

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU History

O.H. 2247

Brandy Johanntges

Interviewed

By

Lesley Durkin

On

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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: Brandy Johanntges

INTERVIEWER: Lesley Durkin

SUBJECT: YSU History

DATE: May 11, 2005

P: This is an interview with Brandy Johanntges for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on YSU History, by Lesley Durkin, at Barnes and Noble Booksellers, on May 11, 2005. At 3:00 p.m. This project was funded by the Ford Foundation.

D: What's your name?

J: Brandy Johanntges.

D: Okay, and when were you born?

J: November 7, 1977.

D: Where were you born?

J: Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

D: What can you tell me about your parents?

J: My mother was a single mother, she raised my brother and I by herself. She was originally from Ohio, moved up to Canada with my father, and they divorced when I was three. My dad is 47 and he's been married four times.

D: What does your mom do?

J: She's an RN, she has her nursing degree, and she also has her degree to be a teacher, her education degree.

D: And you have a brother, what can you tell me about him?

J: He's 29, and he is an ex-police officer, he went back to YSU, he graduates in two weeks, and he will be a mathematician. He's going back into the Master's Program. He's getting married next weekend, and he and I are very close.

D: What's his name?

J: Oh, yea, how about that. Matt.

D: Where did you go to school?

J: I went to elementary school, it was called Fred Parker Elementary in Canada, and then I also went to David Thompson Junior High, and then I moved here in ninth grade and I went to Girard High, graduating in 1995.

D: While you were in school who would you say were your most influential instructors?

J: I loved my Biology instructor, his name was Peter Kalan, because he would always say, "You're nothing; you're burger flippers until you finish school," and he would yell at us and tell us that we were crappy unless we got education. No one was going to do anything for us, and to stop expecting people to do stuff for us. And I actually liked him! And then I had a math teacher named Mr. Compel who worked closely with me, and he was very patient with me. I just remember him for that. And then Miss. Anna Ciambotti, she was an English teacher, and she was tough but I really liked her. Other than that I didn't really like anybody else.

D: What were your favorite subjects?

J: I'm really good at languages, so I took French, Italian, and obviously English, but I loved those. That's about it, I liked the language and the creative subjects, but I didn't care for math and all that.

D: Could you describe to me a typical day in your neighborhood growing up?

J: My neighborhood? I grew up in an apartment complex where there was tons of kids, so we would walk to school, all of us would walk together, and then after school we would all walk home together. And we would also come home from lunch because in Canada you don't eat lunch at school. It's strange but they don't have a cafeteria for you, you walk home, so we all walked home for lunch together, we went back to school and then

we would all come home and do whatever homework we had, and then we would play. Honestly, outside there was a big playground in the complex, there was probably about fifteen, sixteen buildings, so there was probably about...I would say twenty-five of us kids, and we would play like red rover, and hide and seek, and just stupid games that we'd make up. And then we'd play, and then when the lights went on we had to go back in.

D: When did you attend YSU?

J: I attended YSU...I started in 1997 and I graduated in '03, took me awhile, but I did finish, to the surprise of my family.

D: How did you pay for school?

J: Well, I'm currently in my second deferment of my loans. Just through loans, I couldn't pay any other way. The first freshman year, when they don't give you enough money to cover your tuition, I worked two jobs to pay off what the loans wouldn't cover, and then everything else is, you know, still in deferment.

D: What kind of work did you do?

J: I was a waitress at Chi-Chi's, and I'm a D.J. I've always been a D.J. for the past nine years, and that's it, I just waitressed and I D.J'd.

D: What was your major when you first entered YSU?

J: Theater was my major, and then after three years they told me because I was working too much in radio I couldn't do the free shows and stuff. You know how you have to do shows, I couldn't participate in those because I was working too much, so they told me they were going to declare me inactive, so I changed theater to my minor and majored in Sociology, and that's what I finished with.

D: Obviously you worked a lot, but there's activities down at the University, were there any particular ones you got to participate in?

J: I did do a couple of theater shows, but other than that, no, because I had to work every night, I worked every night. But honestly I wish I could have participated more, but I just didn't have the time or the means.

D: What was your first impression of the campus?

J: I loved it, I thought it was nice, it was big it was clean, believe it or not, you know what I mean? There was a lot of places to go to study, or sleep, or you know, just sit outside. I think the campus is easy to navigate, I don't think it's hard, and only when it's cold is it too big, you know?

D: What influential instructors did you have while you were at Youngstown State?

J: I had Dr. Qi Jang, she taught me a lot about Sociology, she was extremely patient and very helpful, and I really enjoyed her. And then I had another one named Dr. Casaniatas, and he was a Sociology professor. I really liked him because he was extremely thorough in his teaching, and he was really...he wasn't easy, but he made it more interesting, because Sociology is not the most interesting thing in the world. And then Dr. Kiniklas was his name, and very interesting, but I always remember my one professor, Steve Ellison, he taught Sexual Sociology.

D: Yes.

J: Don't you love him? And I only had him one time, I loved him, he was just great, so I remember him too, but that's about it.

D: I remember him because he tells that story of when he burned his tongue with a cigarette lighter.

J: Yes, I remember that story too, but you know Dr. Ellison, I only had him one time but he was a great teacher, made it very interesting.

D: What's your opinion of the publications they have down at Youngstown State for students? There's a yearbook, there's a newspaper...

J: Okay, see, now, obviously that's not that good because I didn't know there was a yearbook.

D: *The Neon*.

J: *The Neon*, oh really? No, I personally think *The Jambar* is okay, I kind of think that they could put a little more...not just the students, but the University itself could put a little – I mean, good God, they keep raising the damn tuition, they could put a little more money into projects like *The Jambar* and stuff, because it's kind of crappy, I think, to be honest with you, and not really...I mean I know the kids work hard on it, but I don't really think it's worthy of...

D: Like a priority?

J: No, I mean if it was sitting there I would pick it up and read it, but I never went and got it on purpose.

D: Did you notice, I mean you just graduated, you were there for a few years, any improvements with the campus that they've been making?

J: No, I have to be honest with you, I was there six-and-a-half years, no improvements were made while I was there, no offense. They could improve the parking situation, they

really could, they charge enough for it, and I'm serious with all the tuition that was going up, as much as they raise it where's it going? To teacher's salaries? I mean to be honest with you, no, everything...there was a lot that was...the elevators are still crappy and old they always were the whole time I was there. So I don't know, the parking situation was what I remember to be the biggest hassle.

D: What would you say...did you feel there was a good representation of minorities and women in all your classes?

J: I do feel that, yea, I do feel like I was always treated equally, and I was always treated fine, and I feel that the minorities around me were treated well. I feel like everyone was treated as a student, you had the same opportunities as everybody else, yea I do feel like it was a very diverse and fair environment.

D: So you just graduated, how do you feel about job placement?

J: Totally sucks, I work at Barnes and Noble with a Sociology degree, and I mean, I just think that...I don't think it's the University's fault, I think it's the area, there's no jobs around here, if you want a decent job you have to move, which is unfortunate, but that's just the way it is.

D: Did you attend your graduation?

J: I sure did! Good God, I worked hard enough!

D: Do you know where your diploma's at?

J: My diploma is sitting n my coffee table for everyone to see, it's the most expensive piece of paper I own, and if there's a house fire I would not leave until I had it in my hands.

D: What advice would you give to a perspective student going to Youngstown State?

J: Don't let the paperwork make you not go, because the paperwork in the beginning is ridiculous and it takes forever, but you finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. It took me a long time, but as long as you finish. But that's something no one can ever take away for you is your degree, even if you use it or not.

D: And what are your future plans?

J: I'm going to move to New York City and become an actress. I'm not kidding. I'm moving in the summer. Bye.

D: Well Brandy, thank you for your time.

J: Thank you.