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Rosario “Rose” Lopez interviewed by Hana Yamamoto

Speakers: Rosario “Rose” Lopez; Hana Yamamoto

Date: May 9, 2023

Scope and Contents:

In this interview, originally conducted in person, Rosario “Rose” Magdalena Lopez speaks with Watsonville is in the Heart team member Hana Yamamoto. Rose describes how her father, Arsenio “Archie” Soblechero Lopez traveled by ship from the Philippines to California and eventually began working in the fields in Watsonville. She further explains how Archie became sick with tuberculosis from pesticides like DDT that were commonly sprayed in the fields where he worked. His illness led him to quit working in the fields and open a barbershop in Santa Cruz on Mission Street. Rose vividly describes Archie’s barbershop, including the smell of Ilokanofood being cooked for lunch and Filipino men gambling, smoking, and even trading produce in the Ace Cardroom that Archie ran in the back. Rose remembers singing Filipino songs at her father’s band, Archie and the Islanders. She goes on to speak about her mother, Margaret Yopez Lopez, a Mexican American woman who worked for the canneries and was an outspoken figure in union organizing. Rose details her parents’ wedding ceremony in Watsonville in 1948. She reflects fondly on the tight-knit Filipino and Mexican communities in Watsonville, remembering the Filipino social dances, gatherings at the labor camps, and the Filipino men her parents would house and take in as family.

Hana Yamamoto 00:01

It's on. Okay. Hello. I'm Hana Yamamoto. I'm here with Rosario Lopez on May 9, 2023 in Aptos, and could you start with your full name and your date of birth?

Rosario Lopez 00:20

Yes, it's called Rosario Magdalena Lopez. 6/12/1952.

Hana Yamamoto 00:28

Awesome. I wanted to start off with talking about your parents. So could you give me your parents' full names and their birthdays?

Rosario Lopez 00:37

Yes. My dad was Arsenio Soblechero Lopez. His birthday was 12/13/1905. My mother, Margaret Lopez— oh, Margaret Yopez, Y-e-p-e-z, and her birthday was 12/26/1929. The year my dad—I think the year my dad— I know in 1929, my dad started playing music—his wife was born.

Hana Yamamoto 01:18

Wow. That's a funny coincidence.

Rosario Lopez 01:21

Yeah, well, that was kind of—a lot of the Filipinos that are known from that era had younger wives. They were busy. You know, they were the workforce. There they were so busy, that that's how they came up

with the dance halls and the social boxes and the different—you know, they united to keep their kind together because we weren't always accepted. And I felt that years later, growing up. We moved from Santa Cruz, which was predominantly mixed, whites and other people of color, to Santa Cruz, who—where I was one of five people at our grade school, and one of six people at our high school in Soquel—the newer schools. So had we not had a really good sense of pride in our race and our Filipino and Mexican or whatever—No, had we not had that, I don't know if we would have been able to get through high school as easily. As some folks, you know, just can't take the harassment or feel secure enough to go through that, especially at that age.

Hana Yamamoto 03:00

Yeah. That's great that you had these roots.

Rosario Lopez 03:03

Yes, very proud. Very proud. And my mum and dad were very good at making sure that we were assured of ourselves. I remember they would say, "You know who you are." You know, that was there. You heard it all the time. "Well, you know who you are." If we came home and said, "Well, they were making fun of me. And they were making fun of—" I mean seven kids. I said, "They were making fun of my shoes." "Well, you know who you are. Your shoes are fine. They cover your feet, you're able to walk." We were zoned. We lived over by where the Costco is in Santa Cruz—on that side of town. So we're on that side of the freeway. We were zoned to go to school—grade school up at Westlake. Westlake is notorious, especially back then, for all the doctors' and lawyers' kids to go to school. We were poorer than heck, you know? We didn't have all the clothes. We didn't have all those things. What we had was a big sense of security for my dad and mom. Had we not had that, I don't know that we would have been such a tight-knit, proud family that we were. It really made a difference.

Rosario Lopez 04:54

I know that I have other—I call them cousins, they're not real cousins, but of course respectfully we call them Auntie Marcel and Uncle Tony or Uncle Leonard and Auntie Poncha. We, out of respect, we— Of course we are close to them, but I don't know if their children got as as much—I don't—I want to call it security.

Hana Yamamoto 05:29

Yeah, that's awesome that you guys are so connected to your parents' cultures and that you had that community.

Hana Yamamoto 05:29

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 05:29

You know, because my dad was always so involved and so proud of being who was—they were more involved with getting their family raised, and they didn't have much more time for everything else. They had huge families too. But because we were close to them, we have a tight-knit—There's a tight-knit little community in Santa Cruz that was always was at the dances or at the christenings. And at those get togethers, there was always chocolate meat and adobo, and all the pancit, you know, lumpias.

Everything that you want to see when you're at a Filipino function. It was always there. So we were raised with a lot of culture on my dad's side. When we went out of town with my mother to her family in Fresno, we learned—it wasn't unusual for us to have beans and tortillas, and enchiladas, and tacos, and that side of the culture. We were lucky to have both sides.

Rosario Lopez 06:46

Yeah. The music, the stories—All was so important. And what was neat, I remember, was watching my dad and mom dance at some of those dances, and the other Filipino couples. They danced like tops. You see movies of the old like Victorian days when they they have these big dresses, and they turn.

Hana Yamamoto 07:14

The spinning, yeah.

Rosario Lopez 07:15

You would see, the men were like great dancers. And I was thinking, where did they go? But I also remember there was a dance company called—oh, gosh, Art? Oh, gosh, I can't remember. They would take dance lessons. They were all so proud. And they dressed to a tee. To a tee. They would make—I mean, just the way you see them in pictures in their three piece suits. I remember going into the barber shop where my dad worked—barber in Riverside Avenue in Watsonville. I went to the back—we got to spend Saturday with him sometimes. I went to the back, and he had all these big chests. And we opened one and he had all these three pieces.

Hana Yamamoto 08:17

Oh, wow.

Rosario Lopez 08:18

Yeah, they dressed. And my dad's single days were over because I never saw him in the white one. He used to talk about his Macintosh, which was one of his suits. And Macintosh was well known back then. It was tailor made. He wore it for his wedding. And, you know, fifty years later, or however many years later, he was buried in it. And I always thought, Dad is in his favorite suit— his Macintosh. "I like my Macintosh." And they were, you know, they were a class act.

Hana Yamamoto 09:00

Yeah. Do you know if they would wear different color suits based on their like relationship status? Or—

Rosario Lopez 09:08

I don't think. I don't think so.

Hana Yamamoto 09:10

Okay. Like, why couldn't he wear the white suit?

Rosario Lopez 09:14

Oh, he was just— his single days were over. He now has maybe four or five kids. You know, not quite the seven that he ultimately had. And all those other suits—I don't know what happened to them. God. I

wish I'd known what I know now. But yeah, he— I remember seeing that suit and, it just stuck out like a sore thumb. He had a brown suit with pinstripes. I mean they were just like, you know, gangsters, but dressed to a tee.

Hana Yamamoto 10:04

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 10:05

It wasn't just anything. They paid good money for their clothes. They paid good money for their— dad used to call it "Flor-sheim". "Go get my Flor-sheim." They were Florsheim shoes, which was a brand name and he used to go, "Go get my Flor-sheim." He was going out, you know? So they really were a class act, and they were proud of it.

Hana Yamamoto 10:35

That's awesome.

Rosario Lopez 10:35

They work hard for their money. And then spent it on good stuff. For sure. It was my mom who was—she grew up less fortunate, but just didn't think that you could—I mean, she didn't mind having secondhand clothes or going to discount places. So, of course, if my choice was to get new shoes, and it was—it would be dad to take me to go get it because dad wasn't gonna say no to quality. And mom was going to get me the two dollar tennis shoes.

Hana Yamamoto 11:21

Yeah, the discount.

Rosario Lopez 11:23

And I remember that. I remember that Dad took me once to Vans in Watsonville, and I saw Red Goose—they were called Red Goose Shoes, and they came with an egg with a little prize in it. Well I saw these red shoes, and they were like twelve bucks, and I mean, that's way more than my dad had. You know, my mom said, "You could take her but be careful. Don't be spend too much." And I was like, you couldn't—I was like glued to the window. I was just— I walked out with Red Goose shoes, and I thought, Mom is gonna be so mad. She's gonna be— and I got home and my mom looked and said, "Arsenio how much did you—" Seven kids. You know, he worked so hard, and she worked hard, and Rose got the twelve dollar shoes that she told him not—And yeah, I went home, and I got to keep them. I got to keep them. They were just a little pair of red shoes with two buckles and little holes in the front, but they were red.

Hana Yamamoto 12:41

Those sounds adorable.

Rosario Lopez 12:42

They worked. To this day, I never regret it, but I know mom was pretty pissed. I knew my dad wasn't gonna let her spank me. I did get scolded. My dad got scolded for doing that. But we didn't know that we didn't have as much as the next person. You know, they managed and they both worked.

Hana Yamamoto 13:08

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 13:09

They both worked. We got the best cooks because mom made all the Mexican food. And dad made all the Filipino food.

Hana Yamamoto 13:20

That's amazing.

Rosario Lopez 13:21

It was awesome. They would just call ahead—not even call because we were used to playing outside, phones—You had to run inside and answer a phone. You know that we were latchkey kids because back then you didn't worry about prowlers and all of that. And you could play outside until your mom made you come in. So yeah. The Filipino men,—and I've heard this from other mestizo kids—that they were just best, like I said. And even my brother—I still remember him holding his— working in welding in those big tanks all day long. And we were visiting up in Washington, and then he would come home and cook. My sister-in-law was sitting over there visiting with her friends. And I'm thinking, They're just doing nothing. You know, my brother's got his little baby and happy to cook. The Filipino men were just something different. They were just the most unselfish, and not only that, that unselfish—and I mean, so giving. So giving. It wasn't—I remember with my brother, the one closest to me, we used to fight to—when he took off his shoes at night, you know, we would fight to see who could run faster to get his slippers because we just wanted to do so much for them. We fought for his laps. There were many of us that we fought for his laps. We adored his affection. He was so affectionate. He would—and we would giggle that he would rub his little beard on us. And we were—we just loved how he loved us. And then he was off to work. You know, but we're very close.

Hana Yamamoto 13:37

Sorry, did your dad work in the barber shop his whole time in Watsonville?

Rosario Lopez 15:46

No, he worked— he started— he came to work the fields. They brought the Filipinos to work the fields.

Hana Yamamoto 15:51

So that's when he first started?

Rosario Lopez 15:53

He first started in the fields.

Hana Yamamoto 15:55

Did he ever talked to you about what his work was like in the fields?

Rosario Lopez 15:58

It was very— it was long for little. That's why I'm surprised that they spent all their money on a good suit. They were the most— like I said, the most unselfish men. I mean, I know them from a— say where my dad said, "Oh, we're going to a christening up the coast." And the Filipinos in that camp because they were field workers would— they would all get together, kill the pig. So we knew we were gonna have some good Filipino food, right? They would play— I remember, a man teaching my brother how to do the yo-yo. He was an expert on playing the yo-yo. They carved out of wood homemade slingshots for my brothers. They took the time—and we were not their kids. We were a friend's kids who came to visit, but they were lonely out there. They left their families. They left everything. We were so spoiled. You know, we were so—we would go in when it was time. They would want to serve us. They would almost chew our food for us. They were just—they couldn't give us enough. And I think it was from them missing their families back.

Hana Yamamoto 15:58

You're like an adopted family.

Rosario Lopez 17:32

Yeah. And to have kids around, you know? They loved it. And we're not talking a nice big cafeteria. We're talking wood walls and wood tables, you know, and we were happy. I think of that now. We didn't see anything lacking. It was sincere camaraderie. And sometimes they'd go to the room and they bring out penny candies, because they—when they went to town, they picked them up because when there was a function, they would have them available. And if they didn't, they used to throw change. They would throw—get paid and take their handful of whatever change they had. And the guys would throw it out there and let the kids go out there and scramble for the change. Yeah, because they couldn't get to town. They were so generous. Yeah, with their time. They were a class act. I think that—I don't know who could have had a richer upbringing. There was many times we went up to their cabin— you know, a christening, especially a christening or a confirmation.

Hana Yamamoto 19:00

Do you know which camps these were?

Rosario Lopez 19:04

Well, there was one my godfather had—he was—because in these labor camps, they always had to have a supervisor. So in this one labor camp, my Nino, my godfather, was the—What would you call them, the supervisor or the—? And so Nino's camp was Dimeo Lane, up the coast. It was right across the way. So you knew that if you turned on Dimeo Lane to the right, and you followed it, that was the public dump. If you look for the sign there's going to be a row to the left—to the immediate left, and when you get over that little hump there's a camp. Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 19:58

And do you know which companies your dad worked for when he was working in the field?

Rosario Lopez 20:02

No, that would be—he had decided by the time he married my mom—he had already gotten his barber license.

Hana Yamamoto 20:17

Okay.

Rosario Lopez 20:21

And had his—was working as a barber. My dad—Filipinos, especially then, were very petite. My dad was 120 pounds soaking wet. Yeah, he was 5'2, and one hundred— and my brothers were all big. I mean, big. So they took after my mom's brothers who were tall and big. Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 20:58

Do you know what, I guess, inspired your dad to become a barber?

Rosario Lopez 21:04

He wasn't going to stay in the fields. My dad self taught himself to be an electrician.

Hana Yamamoto 21:14

Wow.

Rosario Lopez 21:16

An architect. Yeah, he built canopies for his friends. He was a carpenter. He was an electrician. He did so many things. I remember him making fishnets by hand.

Hana Yamamoto 21:31

Oh my gosh.

Rosario Lopez 21:32

And he would give them to his friends because they used to go crabbing. So he would make crab nets and he taught himself leather making.

Hana Yamamoto 21:44

Wow.

Rosario Lopez 21:45

I remember making— he made purses, coin purses, and wallets out of leather. He was a leather crafter. He was just always busy at home. He could do carpentry, plumbing—I remember getting under the sink with him. My brothers would take off on their bikes, right? "Rosario down here. Hold this pipe for me," you know or whatever. So I was fortunate enough to learn a lot of that. I couldn't get away from him. I was so attached to him. In 1957, they were farming strawberries on the coast over by the—right outside of Watsonville. And he got sick. My mom was outside. It was the fertilizer, the DVTs that we're using. I mean we—my brother and I used to sit on the swims. And these planes that come over dusting the fields, and we'd be waving tools, smelling all this, and taking in all these DVTs. We're fortunate not to

have gotten cancers or been affected—that we know of. We're all diabetic though. And I don't— we don't know if that has anything to do with it. But you know, we'd be out there early in the morning, and my dad did that for a while. He tried to be a foreman for strawberry fields. He got sick and that didn't work. So here's my mom. Five kids. Her husband is taken to the hospital. They don't think he's going to live. She slept with five kids and no experience really cause she helped my dad in fields, right? While we were—and I can remember I was little. I can remember all my uncle's—or many of them, not all of them, but many of them bringing bags of groceries to our house. Yes, bags of groceries. Because my mom—I don't know if she went on aid. I can't remember. I know she didn't work because there are so many of us that small at home. But I remember going to the hospital and seeing him—up to the county hospital and seeing—and we couldn't be exposed—only my mom. And I just look and waiting for him. So for a year and a half we used to see our dad from up.

Hana Yamamoto 24:54

He was in the hospital for a year and a half?

Rosario Lopez 24:57

Yeah. And that year they came up with, not a cure, but experimental med for tuberculosis. And they told my dad he had about three more years to go, and they let him come home. He lived for twenty years, twenty-three years after, and I—Yeah, my dad grew his own vegetables. He grew his own Filipino vegetables because now you can go to the flea market to get them or you had to go to San Jose to get them, which was really a distance for my dad to go. He'd grow his own bitter melon, and eggplant, and green beans, and corn. We had a lot of that growing up from my dad's garden. He had a beautiful garden. And for a man who was going to lose his life, he had two more kids after he got out of the hospital. So I have brothers— younger brother and sister who were born in Santa Cruz after. As he got better, that's when I remember more of him playing music and going to go Filipino functions.

Rosario Lopez 26:16

And he was the local band. Archie's band was— they were called The Islanders, or—but it was his band. And I got to know so many people. And because I was always— I was almost always there. I know he favored me because I was the oldest girl. I don't like to say it a lot in front of my sister because they were much younger. So I got to go with dad to—So I remember this being very young. And he put me in front of a microphone. And he taught me this Filipino song. I knew nothing of what it meant. All I knew was this little dark Filipina girl singing "Dahil Sa Iyo" and the microphone was put as low as it could go. And my dad would hold me. While I sang "Dahil Sa Iyo". And because it was—I think it was a little novelty for a little girl to be singing this Filipino song.

Hana Yamamoto 27:36

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 27:36

In front of this crowd. And I thought—I was so happy to do it for my dad.

Hana Yamamoto 27:43

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 27:45

It was—what they used to do is start throwing money in the middle of the dance floor. And I used to—I remember singing but I remember that was really weird. But I didn't know that they collected it or my dad got that money. Money wasn't a big thing to me. And I would sing that song. And one day, my dad thought he'd leave me up there to sing by myself. And someone, one of his compadres said, "Oh, don't do that because Rose kept turning around looking for you. Nobody could hear her singing anymore." I was like, where's my dad? But the days of my dad— he got the band together, playing up there on that stage and me sitting with my pretty dress on the stage. When one of my uncles wanted a coffee and a Filipino pastry, I go run and get it for him. And I loved it. I just thought that was so neat to do.

Hana Yamamoto 28:52

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 28:52

And those dances were so— I mean, it was fun to see everybody, and the Filipinos are so happy to be out of the field. And by this time, they're well into their sixties. You know, they're well in this. The fortunate ones got families and have their kids and families there. The more unfortunate—some of them went home, some of them stayed. My brother had—and sister had a godfather, Nino Cirillo, and he lived up at camp up the coast. Every Friday night, him and maybe a friend— there were a couple of them. I remember, they would come over. They would take us to the store. We would just go and buy box of ice cream, a bag of potato chips, two six-packs of soda. I mean, they would just go get what you want. But that was our treat. And we'd go home, and they would sit there, and watch wrestling. You know, it was an event for them. It was a Friday night out for them to go. They were our family.

Hana Yamamoto 30:09

[Inaudible]

Rosario Lopez 30:10

They would watch on TV.

Hana Yamamoto 30:11

Oh TV, okay.

Rosario Lopez 30:12

But we became their family. When Uncle Henry passed away, there was nobody. They contacted my sister, and she helped to arrange his funeral. When Uncle Cirillo passed away— my other sister— and he was the godfather. She arranged his funeral because we were the only family here. They never went back. Uncle Cirillo was well into his nineties. When I remember going up to Stanford one year, when Uncle Cirillo got sick. My mom and him—and I took him to an appointment at Stanford. I can't even remember what his illness was. And the doctor said, "You need to stop working". He was like eighty, almost eighty. And he said, "He can't work anymore. You need to get out the field," and Uncle Cirillo cried right there. Right in front of the doctor, he just started to tear. And my mom said, "Compadre,

what's wrong?" And he said, "I have nowhere to go." And my mom said, "Sure you do. You're coming home with us." I remember standing there, and he was in tears.

Rosario Lopez 31:40

So he lived at mom and dad's for the rest of his— well many years. When I used to go over there, my kids were little—who are now in their fifties. He would always just—He would make their bottles. I'd go, "I think it's time for them to have a bottle and take a nap." He'd jump up, and go in there, and warm up their formula. I mean, he couldn't do enough for us. If we said—if we came over, he'd go, "Who do you want to eat with?" I mean, he was just so wonderful. So he stayed with us for many years. Then he got sicker later on, and he needed a bed. And my mom put him in with the boys— the younger, you know, they were still in high school, I think. And he had a bed there. When he couldn't walk, we all would come over. I remember my kids—Where are they? They were with Uncle Cirillo in the room. You know, they were taking— they were taking care of— He was part of our family. And we loved him, he was so wonderful.

Rosario Lopez 33:07

Ultimately, he had a stroke, and we couldn't lift him anymore. We couldn't do anything. So he went to a home and that's where we went to see him all the time. But he was sad when he went to the home. As I think if they did have family, there was nowhere for them to go. And I don't know what the government did for for all these men that were once used as their workforce. I always think of what would've happen? And my dad had us, Uncle Cirillo had us, and so did Uncle Henry had us. But there was all these other men—You know, we couldn't take them all. And I didn't realize what we were doing at the time. I just knew that my parents—these are their compadres and they would come and live with us and stuff. So it's sad, you know, but that's what made us stronger for our— and makes me want more to make sure people know that they came to put food on their table.

Hana Yamamoto 34:22

Yeah. It's great that your family took him in. He sounds like a great guy.

Rosario Lopez 34:26

Oh, he was wonderful. He was just so nice. They're very soft spoken. And what was funny is he was well into his eighties when we all started to going, Uncle Cirillo doesn't have any gray hair. When he was ninety, he must have had like three gray hair.

Hana Yamamoto 34:51

Wow. That's impressive.

Rosario Lopez 34:53

Yeah, we should've taken pictures of him because he didn't have any gray hair. My mom would dye her hair and Uncle Cirillo— She'd go, "Compadre, you don't have any gray hair, just some thinning and missing," but it was black. And we used to go, "Yeah Nino, you're the young man." And I remember—I don't know who it was—someone said, "Of course not. He has no worries. He has no wife. He has no gray hair." Maybe it was my dad said, "Yeah, I have a wife, look at all my gray hair." But yeah. I remember the day my mom said, "Yes, you do. You have a family." Yeah, so he wouldn't have if he was

a different kind of person—but so gentle. They were giving. All they knew is if there were kids around, god they'd look for a cookie, a candy, anything, you know to— I don't know if we should— but my dad was given a goat.

Rosario Lopez 36:09

We lived in Live Oak area, and my dad put the goat in the garage. My kids adored—they were like three and four. They adored that goat. I knew what was going to happen to the goat. They didn't. They adored billy goat. Well, my dad said, "The boys are coming over,"— you know his friends. They were gonna butcher the goat. I said, "Dad, you can't. He's a pet." "No!" And so my dad— I said, "Well, we're not coming. Not bringing the kids over. We're not coming over." But they were—"I want to go to Grandpa's." Yeah, that's what they were used to. And I called, I said, "Is Dad done?" "Yeah, they're done". His friends are here or there. You know, back then when they butchered anything—a pig, goat, a lamb or whatever—all the men got together and did all the cutting up, and sorting, and cleaning, or whatever. So we got there. And of course they were around the table cutting up things, and Tony went straight to to the table. He must have barely seen eye level with the table. And he's going, "Oh—" and of course he liked to eat. He goes, "Oh, what are you doing? What is this?" And all I remember, Uncle Pablo was cutting up meat and he goes, "You want some?" He took a piece of meat. And he gave it to him. And he took it. And Tony goes, "Mmm, this is good." And I was a little disappointed. And I said, "That's billy goat." And he goes—I waited. Everybody just kind of stopped and looked up at Tony, and he goes "Mmm, billy goat tastes good!"

Rosario Lopez 38:19

And I was verging on the edge of cannibalism. But there was another time, I remember Tony going up to the table and they said, "Hmm. This is good. And what is it?" And I don't know who it was. I remember him saying, "Goat's balls." I know. He did it. And Tony goes, "Pretty good." Tony doesn't like me to tell that story. But I'll never forget. Jesus Christ. A little cannibal I'm raising there. But um, that was what they're— That's what they knew. That's what we knew. That's what it was. It wasn't anything for us to be out in the camp, dipping a piece of roasted pig into soften, bled mixed with vinegar. That was a delicacy. Today, we probably wouldn't tell our friends or talk about it. Because— I mean, that's what they did. And that's what we did. And knowing now and having been Americanize, we would probably act like we didn't because it is kind of out there. But that's what we did. I mean, and I know we're not alone and in all of that. When they got together, they celebrated with with that—with killing goat or a pig. We would travel to Gilroy. They're gonna kill pig. We're like—it was a play day for us. We'd be playing all—the moms got together and gossip. The men were out killing the pig. The kids were out playing. You know, when we went to the families, the men were cooking. The women are gossiping.

Hana Yamamoto 40:35

It was like a community.

Rosario Lopez 40:36

Yeah. I have to go to the restroom

Hana Yamamoto 40:37

Yeah, we can pause this.

Rosario Lopez 40:40

And if you— [Pause in recording]

Hana Yamamoto 40:42

Okay, it's back on. I wanted to ask a little bit more about your dad's barber shop. I'm curious about, like, what an average day in his shop looked like?

Rosario Lopez 40:55

Yeah, he had seven kids. He worked from nine in the morning to nine at night. He never got into the union because the union wouldn't allow him to stay late hours for that reason. Local other—there are a couple other Filipino barbers in town that were kind of upset about that. Because to them it would be taking customers away. But Dad said, "What's wrong with me opening? You know, I don't—For that reason, I've got a family I need to feed." He was adamant. I spent—and all of us got to spend Saturdays with my dad. If my mom needed—we were little and my mom needed to do something or—she'd dropped us off at my dad's barber shop. You know, so, of course, he didn't mind having us. But we had to stay out of—he had customers there, so we had to behave, of course.

Rosario Lopez 42:05

But dad had a little curtain where he had his stove and made his lunches in there. His little pot of rice and little—So their diet had a lot of strange stuff. And it would smell like strange stuff sometimes. And Dad would cook it in the shop. And my mom used to say, "Arsenio, your customers don't need to be smelling all of it." And my dad go, "Why not? Why not? How come?" And my mom would be—sometimes my mom would argue with him or raise her voice and my dad used to go like put his hand up. And she would just stop. It was like, stop. And something that really got her going. Got her go—. "[Unknown] howl like a dog." He would tell her that she's screaming like an animal. And my mom would just start cry—sometimes she'd so much start crying and go away. But I mean, I never saw them really fight or you know, we just didn't grow up with that. Anyways, getting back to the barber shop—He had this little—and he would cook in there. And his customers, they loved him. And they used to go, "Archie, I'll be right." Cleared out because he would cook fish and bagoong, you know, the shrimp paste. And I mean, those strange smells came right out of his little room there in the corner of the barber shop.

Rosario Lopez 43:52

So he had seven kids, right? He had pictures of all of us on the top shelf. And we heard this over and over. Number one Junior, number two Johnny, number three Rosario, number four Dickie, Richard, number—I mean, he was just so proud of us. And the picture I had up there, after years it yellowed in. I had my hair tied back in a ponytail. It looked like a boy actually. I hated that picture but that's someone—We couldn't touch those. Above all throughout the barber shop on the very top, he had pictures of Filipino heroes through the years, different ones. You could barely read the read—couldn't hardly read the writing. But if you asked, my dad could verbatim tell you about that person on there. They're proud, so proud. I mean, he left at a very young age, but he was so proud of his heritage. And I think that he passed that on to us because we were around him so much. Yeah, we would be at that

shop. Saw so many— saw him. And he had this sense of humor. He had this sense of humor, like he used to tell us, "If you have to work as a barber, it's good money, right?" And we didn't know that he was trying to, you know, kind of lead us toward at least growing up and doing something. To him, it was better than working in the field—you know, being a barber. By today's standards, we want our kids to get four years of college and do something different. But dad was like, if you want to be a barber—

Rosario Lopez 43:52

And I remember, he had one of his favorite—the Stagnero Brothers who, on the wharf—Steve was one of his best friends ultimately. He used to come in and they'd talk away. He cut his hair like quick. Quick because they hardly had any. And I remember this day he was teaching me about having some kind of skill to make money, you know, to make a living. And I remember Steve Stagnero—I couldn't be more than six or seven years old. He leaves and my dad turned—He pays my dad, "Keep the change." And my dad turns to me, and he has three bucks in his hand, and he goes, "Just like I found a wallet." He was trying to tell me, "Look at that. That's just like money in my hand." And then this Black guy comes in. And my dad zips his hair off. And he goes, "Archie, keep the change." And he leaves and my dad turns to me, and he said, "Oh, [indiscernible] found my sheep." I go, "Daddy!" And he goes, "I'm just saying." I think he invented that term. He was trying to say this isn't a bad skill to have, you know?

Hana Yamamoto 47:04

It made money.

Rosario Lopez 47:10

It fed us. Even though he was there day and night, it fed us. I remember picking them up late at night—I guess one of the cars weren't working. We picked him up late at night. I was so terrified that I wasn't going to—it had to be in the early 1960s. And I was so terrified that I was going to miss The Beatles' opening number on The Ed Sullivan Show. On our way home, I was gonna miss it, and I told my parents, "I'm not leaving the shop. I don't want miss—" I had to be twelve. "I don't want to miss—" and sure enough, The Beatles—you know, fuzzy little TV. It was black and white fuzzy little TV. But I got to see them. That was the big thing. And that year, I asked Dad for my birthday, I wanted—if I could spend my money on The Beatles' album. And he goes, "Are you crazy? You're gonna spend four dollars on that?" Can you imagine if I would have bought it, and kept it, and what it would be worth now? The original.

Rosario Lopez 48:57

But yeah. And that was me. I was always the older sister. I had big responsibilities of getting—say my mom would cook before she left for work, and my dad was still at the shop—getting them fed, making sure their their homework was done, making sure they had school clothes, you know? And I had to be nine or ten years old. I was very young.

Hana Yamamoto 49:33

That's a lot of responsibility.

Rosario Lopez 49:34

Yeah. And you know, I never have had regrets. That was my role.

Rosario Lopez 49:40

When people talk about, "Oh, we went when I was sixteen, I did this—When I was nineteen, my parents sent me to Disneyland," or whatever. I never had that. But I think of how rich my upbringing was. Listening to all that music and watching them all play. I can remember the sweat coming down their face when they're playing the—When Uncle Billy was playing the trumpet— or not Uncle Billy, Uncle Benny playing the trumpet, or Uncle Gary's gold tooth while he was playing the piano and smiling. And those memories come back, and the music was amazing. I'll have to bring up—I don't know if Tony showed you, but my dad had music, and he would recompose with music. So in his own writing—

Hana Yamamoto 49:40

Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 50:41

I've heard he has really good handwriting.

Rosario Lopez 50:43

Oh, beautiful handwriting. Yeah, it was so nice and he applied it to a lot of things that he did. Because his barber shop was there at the end of Mission Street, a lot of the Filipinos from the camps spent Saturday afternoon hanging out at the barber shop. You've seen TV shows where men are hanging out at the barber shop. My dad's shop was that.

Hana Yamamoto 51:19

Would you say it was mostly Filipino men that were going to the barber shop?

Rosario Lopez 51:24

There was not enough to support nine kids or seven kids. He had his best friends who I remember a landscaper— I can't remember his name, but he was one of my dad's favorite customers. I remember, you know, Steve Gill, who—his family owns the wharf, you know? Or owned some of the fisheries down there. Dad had a lot of people who are adamant about having my dad only cut his hair. Now I remember also, Dad said, "I don't care how long it takes me because his haircuts gonna be right." And he would take, with some if he had to, all the time he needed. It wasn't zipped really, except for those ones I remember— zip, zip, zip. But he took his time, and he had a clean haircut. What was his name? Bob Corday owned a beauty salon—no, a beauty school. And I remember being in my dad's chair, and he turned to me and he said, "I've been in the in the hair business for many years. I would not ever let anybody else touch my head."

Hana Yamamoto 51:24

So, he's pretty talented.

Rosario Lopez 51:24

No.

Hana Yamamoto 51:24

Okay.

Rosario Lopez 52:50

He was talented, and he was a perfectionist in what he did. As a matter of fact, I'll show you. When I talked about perfectionism—I was looking at this the other day. I remember when we were young, we needed [inaudible, pots clatter]. We didn't have automatic arm chairs, and my dad [inaudible, Rosario shows a cooking pot]. This is a quality pot, but the handle fell off. Now we're young, right? Dad carved this hard piece of wood. And I remember him carving this out and putting it on here. Now it was tight and now we're talking probably fifty years.

Hana Yamamoto 53:40

And you still have it.

Rosario Lopez 53:41

And we still have it. But he was very particular about what pot he used. The stuff he used. I mean, my mom could care less what bowl she used. But my dad was like—he wasn't gonna go—

Hana Yamamoto 53:49

Perfectionist.

Rosario Lopez 53:54

Yeah, he was a perfectionist, so—He was a little man of many, many talents.

Hana Yamamoto 54:06

I'm wondering if you knew about a card room in the barber shop?

Rosario Lopez 54:11

Yeah, it was because all the Filipinos— like on especially a Saturday, they weren't working—if they weren't working, that's where they hung out. So sometimes a whole car full would come, and they take up all the chairs, and they'd sit around smoke, and listen to the gossip—watch everybody come in and out. We got to experience fresh brussels sprouts. They would bring them in the whole of shoot with brussels sprouts on there. We get one or two, and we'd have fresh brussels sprouts, asparagus, broccoli. Dad would come—because they would bring it when they come. They'd bring a bag to my dad. My dad would give out what he could and bring the rest home. When we went to Fresno, my mom—my dad would want us to get—one day we would go into the—before we came home, and we'd go into the river, Fresno river. And we'd all dig for clams—freshwater clams, and come home with a sack. We'd have to—we were kind of—We had two showers, but we'd have to use the shower in mom's room because my dad would put all those clams in the bathtub for the sand to come out of the clams—for them to be free of sand in their gut. So he had to leave—we had to leave the clams in the water for three days, and then bag them up and take them to Dad. He would give everybody a little bag of clams because that was a delicacy.

Rosario Lopez 56:04

Yeah. It was kind of like a trading post for all the guys to meet. And all of them to— just like you see in the movies. You see these guys sitting around, gossiping, looking to see what's going on—nosy. That was that shop. The card room was right next door so they could move. As soon as Dad closes the shop, he'd moved to the card room. And as he got older, he had less and less—He had less customers and more in the card room. And we were glad because we didn't want him to work anymore, and he wanted to. It's like, I need to just to keep moving.

Hana Yamamoto 56:04

At the barber shop?

Rosario Lopez 56:06

But he loved that card room. And him and Uncle Cirillo, the one with no gray hair, would take the chips and get the card going. It was illegal. So they would, they—I don't know how they did it, but I know they did it for money. So that would be considered gambling. But that was their livelihood. That was—especially at their age. They're now in their eighties. They've worked the fields. They've left their families. They have nowhere else. That's what they like to do. And that's what my dad really liked. He liked to—that was important to him. And we were glad because his barber shop was—less and less customers. I think his hands might've gotten shaky by then. I don't want to say that too loud because he's gonna get me. But I don't think he could handle the barber shop. Yeah. That was great. He was a hub for the Filipinos.

Hana Yamamoto 56:06

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 58:08

I remember also, a lot of Filipinos couldn't write. And Uncle Cerio Sipigao, that was his name, was writing to a woman in Philippines. And he was going to bring her over as his wife, but he didn't know how to write. So my dad would write these letters, and he got a lot of trouble by my mom because they were love letters. And my dad made all them up. He made all the stuff to get them—to get her to like Uncle Cerio, and she came and she told my mom, "Hey, look he wrote me all these letters." She recognized my dad's beautiful handwriting, and all his words. My mom said, "Arsenio, you have no business. You're making those letters up and writing to—" He goes, "It worked." But he helped him. He helped him with legal. He helped him with— they said, "Oh this is happening, what do I do?" He helped him send letters to Philippines—money. You know, telling them, "Here. Go take it here and get money order and blah-blah-blah." He was like a little—it was a little hub, a little place to go. It was the go to for—especially as they got older. As they were well into their eighties—some of them eighties and they were a—so a lot of them older than my dad. Dad passed away at seventy-six, but it was about a year after he retired. We think, oh we shouldn't have let him retire. But he was told when he was in—like I said in the hospital, that he would only live three more years. But he came home and he grew his own vegetables. And there was a stuff called—I don't even see it in the books, but I remember the plant is called comfrey—big leaves. And he grew it in his garden. And he drank the tea. And he lived for twenty-something years after.

Hana Yamamoto 1:00:32

Do you know if comfrey had any, like special properties or something?

Rosario Lopez 1:00:37

You know, I wanna say yes.

Hana Yamamoto 1:00:40

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 1:00:40

Because if the doctors told him one thing but he—you know, plus their diets at that point were rice, of course. But maybe a little bit of fish and perilla leaves or spinach or some veggie. They were very good diets. His diet was good. But he made this pot of oxtail soup for us. He'd have this little pot on the side with fish, fishy, and little shrimps or whatever. But he had this pot of oxtail soup, potatoes, and carrots, and cabbage, and everything. And he tell us, "No limit. Go for it," you know? And we were a family of seven. Sometimes he'd even buy a round steak, and he cut it in seven pieces. And go, "Okay, everybody get a piece of steak." We knew we're limited. But I mean, we all ended up being heavy—heavier than needed to be for this 120 pound dripping wet, little Filipino—you know, for being his kids. And we were just so happy to have so much. And that wasn't because we had ribeye steak. We had so much because he took the time to cook for us, to teach us, to feed us. I mean, we were his life. And he said, "It's the life I gave up over there." And I have to give my mom such credit. I mean, I used to hear her go, "Oh, speak right Arsenio." [Inaudible] with you. She would tease him, but she was always there. You know, and she was twenty-four years younger.

Hana Yamamoto 1:02:47

What did your mom do for work?

Rosario Lopez 1:02:50

She worked in a cannery.

Hana Yamamoto 1:02:51

Okay.

Rosario Lopez 1:02:52

Yes, it was hard work. But she worked at night because she always said that she wanted to be there for us if the school called, or if she had to go to school appointments or doctor's appointments. I remember, we lived in Santa Cruz. We want to go the beach in the summer. She would get home at four in the morning, and maybe to sleep—to get to work the next night, right? Many times she worked a lot of overtime. And she would take blanket and a pillow to the beach, but she would pick up bologna, and bread, mayo, a bag of chips, and a big container of Kool Aid. And we'd go to the beach. We'd play all day long while she slept on that blanket to get her rest. But as long as we can be at the beach—She took us, as opposed to say, "No, I'm tired. I'm not—" you know, she always found ways.

Rosario Lopez 1:03:17

This project has brought a lot of the community together. And I think that had it not been for Roy going after it—and I know other towns have been doing this for a long time, but we had nothing. And if it wasn't for him, we wouldn't have that history. We wouldn't be doing this. I'd love to see a lot more of the Filipino community. Some of the gals here in Santa Cruz— but I don't know if they're interested. I know Dolly's interested. But she doesn't reach out. I have two friends that Roy has asked me to ask if they would do interviews: Evelyn [inaudible] in Watsonville and Erlinda Soto here in Santa Cruz. There's another girl, her name is—God, it starts with an E. They all start with an E. I'm going to have to ask them. I think we were inbred, Tony and I, because his sister lives here, and she's not interested. She likes to hear about it. She loved him as much as we did, and they're proud as much as we are. But the involvement just isn't there. I'm just so glad that Tony's into it. Because, yes he's very into it. I want them to remember.

Hana Yamamoto 1:03:52

Impressive.

Rosario Lopez 1:03:53

Yeah. We were very lucky. We were very lucky. Once a year, our annual trip to San Francisco was on the Fourth of July. And we piled up—no seatbelts, right? So you can pile up as many kids as you want in the car. We took off up off the coast—up on the coast and went to—we'd start off at the zoo. That was our—and I remember this year, after year, after year. We start off at the zoo. By noon, we'd have to leave to get over—have little lunch there. And usually it was sandwiches that my mom packed. And then we would drive over to Golden Gate Park, where we would go to the Steinhardt Museum and Aquarium. Awesome back then. I mean, there was just—it was awesome. And then we would be done by four, four thirty He'd gather us up, and we'd go over a couple of streets, and land in Chinatown, and we'd go eat. And we got to spend a little time in the shops before we get back in the car. Say it was—no, a good probably seven o'clock. And he'd rush back to see the fireworks in downtown Santa Cruz—they used to have fireworks right off the boardwalk every year. Until one year they stopped because someone got killed, and nobody could get to him. It was so packed.

Hana Yamamoto 1:05:32

That's horrible.

Rosario Lopez 1:05:33

Yeah, it was bad. But yeah that was our childhood. That was—and that was our annual trip. It wasn't Disneyland. We couldn't afford it. But we got that—but we got to go to dances and christenings and that was our childhood. It's not like we were at home doing nothing. That was the culture. And that's what we got to do. So we have many uncles and many aunts. And a lot of the so-called cousins are all over the place. And we talk about it once in a while. We go, "Hey, remember when we'd kill a goat? Everybody get dressed. We're going out to the camp." And we'd go out to the camp. So that was—and what was needed.

Rosario Lopez 1:06:27

A lot of these women that I've met through Watsonville is in The Heart—wonderful Juanita Sulay. She was—her sister was my mom's flower girl. I mean, we weren't even around it was—. So there's a lot of people that we kind of disconnected, but we're connecting again through this project.

Hana Yamamoto 1:08:28

Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 1:08:39

It's important.

Rosario Lopez 1:08:40

Yes. It's history. It's a history that we can't forget. My dad said when they came to the United States, they offered them work. But when he got on the ship, they had so little space on the ship—you know how they did the slaves, and they made them lay down and so they put as many—It was almost like that, I think.

Hana Yamamoto 1:09:10

That's horrible.

Rosario Lopez 1:09:11

And I remember my dad said, "I had such a bad toothache," that he goes, "I didn't know what to do. I had toothache and we're in the middle of the ocean coming over."

Rosario Lopez 1:09:23

It was so bad. I go, "What you do, Dad?" He goes, "I drank urine. Someone told me to drink urine." And I don't know if it was to take the pain away. I mean, why would you do that? It's gross even talking about it. But they did what they had to do because they weren't gonna be given any services. And then to come over here—Did Tony show you the papers when they arrive in San Francisco. He has those. And there's other Filipinos that we recognize some of those last names—that might be interested in seeing those. He dug up that paperwork. He even did it for my grandpa side on my mother's side on the Mexican side, when they registered for something. Tony did a lot of research. And one day when I get my stuff out of storage, I want to get out this list of all my dad's brothers and sisters, because they don't—.

Hana Yamamoto 1:09:23

Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 1:10:06

Like a family tree?

Rosario Lopez 1:10:50

Yeah. The property in the Philippines was left to my father. He never went back. But we have his sister's kids, they were— think their last name was Bustamante—that were living there and other relatives wanted to take over because it ended up that property was in the middle of downtown—the city had

grown. And like our cousin came up to all of us and said, "Would you consider giving the property up?" We all talked about it. We're never gonna go back there. We all gave him—gave the family, our cousin Frank's brother—the property for him. He was a grandfather by then so. I wish we would have gotten a copy of the deed, but it was a really neat looking deed. It was left to my brother, because he was—This is my dad's naturalization papers.

Hana Yamamoto 1:11:59

Oh is that his picture?

Rosario Lopez 1:12:01

That's his picture.

Hana Yamamoto 1:12:04

This is so cool.

Rosario Lopez 1:12:05

And it says, you know, it says that the color of his hair was—that he was dark, eyes, hair—eyes: brown, hair: black, five feet two and a half inches, his weight—oh no, he was no one-eighty, that he had a mole on the side of his mouth, that he was Filipino. I think its so interesting. And that's his naturalization papers. He was so proud that he was a naturalized citizen—that he knew how to recite the preamble and the Pledge of Allegiance. How he was—at least to brag, he goes, "Well how many Filipinos do you know can read and write and blah-blah-blah." He'd gone and unleashed—just roll our eyes because my mom would go, "Oh, stop it Arsenio. Quit bragging." But yeah. This is—there's his signature.

Hana Yamamoto 1:13:16

Oh, yeah. He has great handwriting.

Rosario Lopez 1:13:18

Yeah. He had great handwriting. He was—gosh, I am going to look for all of those. All of those things.

Hana Yamamoto 1:13:26

Yeah, that would be great.

Rosario Lopez 1:13:28

All of the stuff that he—and we could probably come up with a picture of the sink. And I'd love that barber chair. It was already an antique when my dad got it.

Hana Yamamoto 1:13:46

Wow.

Rosario Lopez 1:13:47

It's beautiful. It's like a green marble or something. It's a beautiful chair.

Hana Yamamoto 1:14:00

I was hoping to circle back to your mom and working in the canneries. Do you know she was involved in any unions or anything?

Rosario Lopez 1:14:08

Yeah, she was in the union. And I have a great story. My brother was in Vietnam. He was in Vietnam. I went to work summers with my mother—part time, me and my friend. My mom had been working there a long time. We were working with broccoli. We used to take a big thing of broccoli and cut it in fourths. When we cut in fourths in the sphere—it was the most beautiful broccoli but it had pink worms on the sphere—a lot of them. Pink worms were showing and they would cut it, and there's—You could see the pink worm laying in the side there.

Hana Yamamoto 1:14:58

Oh.

Rosario Lopez 1:15:01

And we were at the end of the line where the broccoli had been cut, and cooked, and sorted, and we were packing it in little boxes. We started coming through—we started seeing worm here and then there. And the foreman came by and said, "Throw those pieces out." Well now we're coming—we're still working. And there was so much of it. And they said—you start out with A Grade, the best broccoli, so the beautiful broccoli with worms in it. So they said, "Drop the grade to B Grade." And that's when more worms started coming out. And they said, "Drop it to C Grade." C Grade is big boxes that will go to like cafeterias. Just because they're not going to get the perfect price for it. They couldn't stop those worms from coming in. And my mom—the foreman goes, "Drop it to government." That's D grade. It's the last grade and government's gonna get the crap—because they have to give government almost free. I mean they had to give the government a decent price, right? My mom—I remember seeing them canneries, it's loud, it's dark, it's cold, damp. I see my mom, and my friend goes, "Look at your mom. Something's going on." I looked over and she was like this with the foreman—like this. And he was like this with her. She's arguing. And then they stopped the line and told us to go home. So we went over and sat on the bench and waited for my mom. We've all come together. And my mom was, "Come on! Let's go," and she was pissed. And I go, "What mom? What happened?" We're running to keep up with her. She was so mad. She said, "I told him, my son is in Vietnam—in the military in Vietnam. I don't know if I will ever see him again. And I'll be god damned if you give him this shit." She didn't want that to go to the government. To her, it was, "You treat my son right. He may die."

Hana Yamamoto 1:17:39

Yeah, he's fighting.

Rosario Lopez 1:17:41

They stopped the lines. And I thought, She's going to get fired. She's been there like, how many years? They never fired her. They stopped the lines.

Hana Yamamoto 1:17:50

Wow.

Rosario Lopez 1:17:52

That should have went to the newspapers, I think. I was so—I always think of that night. I was so proud of her doing that.

Hana Yamamoto 1:18:05

She sounds really outspoken.

Rosario Lopez 1:18:07

Outspoken. And when she wasn't working and taking us to the beach—Back then you didn't have interpreters in the courts, so she interpreted for a lot of her Mexican friends. Spanish speakers who didn't have anyone— "I need to do this," or to go to the welfare office, or go to the whatever-whatever court or—She would do that as a service to people even if she even heard of them—always service to other people. And on Thanksgiving, she would get everything out and serve—getting it going. Then she'd go, "Okay, I'll be right back." And we go, "Mom!" We hated her—for her to take off. But she would go downtown to feed the homeless back then, when very few people were doing it. She would go downtown to feed the homeless. We used to go, "We're homeless." You know, stay here, god. She was admirable—always helping people at the dances. At the Filipino dances, always helping with the money or the getting things—So these wives stood by their Filipino husband. It was just neat time. White, Black, Mexican, whatever, whatever. They they were there and they enjoyed it. You know, so that was a good upbringing for us.

Hana Yamamoto 1:19:49

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 1:19:50

We used to think it was so special because our friend's parents never even got out of the house on a Saturday night. And we were there dancing and listen to music, you know? Like was a really good—to me it was really great. And to feel so secure that with of quite Santa Cruz was—I mean, there were not enough of us, so they didn't even know what to do with this. We had good friends. But when we didn't have good friends, we were secure enough to not let them bother us, you know. And I asked how strong they made us and how good they made us feel. You know, growing up. Big, big difference.

Hana Yamamoto 1:20:44

Yeah, the strong foundation,

Rosario Lopez 1:20:46

Right. When I had three kids, and my husband left—I had left when I was fifteen, sixteen. So I thought, What do I do? I went back, and I got a degree in electronics. I go, "Where's the money?" They said electronics. Okay, good enough. I wanted to—I was going after an art degree. But she said, "Art could be your hobby. You're not going to make money within art," and I thought, Uh, you know? But I have three kids.

Rosario Lopez 1:21:20

So I didn't pursue that. I did go to school, but I had to go back to school for electronics. When I got on the bench, there were very few men who were working in—I mean, women who were—there was forty-one men and me in my electronic courses at Cabrillo at that time. Its like 1980. I got harassed by the guys. You know, "What do you want? What are you doing here?" I had one guy say, "I bet you get those good grades, because you're, you're a woman. You're brown woman." And thought, What is he talking about? I have the same homework, the same classes, and I have three kids. And I had some guys that were really nice to me. Some guys just wanted to date me. And I thought, Man, you just got to keep going. I had three kids. And I had a mom who was sick. My dad was—maybe he was—he hadn't passed away yet. I was still going to school. I was in school when he passed away.

Hana Yamamoto 1:21:20

Yeah.

Rosario Lopez 1:22:50

I had to really be tough, and I'm glad I had a mom and dad like them, or I wouldn't have. They would have—even when I graduated and got a job, the guys—the technicians are like, "What is she doing here" and what—I remember the kid, he was so mean. I got there ten minutes late, I had to—one of my kids was either sick or had to go in to see a teacher. I got there ten minutes late, and he said, "You're ten minutes late." I was so upset and had stressed out that I said, "I put three kids in school. Got their lunches together. Took them all to grade school, junior high, and off to the high school before I got here this morning." And I said, "Yeah, I'm ten minutes late." I said, "But I don't have a mother to make my lunch like you do."

Hana Yamamoto 1:23:55

You put him in his place.

Rosario Lopez 1:23:56

Yeah, because I was so tired. I went to put my equipment on the shelf— set up my test station, he said—and the guys go, "Let me help you with that, Rose." And this one guy says, "Don't do anything for her. Let her do it herself. She wants to be in this line of work." I mean, I never forget those things. I looked at him like—They said, "Oh, quiet Tom." It was like that through—You always have to prove yourself, but had it not been for this strong foundation, I wouldn't have made it for some of those things. When I got into interest—Then I was promoted. After a year on the bench, I was promoted. I made a mistake. I didn't make a mistake. It taking me four days—most of us four days to align these units. These were units that went into missiles, and some of them were radar systems for planes. And we're working on those. I made a mistake and I—One of the girls said, "I have refractor, I'll give it to you." And she put it together—So when I put it together, it got powered within the hour—Book takes four days. I thought, What the heck? So I thought, What could have changed that she slaughtered the fractor inside this? Anyways, I tried it again, but I slaughter the fractor—I changed it before I even got started. Sure enough that was it. I got it told that I was doing a month's work in just a few days.

Hana Yamamoto 1:24:13

Wow.

Rosario Lopez 1:24:14

They've noticed that of course. The guys are going, "Another one, Rose? Another one?" I was getting them done. Well, they said, "Rose you need to tell us what you're doing." And I go—I didn't want to because I thought, I get to finish early and it's cozy for me. Hell no, they gave me more work because I was getting it done early. And so it was an engineering change. They promoted me into engineering. I've got a two year degree, less than a year work on the bench, and I'm pushed into— they gave me a an office with two of the highest paid engineers in the company.

Hana Yamamoto 1:26:33

Wow. That's so impressive.

Rosario Lopez 1:26:34

And I thought was, Hey, I gotta work. I have kids to feed. So I went back to school got another degree in electronics—I mean not electronics, in quality management—which gave me more stuff like in statistics, and [indiscernible] stuff. But I got that degree and was able to get a good wage. By then my older kids were teenagers, and almost ready to leave the house. But my mom had passed away, so it was a struggle. It was a struggle. When electronics went away and my parents were gone—And I came to work here because I was working over the hill with a lot of stuff. But because of my determination and my big mouth, the company sent me all over the United States when there was problems with components or issues with our units because I was so adamant. Like, if someone was trying to lie, or gave the wrong information, I go, "No this is what it is." I'd have my ducks in line and I go and I— they go, "Rose from need you to go to Boston. Rose we need you to go to—." And one year, I said "I can't. I have children." And they said, "Well, let your your mom take care of them." I go, "You're not gonna do that to my mom— make her take care of them for two weeks." They had to pay her twenty-four, seven to take care of—they had to rewrite their—

Hana Yamamoto 1:26:58

You got them to pay your mom?

Rosario Lopez 1:28:30

Yeah, because there were no women working in my field. The men could go and their wives took care of their kids. Here's a woman, who's got three kids—and you're not going to do that to my mom. They paid her. Oh, my mom was happier than heck. She would have done it really for free, but I wasn't gonna do that to my mom. Yeah, they paid her. They had to rewrite their rules for the company. So I had a good run. Unfortunately, the interest rate—when once you start going to China, that's when things started changing—Silicon Valley change, and with technology change. But I just I got job here in Santa Cruz. Is that a bee or fly—?

Hana Yamamoto 1:29:27

I think its just a fly. I want to talk about, I guess, your parents marriage. Do you know when they met? And earlier before we were recording, you're saying that they had a really big wedding reception?

Rosario Lopez 1:29:46

Yes.

Hana Yamamoto 1:29:46

I wondering if you could talk about that a little bit more.

Rosario Lopez 1:29:49

Yes. Because, like I said—Because dad knew a lot of people. Because they kind of use them as—they were tired of being told what they can do and can't do. They were tired of saying, "Yeah, you can't get married in this in this county." People went out of state—out of county, out of state. Many people I know their parents did not get married here in Santa Cruz County. And because of that they—where was I going with this?—The different lodges, they kind of huddled together, my mom said. And my mom isn't real clear on how they did it. I don't think she ever ask but she said, "It was the lodges that said we're going to pay for it. We're going to pay for it." So you know, the Veteran's Hall was pretty big hall. And five hundred people is a lot of attendance for a wedding. Mom said she didn't know most of them. She knew her brothers and sisters. She knew their local people, but she said many people heard of it. It was a big event. They came from different parts of California. And many—she said some some came from Washington—flew in from Washington.

Rosario Lopez 1:31:30

And I don't know if they flew or drove, but she said they came from Washington. It was a—They used mom and dad as a statement. We are here and we're going to do this right. And we're gonna do it. And you're not going to tell us we can't do it here in this county. So they were lucky. Mom said—she said there were so many people, so many people. And like I said Juanita Sulay's younger sister, Margaret—I think her name's Margaret—was the flower girl with their wedding. I am going to trying to find that. Big band. Just all the lodges—there's a lot of pomp and circumstance in the lodges back then. God I remember those swords. I thought they really mean business. Like my dad said, "If you learn the secrets of the lodge, I'll have to kill you." Geez Dad, I'm your daughter! They were just so adamant about their secrecy. And, I don't even think—do you know if there's lodges around? I don't think they exist.

Hana Yamamoto 1:31:30

Wow.

Hana Yamamoto 1:31:48

I'm not sure. Do you know if your parents face any discrimination for being an interracial couple, interracial marriage?

Rosario Lopez 1:33:16

I think they must have, but I didn't see it because they stayed within their own culture and their own people. The people I grew up with—all my uncles and aunties—They would be their compadres and comadres because they baptize each other's kids. Their siblings we saw for holidays and for the big gatherings—The same ones over and over. You know, they kept to themselves. They had their own. It would be like the Portuguese having their own things, and not opening up. I don't remember. I don't feel like we lacked any of it. But I don't think that there was—I don't think the Moose Lodge was going to order—ask them to join. I don't think The Lions were gonna say, "Here, let us—come in and join us." Or

the women—And that's where the women created their own lodges. The women had their own lodges. And there was many Filipinas from Philippines by then. Because when they first came to the women didn't come. The women didn't come until, like I think, more like into the thirties and forties. And there was very few, but now it's it's more. They're all in our hospitals. They're all nurses in our hospitals.

Hana Yamamoto 1:35:01

Were you ever involved in any Filipino organizations growing up?

Rosario Lopez 1:35:07

Well the Dimas-Alang had many chapters—many lodges all over. The local Santa Cruz Filipino Community was what my parents were very involved with. I was very young. But they used to have, what they call the social dance. The social dance was—the daughters of many of the members, we would get—would have to sit up in the front of a dance. Like there'd be six chairs. And they would have—you had to dance. And they would start you off—it was like an auction. They auction your dances with these members. So I get out there and maybe my Nino would come up and tell them I'm giving ten—five dollars. Right? And that went into a pot and that went into a pot. And back then I remember getting like sixty, eighty dollars off—because then another member would come. And they would ask how much and you'd say, "Ten dollars." And they'd go, "Ten dollars." And then they would dance with me. And then they have to go pay this pot. What happened—You got to keep half the money, and the lodge keeps half the money. And it was a fundraiser. It was a benefit dance. And those funds went to—say you were in the Filipino Community and you went to the hospital—a flower fund would come out of there so that the lodge acknowledges that you're in the hospital or that you're ill.

Hana Yamamoto 1:36:59

So they're taking care of each other.

Rosario Lopez 1:37:01

Yeah, they were trying. They were doing—and it wasn't big. It wasn't like there was a lot of money. But they made money that way. And I remember a lot of girls said, "Oh, it's like you're selling your own daughter". And I said no. It wasn't that they meant any harm or anything like that. As much as I didn't like it, I knew that half that money—and you know what, I remember thirty bucks would take the whole family to Denny's in the morning after the dance. That was a lot of money for my mom and dad. I didn't do it for me because I could have said no. I did it because that's what we were into. And that's—and some of my other friends were coming in from Watsonville or other parts of Santa Cruz. And I'd see them there. And how much did you make and how much did you make? But it was always cute. We'd make fun. Do you know—Have you heard of the Ragsac's in Watsonville?

Hana Yamamoto 1:37:01

I don't think so.

Rosario Lopez 1:38:04

Yeah, they were big compadres of my dad. But Uncle Benny would, you know, he'd say, "Well, how much?" And they would—some would say, "Well, twenty dollars," which was a ton of money. It's still a ton of money, and he'd go, "Twenty dollar!" "Five Dollar!" "Ten Dollar!" Give him a hand. It was just a fun

time. It was a benefit to help the community, you know, help them. There was raffle prizes and raffle tickets and—yeah, it was really neat. I remember at a meeting—at a Filipino community meeting, they were voting on something and my older brother put his hand up to vote. And one of the women said, "He can't vote." She says—my mom said, "Why not? We are doing all this for our kids. Why is he not included? He's eighteen." And my mom shut people up. But she was strong. She was strong for that community. She was a big builder. There was one woman here—you should get the Reotutar's. Have you? Have you talked to the Reotutar's?

Hana Yamamoto 1:39:45

I don't—I'm not sure

Rosario Lopez 1:39:47

She's still alive. She's like ninety—I don't know ninety-something. And she was really strong in the Filipino community in Santa Cruz. She's the only survivor that I know. She's in rest home now, but I see her daughter posting her all the time. I'll have to get a hold of her.

Hana Yamamoto 1:40:06

Yeah, that would be great.

Hana Yamamoto 1:40:07

Yeah, it makes sense surrounding yourself with good people.

Rosario Lopez 1:40:07

Her mom was really like—her mom and my mom were like in helping them— in getting funds, and collecting money, and getting it in the bank. And they used to kind of make—they stuck together because a lot of the Filipino ladies were kind of, "Well, they're not even Filipino." And they were all going, "What do you mean? We don't have to be. This is for our children—my children are." So I was fighting. But gosh, I could remember seeing them and the ones that were there all the time. I've met a lot of mestizo half breed Filipinos from Watsonville that I didn't know growing up because I came here so early. And I knew the people around here. But through talking to my parents and looking at pictures, and knowing all the people that we communicated with, and how strong they are—I've re-connected with them. You know now that we're all old adults, I've reconnected with them. But we can still remember going out to the camps and killing—watching them kill an animal for celebration like that. Very strong. The camaraderie was strong. And I think they built that camaraderie because they were so oppressed at one time.

Rosario Lopez 1:40:14

Good people. Good reason. And not so much of that hatred that we still continue to see across the United States. Why they would look down on any race? You know, because they wanted to make things right and be equal. They'd be ousted in a minute. You know, because of the Indians really were treated—So the Filipinos didn't allow them—they banded together. God, I just thought of that. They could've been, quote and quote, sent off to reservation if they wanted them to—like they did the Japanese when the war started, and they sent them off. But they put the Filipinos instead got tighter, and enjoy their lives, and made their kids—gave them a good life. You know, it could have backfired on

them because it wasn't that they didn't try to hold them back. You know? And if you didn't allow that, and you didn't see it, then it didn't work for them. Because a lot of people bought into it. But they had a strong—

Rosario Lopez 1:43:24

You know, I'm glad I was part of that it made me realize that they built strong— And when I was working, and I was working around men who didn't want a woman there, and I work in about companies who were going, "What is she doing here?" I mean, I had a man just tell me, "What are you?" Doesn't matter. I'm here. You know? And I remember fighting like that. Yeah, but what are Filipinos? People just didn't even know. See in the South, back then—that time. You had to have—I know, I had to have a strong foundation to put up with—talking about corporations who wanted to [indiscernible] a lot of stuff. I had nothing to lose. What are they gonna do? These were my companies. I was fighting for my company. And looking for solutions and you couldn't sit there and say, "Hey, doesn't matter what I am. This is situation and that's all you need to know." You know, and that's coming from a strong background. That is coming from the mother who said, "Shut it down. I don't care. You know, my son might not come home, and you're not going to feed them this crap."

Hana Yamamoto 1:45:00

Yeah, no worms.

Rosario Lopez 1:45:03

No worms. You're not going to give it to government. I thought that was that admirable. That was so admirable.

Hana Yamamoto 1:45:13

She really stood up for herself and—

Rosario Lopez 1:45:16

She could have been fired. That was her job—twenty years or whatever. She didn't have an education. That where she worked hard in those canneries. But those women who stood by their Filipino husbands were very lucky. Very lucky. Because the Filipino husbands were good to the kids. Good to the home. You know, good to their wives. So yeah. Really lucky.

Hana Yamamoto 1:45:47

I think we're nearing the end of the interview. But yeah, thank you so much for all these wonderful stories.

Rosario Lopez 1:45:55

I was thinking, Don't bore her Rose.

Hana Yamamoto 1:45:59

These are so like—such rich stories, honestly. So thank you.

Rosario Lopez 1:46:04

Yeah. You know, growing up, I didn't think that. I just knew—I knew we didn't have money. Then, I thought, that's what I need—I don't want anyone to know I don't have it. I didn't know that, being so young—that I had more than money. I had a lot of riches. I had two parents that gave me a lot of culture. Because I didn't only learn how to cook Filipino food, I'm probably the only one in like three families that can make tortillas still. They taught me so much, you know. And I was the oldest, and I got to do a lot. So I was able to—not fight just for my families, but for my companies. So I got a lot of strength of my mother, a lot of knowledge from my father. Very lucky. Very lucky. And that's why I want to make sure—yes, come on in babe. This interview— my daughter.

Christina Ayson Plank 1:47:24

Hi, Kristina. Nice to meet you.

Hana Yamamoto 1:47:26

Nice to meet you.

Rosario Lopez 1:47:27

Yeah, they're taking down the history—our family.

Unknown 1:47:32

Oh, okay.

Hana Yamamoto 1:47:33

We're doing an oral history interview. We're nearing the end though.

Unknown 1:47:37

All right. [inaudible]

Rosario Lopez 1:47:43

Yeah, hey, they keep the cable and got it on the table.

Unknown 1:47:50

He's our guard cat. Better than him.

Rosario Lopez 1:47:58

Are you gonna have something to eat?

Unknown 1:48:00

Yeah, I'll be right down. I have to check on something else.

Rosario Lopez 1:48:03

Okay.

Unknown 1:48:04

I'll be right back.

Hana Yamamoto 1:48:06

I was wondering before we close out the interview if you have a favorite memory of your parents growing up?

Rosario Lopez 1:48:15

Yes. Saturday mornings when me, my brother Richard—who's one year younger, my sister Delia, my sister Lisa, and my brother baby—the baby Bobby would all get in bed with my parents Saturday mornings. And we had to put our arms straight up in the air and go maysa, dua, tallo, uppat, lima, innem, pito, walo, siam, sangapulo, and then we all sit up. And then go make pancakes. So many Saturday mornings—We learned to count to ten in Filipino. That's, I mean, we didn't know much Filipino. We knew when he was mad, but that memory—And the other one is on Christmas morning in our pajamas. Dad would bring out his saxophone and play White Christmas, Silent Night. Beautiful—pure sex, pure alto sex in the morning, while mom made breakfast on Christmas morning. Good memories. And I am going to find the photo—I mean, not a photo but a painting that I did. My dad— watching my dad as my dad played the sax and my mom watching, waiting for us to to eat.

Hana Yamamoto 1:49:55

I would love to see that.

Rosario Lopez 1:49:56

Yeah, that would be fun to share. You know because, I mean, how rich—how many kids get a solo Christmas morning of Christmas tunes like that.

Hana Yamamoto 1:50:12

That sounds pretty rare.

Rosario Lopez 1:50:14

Yeah, we were really lucky. You know, this interview really made me feel really proud. Yeah. And that we had to be the poorest family in town. We didn't know it though. We didn't know it. We always had food. And more than anything, we always had our parents. Yeah. So any of the other outside things, whether it was a teacher, or someone at school, or another technician on the bench when I grew up, we were able to go stand our ground. Yeah.

Hana Yamamoto 1:50:59

That's beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing all of that growth. Isn't alright if I stopped the recording?

Rosario Lopez 1:51:10

Sure.