Political Science Department and the History Department; and I teach a course on Chinese politics. And the reason I can do that is because of all this constant travel and this exposure to the literature in the field.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. So you graduated; and then, I believe, you became the director of the Committee on Scholarly Communication in the—

DR. BULLOCK: People's Republic of China, yes. A long name, yes.

MR. NEWBERRY: And that was from—that was fifteen years.

DR. BULLOCK: It was a long time.

MR. NEWBERRY: So were you—

DR. BULLOCK: Best job I ever had.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see.

DR. BULLOCK: I've had great jobs, but that was a great job.

MR. NEWBERRY: That was the best one. And you didn't—you weren't like a professor necessarily at a school.

DR. BULLOCK: No, I taught for—George and I went to Alaska right after we were married, and I taught for a year at the University of Alaska. But then when I joined the committee, the CSCPRC, I didn't have an academic appointment. I had my Ph.D., but not—this was--based at the National Academy of Science and Academic—in Washington. But the responsibilities were trying to serve as a bridge. China—[Richard] Nixon had just gone to China [1972], so we were responsible for the academic programs that the Chinese had agreed to when Nixon went to China. So we traveled with the—it was initially a very small office; it grew to be about twenty people, I guess, about the time I left. But we would travel with American scientists going to China and with Chinese scientists going to this country and some social scientists. So it was really like another education. I had a lot of exposure to science at that time, American and Chinese science, which had been one of my research interests. So—

MR. NEWBERRY: When you say science, you mean what, exactly?

DR. BULLOCK: Natural sciences of all kinds. My own writing has been on medical science. But my first trip to China in '74 was with a seismology delegation, looking at earthquakes; and this is geophysics and geology. This was a field in which the Chinese and Americans were considered to have some similar interests; we both were seismic, you know, zones. And so the Chinese had, you know--their universities had been closed for fifteen years during the Cultural Revolution. It was a really terrible time in China. But we were lucky to be among the first groups that went. And so each of those visits—then I traveled with a schistosomiasis delegation. So it's an infectious parasitic disease. So kind of obscure topics in a way, but important for the—an earthquake engineer and what all did I travel with? Agriculture, agricultural science. So I was exposed to the scientific infrastructure of both countries; because when I traveled in this country, I would take Chinese groups to American universities. And I went on other briefings, all their meetings. So I really have a once-over-lightly view of a lot of different disciplines. Actually that helped me a lot as a college president—

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-mm

DR. BULLOCK: --was that exposure that I'd had to many, many different disciplines when I was at the academy.

MR. NEWBERRY: And it was—so you were more—in more of a public policy, foreign relations position?

DR. BULLOCK: Kind of, although we didn't formulate policy. We were kind of running programs that had been agreed upon by others.

MR. NEWBERRY: That might have an impact—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes.

MR. NEWBERRY: --on policy.

DR. BULLOCK: Right. Then when I went to the Woodrow Wilson Center, that was more of a public policy institution.

MR. NEWBERRY: That was when you left the—

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --Committee on Scholarly Communication.

DR. BULLOCK: You've got it all down. [*Both laugh.*]

MR. NEWBERRY: And went to the—

DR. BULLOCK: --I'm impressed.

MR. NEWBERRY: --Woodrow Wilson International Center as the Asia Program Director—

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --and was that also a fulfilling period?

DR. BULLOCK: That was great, too. I had been—I was worn out after fifteen years of dealing with the Chinese. It—those were difficult years, politically and in a lot of other ways. So it was nice to go to a place that was more of a think tank—

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

DR. BULLOCK: --and less operational. I had been running a program, I'd been raising a lot of money, etc. I didn't have to do that. So we had resident scholars. A different group came every year. We planned programs around issues in—on modern Asia. And I got--one of the reasons I was interested in going to the Wilson Center was it—China was a big focus, but it also included Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. And from my Korea-Japan days I had long had a broader interest in Asia than just China, so this allowed me, you know, to work--sort of dabble in all of this. So my job was to come up with good ideas for programs that would bring scholars and public policy people together. We would write books that came out of that, and that was just great fun and again exposed me to a lot of different disciplines during that time.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you continued traveling to China, or [inaudible]?

DR. BULLOCK: I did. Not as much, but I—not as much, but I did. Well, I did keep going. And I did go—spent time in Japan and Korea, India, Sri Lanka, so I got some broader travel exposure to Asia.

MR. NEWBERRY: And are these—these committees in the international center—are they affected by political changes in Washington, or is that totally separate?

DR. BULLOCK: Fortunately, in a way, the Wilson Center was nice because it was considered—it's considered—it is a nonpartisan center. It's not like Brookings, it's sort of considered, you know, Democratic in the heritage, it's considered Republican. It was created by Congress as a living memorial to President Woodrow Wilson. And so it was designed not to have any political bias. So we have scholars of different persuasions; and when we put on programs, we made a point of trying to have different perspectives. So we weathered the political wars pretty easily—pretty well, because the institution had a—there was a lot of respect for it. If anything, it had a kind of centrist view. But we would—well, we brought in all kinds of viewpoints. It was fun.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. And you were also a lecturer at Johns Hopkins—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes

MR. NEWBERRY: --during that time?

DR. BULLOCK: I taught a couple of courses just because I always had wanted to teach, and this gave me an opportunity.

MR. NEWBERRY: But it wasn't your first foray into teaching—being a professor, obviously--

DR. BULLOCK: No, I taught at the University of Alaska.

MR. NEWBERRY: --but not from early '70s to the '90s.

DR. BULLOCK: No, no, no. I hadn't been doing any teaching, right. I'd published a book, and at the Wilson Center I edited a couple of books. But no, it was—and I was doing this kind of in my spare time. You know, it was a sort of visiting professor type thing.

MR. NEWBERRY: What do you see yourself as during that period, an academic or a—

DR. BULLOCK: I guess I would see myself, I guess, if you were going to describe it, as an academic administrator. I always felt it was important to keep

my toe in my actual scholarship so that I didn't just become an administrator. And the teaching was one way to do that, the finishing a book was one way to do that, writing. I didn't want to just be an administrator.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. So in 1995 [*laughs*] what happened at that point?

DR. BULLOCK: It was a 180-degree turn. Well, some classmates nominated me as president [of Agnes Scott College]. I thought, this is crazy. You know, I have no—I haven't even been teaching, I haven't been in an academic, you know, institution. I knew a little bit because my parents lived in here, and two brothers lived here. I knew some of what was going on at Agnes Scott; I knew that they needed some help. George and I talked about it. We thought they'll never pick me, so why don't you just—why don't you just throw your hat in and see what happens?

So I did, and you remember this; it's actually a good thing to do. I decided, OK, if I went there, what conditions would I go under? What would I want to do? So I wrote this letter that outlined what I would do, and that's why they hired me. They liked what I had to say, they liked that somebody came with sort of an agenda, and the—you know, they took a gamble on me. I took a gamble on this big change. But a lot of my work, both at the academy and at the Wilson Center, you know, was not dissimilar to that of a dean who's juggling different faculty and different disciplines. I was grateful for that breadth, as I mentioned. I'd raised a lot of money; I knew how to raise money. I did have, you know, administrative experience. But I'm sure it seemed kind of odd to everybody, but they had not had an alumna president before; and so I think that was obviously the other reason.

MR. NEWBERRY: But you weren't itching to leave the previous—

DR. BULLOCK: No, no, no. In fact, I had a hard time leaving. Once they then offered it to me, I thought, "Oh, no. I don't want to go." I loved my job. I loved—

MR. NEWBERRY: So it was coincidental that your classmates—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes. No, no, no—I didn't ask them to—it came totally out of the blue. Yeah.

MR. NEWBERRY: That's great.

DR. BULLOCK: So anyway, I was very honored, and they've been very loyal to me. They gave me huge help when I was president and would always stand up and cheer. So, I mean, you know, a lot of moral support, too.

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: So you were the first and only alumna to serve as president.

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: And was there special significance, and has that been, you know, highlighted on all occasions?

DR. BULLOCK: Yeah, I think it was. It helped me that first year in particular, because my learning curve is—had to be very steep. And so that people gave me—at least the alumnae, who had become disenchanted with the college—they gave me the benefit of the doubt in the beginning, because they knew I knew what the college record was. And I think they trusted me to try to get it right. So actually I could be more radical in a way, because they felt I was grounded in the institution. So that helped a lot, because we made a lot of changes. And the board of trustees and I felt, while a changes were needed, and in the weeks leading up to my actual appointment we talked about that a lot, I said I wasn't going to come unless I had their support, the support of the board of trustees, to look at the college in certain ways and address certain issues.

MR. NEWBERRY: And obviously they're made up of mostly of alumni [sic].

DR. BULLOCK: They weren't at that time. There were some alumnae. I put more alumnae on the board. I'm sure it's more—it may be the majority now. I don't think it was then. But certainly there were some alumnae and some from my era at Agnes Scott. There was nobody from my class, but some from the '60s were on the board at that time.



MR. NEWBERRY: OK. And could you tell me a little bit about the college's history? I mean, I know it was founded in 1889--

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --or so and private, Presbyterian USA today.

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: But could you tell me—

DR. BULLOCK: I was Presbyterian—that's another reason—

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

DR. BULLOCK: --that made it easier. The college also always had a Presbyterian president. So—

MR. NEWBERRY: The light's not bothering you, is it? I see it's on your face.

DR. BULLOCK: No, it's OK. Maybe I'll move here.

MR. NEWBERRY: Yeah, I'd hate for you to stare into it.

*[Sounds of shifting seating.]*

DR. BULLOCK: Is the recorder still--

MR. NEWBERRY: It's fine.

DR. BULLOCK: --working? OK. Well, the college was—there were two models of women's colleges at the turn of the century. One of them was an academic track, and one was more a “educate mothers” kind of track. Both had important roles to play, but the men who established Agnes Scott did the academic track; and they wanted to model it after Princeton and Yale and the really well-established women's colleges of the day. So they tracked the curriculum at those institutions and tried to implement it here and those kinds of standards. So it was always known as a pretty rigorous college. It had the second Phi Beta Kappa chapter in Georgia. The University of Georgia had the first; Agnes Scott had the second in the 1920s or so. So it was—it was always a serious place in that regard. I think it—during—certainly when I was there, it was predominantly white, overwhelmingly white, overwhelmingly middle-class, and some regional--some diversity from within the region, but not so much

nationally. English was always the strongest department in that era. English is probably still the strongest department. It's one of the—well, psychology. There are other strong departments, but a strong humanities-liberal arts focus.

What started to change, of course, was in the mid-'70s when all the former many schools that had been for men only went coeducational. It was a huge threat to women's colleges. So when Davidson, which had been kind of a sister school or brother school, or Princeton, which drew a lot from the South, when all those schools went coeducational, many women who would have gone to Agnes Scott in the past went to a coeducational institution. So since the mid-'70s the—I wouldn't say it's the biggest challenge. Well, I think at times probably the biggest challenge is how to define a woman's [sic] college in this new era and how to keep the standards up and the enrollment up.

When I came, the enrollment had dropped to under five hundred—they said five hundred; my husband kept counting. "There are not five hundred people here," he said. Anyway, about five hundred. And I told the board of trustees that we had to get the enrollment to a thousand, and they totally agreed. But everybody on campus was very nervous about that, because they didn't think it could be done. And they didn't want sort of to out-promise what you could accomplish. It had become much more diverse before I arrived, under my predecessor, Ruth Schmidt. So it was about fifteen percent African-American when I arrived; and it had become more national, people coming from around the country. But what we did was we tried to—it was tough. We tried to raise the academic standards and grow the enrollment and maintain our diversity. So all of that—

MR. NEWBERRY: That's a tall order.

DR. BULLOCK: It's a tall order. We reached a thousand one year that I was here. The enrollment is probably about nine hundred now.

MR. NEWBERRY: It's said at the time of your departure it was 1,032.

DR. BULLOCK: Oh, OK.

MR. NEWBERRY: And then today it's about 998.

DR. BULLOCK: Right. That sounds about right. So that was our big push, you know. And the diversity only grew because in that sense we were part of a wave of the future. And so I think now—I think when I left, the non--the minority population, African-American and Hispanic and others was probably thirty percent, thirty-five percent. Today it's more than that. Thirty, thirty-five percent? I don't--used to know these numbers cold. And we were able pretty much—we were able and definitely raised the standards initially, and our SAT scores all went up. It was hard to maintain that. We gave lots of scholarship assistance to the students. And I—the other emphasis--I had three emphases: one was on growing the college, one was internationalizing the college, and one was emphasizing science. Women's colleges have a great reputation of growing women scientists. And so Agnes Scott had a fine science faculty, just needed to get more emphasis on that. And so those were the three areas that I really put a lot of attention into.

MR. NEWBERRY: But you had this very tall order. And how did you accomplish the three things? How did you accomplish that? Because you did it.

DR. BULLOCK: You—well, what you do is you—you know, "It's the enrollment, stupid," we used to say. You know, "What are we doing every day about the enrollment?" You know, you try not to get sidetracked. I set up task forces that brought trustees and faculty and students together and administrators my first year. I didn't quite know how to organize, [inaudible] didn't understand how the college was structured, particularly when faculty are very prickly about their prerogatives. So I created these sort of ad hoc task forces, and they succeeded very well. We had a wonderful group on branding and marketing and went all out with that. That's when the college adopted the tagline they still use, "The World for Women." And it had—they'd tried advertising. Faculty didn't think you should market—you shouldn't have to market yourself. They've learned that the faculty have to market themselves. [Both laugh.] And we got the alumnae behind this. And I mean, I think it was

just by constant focusing on one or two things a year, you know, you can. But it was more than just one or two things. We did a big building program--

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

DR. BULLOCK: --for the college had not put any money—very little money into its buildings. I used to say that it was because it was run by bankers and men who had not graduated from the institution, and they're very conservative. And yeah, Agnes Scott had a lot of resources, and so we undertook a huge, you know, building program.

MR. NEWBERRY: Wasn't that the largest in the college's history?

DR. BULLOCK: \$125 million, yeah.

MR. NEWBERRY: And how do you raise the endowment like that? I mean, don't know how that money works, but how do you raise and sustain that? How does that process work?

DR. BULLOCK: We didn't raise all the money. We had—Agnes Scott had a large enough endowment that we were able to borrow a significant amount. The institution had never borrowed. That was a problem with having it run by bankers. And so in a sense we agreed that, OK, we're going to take out a little more of the endowment to pay for the—you know, to pay for the growth, but there's no way the college is going to attract more students if we don't get on top of this campus and improve the facilities. So part of it was leveraging, you know, what you have and taking and trying to have the confidence to do that. We also--we couldn't start a campaign right away because no one—the—I think we all felt that we had to demonstrate we could accomplish some of these goals before the alumnae would come behind us, because they were very doubtful. So we started—I don't remember when the campaign started—but we raised a lot of money [inaudible] the money also. We were kind of doing it at the same time, doing both at the same time.

MR. NEWBERRY: What is the interaction between the college and the city of Decatur?

DR. BULLOCK: Well, you know, it was rocky, and I learned a lot. I really, as I said, had no experience in doing something like this. I thought, “Well, of course, Decatur is going to want Agnes Scott to get better.” And the only way you can get better is to get bigger--we were too tiny, not sustainable—and improve our facilities. But it turned out that the college did not have a good reputation for how it handled its existing property, including a lot of its rental houses; and so the neighborhoods, McDonough and Winnona Park, etc., were very skeptical about any growth or any building program. They didn’t want Agnes Scott to become like Emory [*laughs*], which is pretty funny, you know. We were so nowhere near Emory. And the issue—and I sort of thought people would see the light, you know, and they’d come on board. I didn’t realize how intractable some of these town-gown issues were. And the crunch came over the parking deck—

MR. NEWBERRY: Right

DR. BULLOCK: --because in order to—we had a wonderful master planner that realized—I mean, we all knew we had to have some parking, and it shouldn’t be in the neighborhood. It—we needed a parking facility and that [*sic*] it should be on the side of the campus where the public events are. We owned most of that property; we had to buy some of it. And, as we were doing that, we started having programs for the neighbors that we would present the master plan. And they would come to these sessions, and they would say, you know, “But we don’t want a parking deck in our area”—you know, etc.—“It’s a residential area.” I or the master planners would say, “You’ve got a train, you’ve got a school [Decatur High School], you’ve got a college, you’ve got a church. We’re going to put a parking block in the middle of what is already an institutional area, you know, and we’re going to build the most beautiful parking deck you’ve ever seen.” Anyway, they—we had to have the property zoned—rezoned—so that it would—I guess it was zoned residential, so we had to zone it--so institutional; and that’s when the neighborhood blocked it. And

we did a lot of hearings, a lot of terrible kind of things, calling me a liar, etc., etc.

We finally worked out—I think the city council [Decatur City Commission] at that time was generally supportive, but they had to be responsive to their constituents as well. And so we worked out kind of a deal that the three houses that are on College Avenue—I don't know if you know anything about it.

MR. NEWBERRY: I'm not familiar with it.

DR. BULLOCK: Anyway, three old houses—they were old, run-down boarding houses, totally surrounded by all this growth. And I think our original plan was to cut—was to tear them down. They were historic, but they were in such bad shape, I mean terrible shape. So the final agreement was [that] we would restore those houses, and we would in a sense bury the parking lot behind them. And that's the agreement we had to reach in order to get the city to give us the zoning. It turned out to be a hugely expensive proposition for the college, because these houses were in such bad condition. Drive by there sometime. It runs—when you—if you go up here on McDonough and cross the railroad tracks, turn right on East College—

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

DR. BULLOCK: And you'll see first a kind of green—right opposite Decatur High School, you'll see a green little meadow. That was a filling station that had been there for fifty years. We bought that. Terribly—it was—drugs were being bought there. It was awful for the college that it was there. We bought it; and we also had to mitigate the environmental concerns, so we had to pump the gas out and have it—all the things you have to do. And, as I said, this was a real education for me. And we decided to just leave it as a grassy, you know, kind of corner. But then the next three houses, as you go down—as you head towards the city are these old houses that we restored, and we use them for theme houses for the college; and the parking garage is behind them. It's beautiful. [*Laughs*] I just remark that it's a beautiful parking garage. So I think eventually, I think the—even the neighborhood came to appreciate the

quality of the construction that we did, and the neighborhood looks a lot better. We cleaned up that whole block.

MR. NEWBERRY: Based on restoring those houses that you were able to [inaudible] that was agreeable to everyone.

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: Somewhat

DR. BULLOCK: Yes. They still were very opposed—

MR. NEWBERRY: And then, with all of the renovations—

DR. BULLOCK: We had so many meetings with the neighborhood, but they got worse and worse, so—you know, the meetings were terrible. I mean, I look--you know, and the worst—I don't know if I should —[*laughs*] I'm not going to tell you this story. [*Laughs*]

MR. NEWBERRY: Oh, please do.

DR. BULLOCK: Pardon?

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: I'll wait till—

DR. BULLOCK: It'll get me in trouble.

MR. NEWBERRY: So with all the—I mean, you did renovation and building projects—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes

MR. NEWBERRY: --but--enlarging the library—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes, we doubled the size of the library. We restored the beautiful library and added to the back. And that building got—won all kinds of awards.

MR. NEWBERRY: That's the McCain Library?

DR. BULLOCK: Yes. We decided the—this is what—this is why I had really good, significant alumnae on the board. We decided that if this college was going to spend \$125 million, that was a lot of money; and we wanted to be taken seriously in the construction and architectural world. So we bid every project nationally. In the past the college had relied on one set of contractors, and they were very upset that we didn't go immediately to them. They—it's an

important Atlanta firm. And we eventually hired them for one or two of the projects, but we didn't hire them in the beginning.

So the library and the new campus center were designed by a firm from Boston, and actually the renovation of the dining hall and the new science building were designed by a firm from Boston. One set of those were linked to an architectural firm here in Atlanta, so we had sort of a bridging. We also used some Atlanta architects, and we used—what was the name of the construction firm?—I can't believe I'm going to forget it—I'll try to remember it.

We bid construction, and for the dining hall, it had to be done quickly, because you couldn't go without your dining hall. And they made a commitment—oh, so we insisted—oh, this is what I meant to say—that we wanted to highlight women's work, so in our proposal we said that we wanted to see the evidence, you know, of women in senior positions would be considered as part of the proposal. So a woman was the senior architect of the science building, a woman was the senior architect of the renovation of the library—no, of the new campus center. And Brasfield Gorrie—that was the construction company from Alabama—they said, "We don't have any women in senior positions, but we make a commitment. If you let us do this project, we're going to start training women." We hired them, and they had a woman that they started training, and she—we hired them eventually for most of our projects because we had such a good experience. And she grew up, in a sense—she was trained—and she became the senior project manager for the science building. So anyway, these were wonderful experiences for me, you know.

MR. NEWBERRY: And so, in addition, of course, you said the \$36.5 million science center with a three-story-high painting of Agnes Scott's actual DNA?

DR. BULLOCK: Vertical

MR. NEWBERRY: Vertical

DR. BULLOCK: Vertical



MR. NEWBERRY: Now, explain that. What was the idea behind that? And how did you find that?

DR. BULLOCK: One science faculty—we were sort of designing this atrium, and he was walking through, thinking about what we should do. And he felt, “Oh, we could do the DNA sequence of Agnes’s DNA through the mitochondrial root [route?] if we could find a female descendant that had come through only female descendants.” Part of your DNA—and anyway, I don’t fully understand it, but it has to come through a female descendant [ancestor?]. We actually located a great-great-great granddaughter of Agnes, who had gone—came through the mother’s line. She was living in Ohio or someplace, and one of the faculty members knew—oh, she had—it turned out she had gone to Agnes Scott, and nobody knew that. We uncovered all this. So somebody knew her. And one of her cousins here in Atlanta agreed to call her and ask if we could have a blood sample. She said—I mean, I later met her, and she said it was the most bizarre call she’d ever received. [*Dr. Bulloch and Mr. Newberry laugh.*] But anyway, we got the blood sample, and Emory agreed to do the DNA sequencing pro bono. And then they graphed it—it’s fantastic on the wall. And there’s a big display that explains what it is.

MR. NEWBERRY: Has that ever been done anywhere? That’s such a unique idea.

DR. BULLOCK: I don’t think so. We got some nice write-ups. It got some—a lot of nice write-ups when the building was finished. I mean national—we got some national publicity out of it. That was fun.

MR. NEWBERRY: And that was the largest construction project, the science center--

DR. BULLOCK: Mm-hm

MR. NEWBERRY: --named for you?

DR. BULLOCK: They named it for me eventually. It was amazing.

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: And so also added a planetarium and—

DR. BULLOCK: We did the planetarium a little bit earlier. It was separate, a new planetarium—well, there had been a planetarium; but it needed to be renovated--

MR. NEWBERRY: Mm-hm

DR. BULLOCK: --and upgraded. And it's—well, there had been an observatory, not a planetarium; and we added--to the observatory we added a planetarium.

MR. NEWBERRY: And a LIDAR [Light Detection and Ranging] lab?

DR. BULLOCK: And a LIDAR lab, right. And we had—Agnes Scott has a really outstanding Astrophysics major, and most of the students that major in that go on for PhDs. They are now sprinkled all around. One is at Harvard. So it's had a—it's been a little niche field, with a just fantastic faculty. And they know how to grow this, so it's been a great—it was a hard financial decision, because it is such a niche thing, but they had such good faculty, saying, "We can make it happen," so the board of trustees kind of bet on it. You should go over there and look at all of these places.

MR. NEWBERRY: I'd love to see the—well, besides the DNA strand  
[laughs]—

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: --some of these buildings. [Inaudible] quite a number of these buildings, and with the renovations, is that the sort of thing that, you know, compromises, you know, historical integrity of buildings? How did you deal with preservation?

DR. BULLOCK: We told all of the—we told all of the architects that we did not want signature buildings. We wanted buildings that blended in with the existing architecture and that we wanted—they didn't have to be in the total collegiate-Gothic—we didn't want mimicry. We wanted originality, but we wanted it to blend, blend well. And so they're all brick and then limestone, so that continued the theme. We can wander around and see what you think. The only building that is sort of significantly different was the chapel, which was

done kind of in the end. It's a smaller building, but it's—it is a signature chapel. It was done by the famous architect [E. Fay Jones, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright] who designed a chapel called Thorncrown in Arkansas. If you look up Thorncrown, it has its own webpage, etc. And was a long and drawn-out process; but eventually several of us went to Arkansas and looked at these chapels. And even though they were more expensive, we just loved them. And so we got the guy to come and design for Agnes Scott. It's a fantastic chapel. It blends--I'm not saying it doesn't blend. It's brick, very steep roofs, heavy roofs, eaves, and much—and beautiful gardens around it.

MR. NEWBERRY: And could you sort of describe the school's relationship with the Presbyterian Church--

DR. BULLOCK: Yes

MR. NEWBERRY: And how about—is it a benefit?

DR. BULLOCK: Yes, it's affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church--we have no—it has no judicial relationship. So, for example, Methodist institutions like Emory appoint bishops to the board of trustees. The Presbyterian Church doesn't appoint any of the Agnes Scott trustees. So it's more an affiliate—a concept of affiliation. We don't get any money directly from the Presbyterian Church, but a lot of our alumnae and a lot of our supporters are Presbyterians. So indirectly we have gotten a huge amount of money—our biggest donors have always been Presbyterians. So I think financially it's been important to keep that link; but I think for the trustees and certainly my own sense it's because the Presbyterian colleges modeled a wonderful form of liberal arts colleges. And people don't—you know, you think of John Calvin as being kind of this, you know, very stern, moralistic person. But actually Calvin's concepts of education were pretty—pretty amazing. And his concepts from Geneva were really taken to Princeton and to create this concept of a community of learning in a residential setting, which has both faith and learning. And then in the nineteenth--late-eighteenth, nineteenth century was a very important concept that you could--in that time

these were mainly seminaries—that you could bring in any kind of learning, and it would not challenge faith, and so that you need to be relaxed about that. God created the universe, and so He created our minds; we can explore. So that is a very liberal kind of learning tradition within a religious tradition, not that different from the Jesuits actually. So that’s Agnes Scott’s legacy, it’s the type of liberal arts education that it came from. So I think when you have something that is that linked back in time and place, you don’t just throw it out, you know; you build on it. And so the program I just went to today was the Founders’ Day program. And that’s kind of an occasion that celebrates that tradition.

MR. NEWBERRY: And obviously—well, not obviously but today is that more associated with one branch of the Presbyterian Church?

DR. BULLOCK, *laughing*: Oh, you know the different Presbyterian stories? Well, we are affiliated with the Presbyterian USA, so it’s not with some of the other—

MR. NEWBERRY: It ordains women, and—

DR. BULLOCK: Yes. Yes, it’s definitely the most liberal branch. An Agnes Scott graduate was the first Presbyterian woman ordained [Presbyterian Church in the U.S., also known at the time as the PCUS or “Southern” Church, 1965; The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The PCUSA or “Northern” church, ordained its first female minister, Margaret Towner in 1956.].

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

DR. BULLOCK: Rachel Henderson [sic; actually Rachel Henderlite ‘28]. We have a great tradition in the ministry--of Agnes Scott women in the ministry that goes way back.

MR. NEWBERRY: I think perhaps I neglected to ask you specifically about Agnes Scott. I believe it was because her father had funded something, and so it was named for his daughter [sic; Agnes Scott was founded by George Washington Scott and named for his mother].

DR. BULLOCK: Right. Actually she is a great story. One of the things that I love to—that I did that I'm very proud of is they always celebrate George Washington Scott's birthday; it's February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Founders' Day is always February 22<sup>nd</sup>. He's buried in Decatur Cemetery. They [inaudible] pilgrimage sometimes over to his grave. But the name is actually Agnes, so it's a women's college. We need to rediscover who is Agnes. And it turns out she [inaudible—either “is” or “has”] a great history for this college.

She [Agnes Irvine Scott] was born in Ireland—in [present-day] Northern Ireland, came from Scots-Irish tradition, from Scots Presbyterian tradition, and her mother was widowed twice and came to the United States in the late 1700s, early 1800s. And they had just a few relatives here. Her sister died in childbirth coming [over on the ship]. She [Agnes] just had one tragedy after another. They settled in Pennsylvania—she and her mother settled in Pennsylvania, where they had some brothers, some connection. And Agnes married John Scott, who was a widower who had five children. And they then had five more children. I love the story—I used to—this really—motherhood. He went on to become a U.S. Senator, so—and their children, particularly their sons, became interesting in their own right. Two of them came south before the Civil War. One was George Washington [Scott], and he was in Florida for a while. He was a colonel in the Southern army. We have her diary and her notes and her letters to her—both of her sons from the Civil War. Her family—the rest of the family was on the side of the North. Everybody else--these two brothers were on the side of the South.

She talks about praying for both families, and she does a very interesting thing. She disinherits all of her sons because, as the war started to end, it was clear that the South was going to lose, and any Southerners would lose their estates and all to the victorious army. So they were going to lose any assets they had. She didn't think that was fair that they [the two brothers who were in the Confederate army] would lose, and the other brothers wouldn't because they were from the North. So she gives all her property—not that much, but

still interesting—to the daughters, and all the sons are treated equally with nothing. It's a great feminist story. [*She and Mr. Newberry laugh.*] It's a great feminist story.

Anyway, George Washington Scott was a big developer in Florida. He did all kinds of things. But anyway, he ended up here in Decatur. And do you know where the Decatur [Maud Burrus] Library is and the rec center?

MR. NEWBERRY: Not exactly

DR. BULLOCK: That's where his house was.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK

DR. BULLOCK: And there are these huge magnolias there, which were there—you can see—you can imagine that there was a house behind these magnolias. Anyway, he was—he developed a company, [was] very active in the Presbyterian Church. So the minister—this minister comes from Virginia to Decatur Presbyterian Church, and—Frank Gaines, a young man. Somehow he gets the idea of a woman's [sic] college. The South is flat on its back—you know, hadn't really recovered. We're talking 1870s, 1880s. And so he persuades George Washington Scott and some other people—men—to help him fund a woman's [sic] college. They begin as a school [Decatur Female Seminary], but they pretty quickly—Main, the big building—the college was started in 1889. By 1891 they have the biggest—what's still the biggest building on campus [Main].

So that's—and George Washington Scott—by the time they got the building going, he gets the credit because of most of the money; but the ideas came from Frank Gaines. But Scott got the privilege of naming the college, and he wanted to name it for his mother. His mother had died shortly before. She never came here. But still for a college that's very diverse, lots of immigrant people, it's a wonderful story of America and of women.

MR. NEWBERRY: Wow

DR. BULLOCK: So anyway, I love telling that story, as you can tell.

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: It is a great story. And it's interesting to me—I'm just hung up on the inheritance thing. So in order to make it equal, she left nothing to her sons?

DR. BULLOCK: That's correct.

MR. NEWBERRY: So it wasn't that the Southern sons were going to lose her money--

DR. BULLOCK: Yes, they would.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK, that—

DR. BULLOCK: They would not be able to inherit her funds—their--her money.

MR. NEWBERRY: So she couldn't just leave it to them after the war?

DR. BULLOCK: Right. Something anyway.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, it's a great story. I love that.

DR. BULLOCK: [Inaudible] I know I've got--

MR. NEWBERRY: Just a wonderful—

DR. BULLOCK: At its core I have it correct.

MR. NEWBERRY: The decision was very strong at that time.

DR. BULLOCK: Right

MR. NEWBERRY: So—but along with the new buildings and the population increase, you created a strong new endowment plan that would help to beautify the campus long-term and have the best technology on campus?

DR. BULLOCK: Well, we—my successor, Elizabeth Kiss, has taken the sustainability emphasis much further than I have; and I wish I had done as much as she, you know, she has in that. But we did decide, I think, that all the—we put in a watering system—that we to be self-irrigating, so that all the watering had to come from our own retention pond. We had to build these retention ponds, so the other thing is that our landscape architect, who was a wonderful woman from Boston, she said, "You either have grass or don't have grass." You know, don't have ugly grass. And so we redid all the grass. Keep it simple—grass and beautiful trees—was her idea. So we replanted grass

everywhere, and we planted a variety that is supposed to do well in hot sun and heavy shade, which is kind of what Atlanta has. [Grass variety inaudible—sounds like “Rambo” or “Ramble” “Three”], if you want to know. The grass is beautiful. And we put in the irrigation, and we did the right things to keep the grass so that—I’m always pleased when I go back that they’ve kept it up. It is low-maintenance because we did away with a lot of bushes and a lot of flower beds, things like that, which are very expensive. The main thing is the grass, which is self-irrigated, and the trees. We planted a lot of—it had beautiful trees, but we were starting to lose a lot of big old trees. So we also planted a lot of trees.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. So what would you say are the main concerns of a college president? I mean, are you a director, an educator, a fundraiser, a diplomat?

DR. BULLOCK: All of the above.

MR. NEWBERRY: All of the above?

DR. BULLOCK: All of the above.

MR. NEWBERRY: Right. So it’s—you were well-equipped to take on that position, you would say?

DR. BULLOCK: I turned out—I think it turned out to be a good fit. We were lucky. I enjoyed it, I learned, and I had a wonderful team working with me and wonderful trustees. So—and it turned out to be a great time to be here, you know, and to—Decatur was taking off. That really made a huge difference. When we came here, there were just one or two miserable little restaurants, you know. The Olympics became the year—the Olympics came the next year [1996]. The Olympics really revitalized the city, but especially Decatur, because they reworked some of the transportation patterns, and they’ve spent all this time fixing up the square. Now with forty restaurants within walking distance of here, you know, it’s just a fantastic community. So I think that has—that has helped Agnes Scott tremendously is that it’s located in such a wonderful



community. And so I was lucky to be here during those same years, I would say, in which Decatur was taking off.

MR. NEWBERRY: And when you travel to distant places to give talks and that sort of thing, when you mention Agnes Scott, is it associated more with Atlanta?

DR. BULLOCK: We try to make it—I--you know, I did emphasize Atlanta, because the rest of the city—the country has never heard of Decatur. And yet Atlanta is a well-known—and look, we're right here in Atlanta. So I felt that part of the branding was to position us in Atlanta. But the way we did it was to say Agnes Scott's—I don't know, it's a cute way of saying it--but the front yard is in Atlanta, and Decatur is our big back yard, a residential community, and that we have the advantages of both.

MR. NEWBERRY: I see. Now, what would you say was your greatest joy as president, I mean, in addition to--

DR. BULLOCK: Greatest story as president?

MR. NEWBERRY: Joy

DR. BULLOCK: Joy as president.

MR. NEWBERRY: In addition to the many accomplishments.

DR. BULLOCK: What was our greatest joy?

[Unidentifiable background noise and inaudible comments]

MR. NEWBERRY: [Inaudible] with the technical stuff, so the greatest joy.

DR. BULLOCK: The greatest joy. I think it's got to be the students. The—it was always--you know, when they graduated, to see them march off and then to see how well they've done, you know, I really feel that's the greatest legacy.

MR. NEWBERRY: And as a president of a smaller college, do you—are you able to interact with them more?

DR. BULLOCK: I mean, not as much as probably I should have. You know, you get caught up in everything else. Certainly more than most presidents, you know, at a big university or at a place like Emory. But, you know, they're—because we lived right next door, we lived on campus; so

students were—George [Dr. Bullock’s husband] knew all their names. I never knew all their names, but you did get a sense of generations of the classes moving through. And that was exciting to see how proud they were to be at Agnes Scott. They started calling Agnes Scott “Agnes” while I was there. We called it “Scott” when I was there; nobody liked the name Agnes. But anyway, now people talk about Agnes as though she’s their friend. “Agnes owes me some money” [*laughs*]. You know, I think it’s pretty funny. We’re all more alike [inaudible].

MR. NEWBERRY: And so you became—is there an official residence for the president?

DR. BULLOCK: Yes. Yes, it’s—

MR. NEWBERRY: And it’s on campus?

DR. BULLOCK: It’s on campus. That’s correct.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. And you became president emerita in 2006--

DR. BULLOCK: Yes.

MR. NEWBERRY: --after stepping down, but you continued to serve on several boards, as director of the Women’s College Coalition—

DR. BULLOCK: I did that before.

MR. NEWBERRY: You did that before you—

DR. BULLOCK: While I was still the president.

MR. NEWBERRY: OK. And the National Association of Independent Colleges?

DR. BULLOCK: I did that before I left Agnes Scott.

MR. NEWBERRY: American Council of Education?

DR. BULLOCK: All of those education things were before I left [*laughs*].

MR. NEWBERRY, *laughing*: But you are now a policy fellow at Woodrow Wilson International—

DR. BULLOCK: I’m a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson [International] Center for Scholars.

MR. NEWBERRY: And what does that entail?

DR. BULLOCK: Not too much [*laughs*].

MR. NEWBERRY: Are you constantly traveling?

DR. BULLOCK: No, no. It's kind of—they published—they were one of the publishers of my book, and I stayed in touch with them. They could call me to give talks and things like that. I was there for my sabbatical at Agnes Scott. I have an ongoing affiliation there.

MR. NEWBERRY: And you are a Distinguished Professor of China Study at Emory--

DR. BULLOCK: That's correct. That takes—that's a major job.

MR. NEWBERRY: --since '07.

DR. BULLOCK: Yeah. I enjoy that. I love teaching. You know, I've discovered I love the teaching, and I've been able to return to my [inaudible], since I teach Chinese politics and several courses on U.S.-China relations. And I am on a number of other boards related to Asia. I chair the China Medical Board, takes a lot of my time. It's a medical foundation that works with Asia. And Asia Foundation, several other—so that—those keep me in touch with sort of broad national connections with Asia.

MR. NEWBERRY: And do you travel to Asia?

DR. BULLOCK: I do. I will go to China three times this year, in June, July—in May and June and then in September or November. So I love that. George goes with me some. I don't just go to China— some other parts of Asia.

MR. NEWBERRY: Now, I'm going to finish up with—

DR. BULLOCK: OK

MR. NEWBERRY: --Agnes Scott's motto, which was adopted in 2002.

DR. BULLOCK: Yes

MR. NEWBERRY: "Educating women to think deeply, live honorably, and engage the intellectual and social challenges of their times." And what was the thought behind that, and what does it mean to you?

DR. BULLOCK: I love that. We spent two years reworking our mission statement and thinking about what should be the motto of the college. We

involved alumnae, students, faculty, everybody. And we were looking for some short, memorable way to capture some of the traditions of the college as well as sort of the future. And so the “to think deeply” was a way of talking about-- in liberal arts you talk about thinking critically. But the “think deeply” also suggests that there is a different level of thinking as well that is—that can be spiritual. So “think deeply” can encompass spiritual learning but also critical thinking.

“To live honorably”: Agnes Scott has had a strong honor code since the 1910s. And so that’s a very—has been an important ethical kind of norm that binds the community together. So how do you make decisions as an institution that show that you’re living honorably? How do you make decisions as an individual that show that you’re living honorably?

And then to “engage the social and intellectual challenges” of the day is pretty self-descriptive, but the wonderful thing about some of the really oldest alumnae of the college is how they did that in their era--I mean, these unbelievable women that were pioneers.

So I think that it stretches out across and gives people something to aspire to. You know, your life should have some meaning when all is said and done. You should pay attention to something and address it, address the social and intellectual challenges [inaudible]. Everybody at Agnes Scott can tell you that motto. And I’ve been--Elizabeth [Kiss], my successor, loves it; she quotes it all the time. So I feel it was really a—it took two years, a lot of fights over wording. But I feel it was successful [inaudible].

MR. NEWBERRY: Important

DR. BULLOCK: Yeah

MR. NEWBERRY: And what do you think is the future of women’s colleges?

DR. BULLOCK: Women’s colleges are no longer challenged because they’re women’s colleges. They are challenged because they’re liberal arts colleges—small, liberal arts colleges. And I think the liberal arts college model

is hard to sustain financially because of size. Even schools twice as big as Agnes Scott are hard to sustain financially. But no, it's very interesting, I think, you know, with all the emphasis on [inaudible—sounds like “national”?] you can now have public schools that have a women's component to it or a girls' component to it. There's a recognition that it can be beneficial to both sexes to have some [inaudible] learning separately. And, in fact, women's colleges have been so successful in training women leaders that now there is a concern about boys and men not getting enough education, so can they learn something from women's colleges? So I think in that sense women's colleges still have to continue to redefine themselves, but they're not under challenge the way they were maybe two decades ago.

MR. NEWBERRY: Well, thank you so much.

DR. BULLOCK: OK. You really are well-prepared. Gosh, you knew all about me. [*To another person, possibly George Bullock*] What did you tell him when he was here?

OTHER VOICE, *possibly Mr. Bullock*: I didn't tell him anything.

END OF RECORDING.

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