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150 Years of Women at Berkeley

Pat Spratlen Etem

INTERVIEW BY JEAN STRAUSS

Let's start at the beginning. And these are the first ten questions I'm going to ask. You are going to be very fast. We're going to get into some more meaty things down the road. But where did you where were you raised? Tell me a little bit about your family. Where were you in the birth order? So, in just a couple sentences, where were you raised?

I was born in Columbus, Ohio. Married student housing. I grew up, though, in Bellingham, Washington. Love. Bellingham, Washington. I'm the second of five kids, so I have an older sister, younger sister and two younger brothers. Really fun childhood. The only thing athletic, I think structurally that we did when we were young is soccer. So I was on the girls soccer team after school. It was wonderful. I had a great PE teacher. And I think actually my PE teacher had a bit of an influence on my overall love of sport and love of being competitive because she had us compete against the boys. I was the fastest. I was the fastest kid in our fifth grade.

She always really emphasized being a good sport and kind of just going within yourself.

So. Were sports a part of the household? Were your parents' athletes at all?

Oh, yeah. My mom always talked about it. She played girls basketball. She grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia. Segregated school in segregated town. But she was on the girl's basketball team and was very good. And my dad actually went to Kent State to play football in Ohio. I don't think back in the 1950s when he was there, people were given scholarships. Anyway, he didn't receive one, so he eventually had to drop out because he did not have the funds. He wrote a memorable letter which my brother still has - a letter he wrote to his mother thanking her for the 50 cents she sent for him to buy shoes. My father entered ROTC officers training, became an officer, went into the Korean war, and then came back, and received his college education paid for (to all veterans to this day) on the G.I. Bill. He, a newlywed to my mother, went to Ohio State and got his BA, master's and then his Ph.D. all on the GI Bill.



Pat Spratlen, 1980

Wow. So how did you happen to come to Cal? You were from Washington. Why didn't you go to Washington?

Oh, my gosh. Good question. Bellingham was home base, however, my dad had one sabbatical at UC Berkeley - and I loved it. Berkeley opened my eyes to diversity. We were the only black family in Bellingham. So 6th grade when we spent that sabbatical year in Berkeley was heaven. It was '67. Just flower power, free expression - it was so different than Bellingham. I drove past the dorm that I eventually lived in, years later, as a freshman. There was a sign in the window, and it said, Vietnam War protest; "Chicken little was right. The sky is falling." And I'm like, okay - this is my place!

Anyway, so that was sixth grade and I just vowed to move back to California. I said, "This is where I want to be." Eventually we moved to L.A.. During middle and high school, my dad taught at UCLA for a few years and then my parents moved to Seattle. I finished my high school in Seattle. We moved from the vibe of L.A., you know UCLA games, John Wooden's legacy, to rainy, dreary, awful Seattle. And. I knew I wasn't going to stay in Washington.

Seattle was very segregated. And I was just determined I was not going to stay there and go to the University of Washington. My Mother wanted me to stay in Seattle or go back east to college; I said, I will pay for Cal myself.

I got on that Greyhound bus and I was never so happy to leave home. So that's how I ended up at Cal.

What were you planning to study and what were your goals and dreams?

I was pre-med originally. But when I got to Cal, there was the world of college. I spent hours looking through that college catalog. Like I should take criminology! And what was this, anthropology! All of these things. I just started taking classes, so I went off script for sure. But I didn't, shall we say, thrive in the hard sciences.

Eventually, I said, "Pat, you need to figure out what you want to do, but enjoy what's here," because there were so many brilliant minds. I loved Cal from the students to the professors to the TA's. It was just such a rich environment for learning and you could learn anything. So I said, I'm going to take full advantage of being here since I'm paying for it myself. And that was another kind of license I felt, you know, the freedom to have it be mine.

So. You're living on campus. Had you ever seen rowing before? How did you find your way to the Cal Women's crew and what year was that?

Never saw rowing, even though there was Green Lake crew in Seattle, I never saw rowing, never heard about rowing. The way I found my way to rowing was two-fold. I had taken a yoga class. It was in Hearst Gym, the women's gym, a gorgeous building. And in the hallway, there was a poster about crew; a silhouette of a men's boat, golden gate bridge in the background at sunset. I really was spellbound. That same year, as a freshman; in the dining hall, a guy had a men's crew shirt on. It just said, "Cal Men's Crew." And I said, "What is that?" And he said, "oh, it's, rowing". He goes, "You'd be good if you lost a little weight."

And I just said, "Oh, a men's crew. "You know, in our yearbook, in high school, Seniors could put little captions, of their achievements under their photo. A girl had "Green Lake Crew" under her photo.... And I just thought, "Oh, my God. Okay, So she works for the Park Service, and she proudly wore it on her picture." Now I finally understood - Oh, that's what she meant. Rowing!

All of these connections to rowing were converging in a really magical way. One day, walking to class, Daig (the Cal Women's Crew coach) had a boat in the quad, you know, saying, Hey, do you want to come try out for this? It was the magical boat. I went to the orientation, and that's where I saw Kate, and other lifelong friends. Were you there? He had a whole video show. It was great.

What year was this?

It was probably. 1976?

Okay, because didn't you take a year off?

I did. So, I rowed in '76, was my freshman/sophomore rowing, and I loved it, but I was not in shape. I mean, true to what that young man said, I'd be good if I lose some weight. Daig told me the same thing! And I loved everything about rowing. I loved the workouts. What I love most was the collegiality, the friendship with women and the feeling of community finally on campus because Cal was huge. I wasn't in a sorority. Rowing was true community for me. But I wanted to be good, and I said, "I need to be good. I'm really going to have to do what people are saying, lose weight." I gave myself time to be great, to lose weight, to get fit, figure out how to study and manage time. So that's what I did. I took '77 off from the team, ran, worked, studied. I ran every day. I ran the fire trail on my own. I ate better. I just had this whole routine, and I could still study and get that groove I just thought I need to learn how to be an athlete here, and study here, because I still have to, you know, keep what financial aid I had. I just had to be able to put all these things in place. And for some reason, the way I operate, I don't think there was a place where you go and say, "Hey, how did you do this?" But I just sat down with myself, and I said I had to work my plan. That year, I learned to work, get fit, eat well, train and study. So, I did that in 1977.

What kind of jobs did you do?

I had great jobs. I worked at Lawrence Hall of Science and for my dear friend, my college mom, Rosemary, who owned her own Montessori School Day Care. Oh, my god. I worked at Lawrence Hall, for a woman getting her Ph.D. in consumer behavior. Crazy enough, that's what my dad's field was, you know, marketing consumer behavior. So I rode all over. So, I biked all over Berkeley, Oakland, and San Pablo, doing these interviews for her at these various schools; local high schools or middle schools. I would interview students about - advertising, like shampoo. Both jobs were heartfelt great.

So 1976 was the first year that women were in the Olympics. And it was also the first year that you rowed. Did you watch the Olympics that year? Did you have any idols who were rowers? Did it begin to sink into your consciousness that that might be something you wanted to do? Or did you even pay attention to the Olympics in 1976?

Yeah. Good question. Because, you know, growing up, we watched the Olympics all the time, but I didn't have a TV in '76, so, no, I didn't watch the Olympics at all. And I in summer of '76, I know I stayed in Cal. I was just working and kind of doing my thing. So, no, I didn't even know there was a women's

rowing team, first women's rowing. Did not know.

What did your parents think of you and all the stuff that you were doing? Here you were sort of emancipated from them in a way. Were they supportive of you trying to be a student athlete?

You know. I don't know when I told them. I don't really recall. They were happy that I was happy at Cal and doing well. I don't recall, until racing season. They were excited when in '78 and '79, I was in the varsity, and we went to row at Opening Day. And they hosted the team once for a dinner. So that was quite fun.

They loved that. Yeah, they absolutely loved it. But while I was doing that, I don't know that I shared so much with them. I was kind of like, I'm going to just experience this world and drive it myself. But certainly '78, '79, and definitely in '80. I'll tell you what I remember about '78. 1978 was the time that Daig actually said that, you know, you will really be good. I don't know that I was processing the Olympics. You know, I loved the sport. I loved the women. I loved the competitiveness of it. I love the energy, so I remember a couple women on the Cal team who went to the training camps for the national team.

Like Dana Whittaker.

Yeah, I remember that. That's when I thought, I want to do that. But I didn't know what they were...I really didn't know about it. You know, they said, Yeah, they seem so excited. They're so fit. I just want to do that. And so Daig took a four - I'm pretty sure that was 78 - to Vancouver.

To Lake Burnaby.

Yeah. So, Liz (Miles) was in one of the fours with us, but we were not up to her standards, apparently, because I think she left and she went back to Philly, she went to Vesper.

What a hoot. But like, it was myself. Kate. Annie.

Robin was there. I think there were still two fours, even with Liz.

I was there.

Were you there? We stayed in the camp.

And we started off staying at the Simpson's house, sort of scattered all over. And then we went up to Burnaby. Yeah, Yeah. I don't remember much about it. I was a sculler.

Well, I just remember this is the best. You know what more? We're here with some great folks. What I was processing was, Daig said "One of you could make this team." And we were like - Oh, my God, we're going to race so hard for Annie. Do you remember that? And this is going to be so cool. And it was really genuine, you know, And we did well. And then Daig came up to me and he said, "Pat, they want you to go to the camp in Seattle." I was shocked. You know, I just really was shocked. But that's when I started thinking, okay, I could be really good at this, you know? But it really wasn't until I got to Seattle. And in Seattle there were a few eights, I think. And Kris Korzenowski. It was the first time I met Kris and a lot of other women.

When you are just absorbing it and enjoying it. And open to anything being possible and it all being good. That was it. Because at the time too, there was a group that if you didn't make the national team or this team, there was a group going to Mexico. There were all these options. And they were all good.

I went to Mexico. But you went to what I think was the greatest program ever funded by the Women's Olympic Rowing Committee was the Olympic Development Camp, that you were part of and what was it, five weeks, six weeks in Europe.

It was - they should have that every other year.

We tried to can't afford it. Yeah, it's really expensive. I don't know how they managed it, but it was the best money they ever spent. If you look at all the rowers that came out of that, and I think just the good feeling that came out of it, too. I remember you telling me about who was the coach of that? Was that Korzeniowski?

Kris Korzeniowski. And I think he went through Europe because he you know, who was the head coach. Because what happened in '78 is they were taking one eight to New Zealand. And so that camp was in Philly.

New Zealand wasn't until November and so.

That's it. But you could still do this development camp. It was amazing. We raced everywhere. We went to Germany, we went to Copenhagen, Denmark. It was unbelievable. And you got to experience this and see at this very high level what it was like to compete. And with a technician like Kris Korzenowski. It was amazing. I mean, I was just like - this is the level that I want to be able to row. And for him as a coach, for me as an athlete, I know a lot of women were impacted by his style where he would yell. But I grew up with a very strong mother, so you just learn to listen to what they want you to do, right? If you block out the yelling and you just say, okay, what do I need to focus on here? And peel out the emotion, their emotion. And so. That was sort of my mother, she wasn't really a yeller often. But she was very strict. So I also was not averse to being what some people would say, being nitpicked, like, you know, we'd clean the kitchen and she'd come into the kitchen and say, "okay, this is here, this here, you need to get busy and get back to work." My parents reminded me that in elementary school I wanted to be in the top reading group. Well, my teacher said, "what do you have to do to be in this reading group? You have to read ten books a week. So I'd read ten books a week. And made the top reading group. So I was with Kris and he was like that. "To be at this level, you need to do this". And some people would kind of fall out. And I'm just like, I can do that. I will work at getting my body to do what you want it to do. That just meshed with me well. And we got to be really good in that tour. And I was around some iconic people. That's when I kind of also knew some pretty awesome rowers here. So it was great, though, both learning how to compete at that level.

I'm going to bounce back to when you were first starting with just a couple of brief questions and one is, do you remember what it was first like to be on the water? I mean, seeing it a picture on a poster is one thing. What was it like when you finally were in a boat?

Yeah, so we started out in two ways. I remember a barge. So, there was a barge at Briones, I think. Or that place along the freeway. So it was fun to be in the barge. It was very stable on the water. You're starting in a barge because the boat is really tippy. You know. But it takes that experience to know what they're talking about, to implement an entire rowing motion, really. So. Anyway, my first experiences of rowing were similar to the daydream I want to say, or fantasy of seeing that poster, in that it was just magical. Because getting up in the morning and it's quiet and the birds are out or it's slightly windy. And you're working collectively. That's the spirit of what the magic was that you're thinking when you're looking at the poster. So that's how it was like the poster. And, you know, it was great because we worked every component of being able to do it. We sanded the boat that we were going to row in. So, there was all this process. And I think growing up, being a process family, in a way, I just I love that, you know, you learn to clean your room. So this whole process of taking care of what it is you're going to experience, I loved including taking care of each other. You know, we cared about one another. So that whole piece of being a full part of the team from the very early stages. I love sanding the oars, they're our oars, I used, hand-me-down clothes that I love. And, you know, it was just all part of this ritual of growth. So, it was it was magical all the way through.

I'm going to ask you something that we may come back to in a bit. But you spoke about coming to Berkeley in the sixth grade and the diversity and, you know, coming back to Cal seeking that. But I want to bring up race. It's something we never spoke of the entire time I knew you at Cal, but you were the only African American that I knew of who was involved in rowing, except for Anita DeFrantz, who was on the East Coast. And so - what was that like? You know, because I never thought of you as Black. I just thought of you as Pat. But that's negating what might have been experiences that you were going through. I know somebody threw rocks at you at some point when you were at Nationals, I think in 1980. But I'm speaking more about on the team itself. Did you feel isolated? Did you feel, you know, it sounds like you really felt like you were part of the team. I don't want to use the word integrated because we were all seeking to be integrated into a boat, into a mesh of friends.

Right, right, right.

But what was the experience like for you in a society that was isolated in in many respects.

Yeah. And, you know, it's interesting because growing up in Berkeley, I think was a little bit different than being at Cal. I was aware of diversity, because it was such a stark contrast to Bellingham. However, as a freshman at Cal, and on the Crew team, I was really part of the team. The Black student population at Cal when I was there in '79 was much higher than when Elise was there years later. The Black population when I was there was around 7%, but when Elise was there, 2%. It's all under-represented. I would say in hindsight. I wish I had sought out more clubs for African American students. Because I think there was mentoring in that and certainly friendships that I never made. But I didn't feel isolated on the team. You know, growing up in Bellingham and just being a part of the community, being a vibrant part of the community is what drives belonging. My parents were so engaged in the community. The community was activists, antiwar professors, you know, so the community was what you were making it. It's like the team was what you were making it. So being the only Black person, that's kind of what I grew up in. It wasn't isolating. It really didn't feel different. I think I was with folks who were embracing 'team' - I mean if there were folks didn't like Black people, they certainly didn't say anything - it would have been "put up or shut up." You know what I mean?

California is such an amazing place – where I experienced prejudice is that on national teams or training in national teams going to Boston, that is where you feel racism. Going to Philly and going on runs and oh, my gosh - having bottles thrown at you. It's crazy. Yes. When I was in Philly training, bottles thrown at you. And I'm like, what is going on? You know, that's when I talked to people. They said, oh, my gosh, you were probably in the Italian section, or in South Boston. I mean, folks were like, this is the Italian neighborhood, this is the like the Irish neighborhood. It was crazy. And that was like South Boston. Not on Cal's team but being on the National team, training and going places, more than even going to Europe. That's where you're seeing, "wow, this America... is not everything that it professes to be." Like, I literally I had snowballs thrown at me from adults! I was running in my USA training Gear. USA team. And I don't think it was in a (mass marketing) time so much when there were logos (randomly on clothes) everywhere. So it could have been "USA" Athletics, right? You know, a logo. And I thought here I am out in my training gear and an old white woman that - I was in Charlestown housing projects, the heavily Irish part of town, Boston, and this lady was livid I was in "her neighborhood."

Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Uh huh. And I was staying with a dear friend. A coxswain, who was white from Boston and finally got my way back home. I could not go back the way I came. That was obvious. But I finally got back to her house, only to open the door and hear her mother and her sister having an argument about whether I should be allowed to stay in their house.

So what did this old lady do to you in Charleston?

She was in her car. It was very snowy. We were there during I guess I think it was like maybe even April, but it was snowier than all get out. And she was just and then people were hurling snowballs and calling out, you know, were yelling get out of this neighborhood, you nigger!

So I was just like, okay, I got to figure out a different way to get back. - we didn't have cell phones, anything. Anyway, I had to figure out how to get back without retracing my steps. Exactly. But that's where I just thought, I had watched TV shows on racism in America. But that was where you're first really experiencing it, right? That's when I was like, "This is why my dad wanted to leave the South." He didn't want his family growing up around any of this nonsense. So, yeah."

Wow. Now, I want to jump forward to 1978, because that's when I met you. You were hands down the best rower on the team in 1978. Whether you knew it or not, you know you were going to I knew you were going to be the stroke or the sixth seat of the varsity boat. You were the Carrie Graves of Cal Berkeley, and you never goofed around. What I remember about you was the rest of us drank beer, and when we went to races, we were goofing around. We were having fun. And I remember being at Regionals with you at Lexington Reservoir, and you were studying. And I took a picture of you studying through binoculars because it was funny, but you were actually studying for real. You were very serious. And did you see yourself in that light? That you were the person Daig was building the team around? That was very apparent to me as a lightweight. The fact that I got to be in a boat with you was great, but it was like you were this role model for me. Did you see yourself in that light?

So. You know, I think it goes back to 1977 where I wanted to be successful, 360 degrees. I wanted to be a successful student. I wanted to be a successful rower. I wanted to be a great friend. And I needed to work. You know, I just had these times where I just really, I guess I've always been disciplined. You know, so, that's just kind of who I am. Genuinely. Now, I'm pretty disciplined, and kind of a disciplinarian.

But how do you do it? Because I remember when I was at the camp in 1980, you gave me a piece of advice and you said, Jeannie, the thing to do is don't lose a single seat race, because even if it's somebody else's seat, race is your seat race. And I was like, okay, how do you do that?

Oh, well, you know, it goes back to the question you asked about my parents and were they excited? I never saw my mother cry too much, except when I got cut from. I was the last one cut from that one boat that was going to New Zealand. And John Hooten was the coach, and it was a seat race where it was tight. It was between me and Carol Brown. And I would win one by half a seat. She'd win one by half a seat. Literally. It was like that, till the very last breath. And I think he was...I mean, he seat raced us a lot. There was we'd go out for a couple, three days in a row where I think he had the whole boat and it was just this thing of like and maybe it was just inches in inches. My I think he was just trying to pick between us; and I got cut and I was so mad. Good thing I was staying with Liz in her apartment, and she was all mad anyway. So I went back to Seattle and I got cut and my mother just burst into tears. I had so, you know, that's me just going, Wow, somebody is rooting for you and you don't even know, right? And she goes, What are you going to do? And I said, I am never losing a f--ing seat race again. And that's where, you know, it's just like one of those things where I think it probably was the best thing that's ever happened, where it's just like I wasn't devastated and crying (she was). I was pissed and I was like, okay, never lose a seat race. That's what I said for myself, it will never be that way. I trained relentlessly, above and beyond, I ran the entire stadium stairs. Ever since then, I always after that I had the best ERG scores in any camp, always won by a ton, my seat races. I was just not going to ever have it be where I wasn't on top.

Tell me about you and Patty Brink. When did you become friends?

Yeah! So, we really grew in friendship during our National Team camp tryout summers. During the Cal rowing years, we were different majors, we both did knot Connie, but in rather different dimensions; I trained on hills with Connie with skates, and Patty trained or rode occasionally with Connie on Bikes. Our majors were different. We became much closer during summer and camps.

Because otherwise at Cal, we were kind of in different majors. And kind of back to what you said. I would go on team dinners, but I didn't socialize lots. Patty and I shared houses in the summer together, so we really got to spend time with one another. So kudos to Carol Brown. Carol Brown set up housing for every rowing camp. I think, that I was on. Unbelievable. However, once I stayed solo, with a couple, an African-American couple in Princeton. That was unusual, I was happy for them. I think the father worked for Johnson and Johnson. And they lived a bit out of town, and loaned me a bike to get to practice. I biked into the boathouse every day. And what I remember. about that summer: they were so excited. I was rowing in a pair as well and I won. It was it was with Jean Flanigan. And she and I won the pairs trails. She and I won nationals in the pair. It was before you

could row two international events because we would have done it. So it was unfortunate that we had to pick one (the pair or the eight) because we picked the eight and then Peggy McCarthy's back went out and the eight wasn't as fast.

Anyway, long story short. But I was staying with this African American couple, so kind of back to the race. It was great. I was so proud of them for being in that spot, being in Princeton, in this amazing hall where working for Johnson and Johnson. And the mom, the mom's big excitement that summer was Charles and Diana getting married. I didn't know who she was talking about. She was going to stay up one night to three in the morning to watch this wedding live, and I just thought "that must be some couple." She was so into that royal wedding. But she and her husband came and watched our races. And they were so happy when I made the team. That was that was really just lovely.

And other than that, Patty and I shared rooms with the Cooks, with Liz. That's really how I really got to meet Cal people was spending summers sharing housing with them. Yeah. And Val was there, and that's where you kind of noticed that Val took notes on every single solitary workout. So I got to keep that in my head that she was writing everything down. It was just really something. So you saw people's personalities. And everybody kind of gave everybody space. Liz was the kind of go with the flow - she watched MTV all the time. It was so funny. So she knew all the beats. You know, Patty knew about the environment, and it was just fun. And we'd cook for ourselves and got see another side of America through what everyone ate. Because what I learned about at the Cook's house was - she had five kids. The mom was a little bit... Her husband was a rower. He wanted these women to be able to stay in the house to give back to rowing. She was in the space of I just had five (grown) kids leave this house and now what?! But they had a huge house and we stayed in the upper rooms. We became such good friends with the Mom, Sheila Cook. Funny, you asked about race, however, the one hesitation moment was when Sheila Cook first picked me up from a bus station.

I got to Princeton and it was pouring - pouring - it my first time there in Princeton. And I thought, okay, I have a phone number, maybe I'll call. I really didn't know where I was. So I called to see if Mrs. Cook could come pick me up. And you can get this hesitation, like yes. And she comes and picks me up and then she couldn't tell from my voice that I'm Black, and she goes... Hi... But we got to be great friends, and the next summer she was like "when are the girls coming back," you know, It was it was great. We just loved, Oh, my gosh, we loved her. I wrote to her until she died. We went to her memorial. That is the rowing community. Summer teams and housing; that's really where I experienced diversity about the American family. From staying with a black family. They had one child. I think who was grown. But the mom was going to have the royal wedding joy. And then the Cooks were super, super, very Catholic, the mom very Catholic. Five kids. One son in the military and one son who was gay. You just saw the struggle. The love for a son and just the struggle. And I just thought, this is how complex America is, right? Like this mom who loves her kids. We loved all the kids, they'd visit and it was so much fun. The second summer, hey, the girls are here. Their New York Avant Garde son, quite the character, would bring some kind of special cheese from New York, and the magic of The Big Apple; it was just the thing. Anyway, great family. But you just saw so much of family when you're staying with people and visiting.

What year did you graduate from Cal?

I graduated in '79. Patty and I got to be very close and she was amazing. I lived with her family after Cal, so I actually lived with her family for two years. The Brinks are amazing. Anne Brink.

I know you used to put I remember Patty complaining that she would make beautiful like blackberry crepes and you would put frijoles on it, that you had beans on everything.

That is a hoot. Beans were such comfort food! Our time with Anne (Patty's mom), in their kitchen, you know we did crossword puzzles with her mom. It was wonderful.

You became a part of her parents' family and she became a part of your parents' family. You were sisters, sort of.

Yeah. It was just that it was really after graduating from Cal, where we really got to know one another. The challenge was we were not good pair partners. I couldn't steer, Patty was patient. I was terrible. And so, yeah, that was hard. But we, you know we just worked it out.

I remember being on Briones with you two. I don't know if you remember this day. I was in a single you guys were in a pair and we were rowing against an eight and you guys were really doing well against - I don't know if it was the varsity or the JV. And when practice was over, we were coming into the dock and the eight flipped and we were laughing so hard about it because it's pretty funny to see an eight flip at the dock. And then you guys went into the dock and you flipped.

We flipped. I will never forget forget that; hilarious!.

And Patty freaked out because unbeknownst to me, you couldn't swim. I want to talk about that.

Oh, I could swim. I just didn't like water. I mean, I could swim.

How could a rower not like water??

I mean I didn't like being in water. I like being on top of water.

I thought you were so brave after I found that out that you were on open water without a launch next to you. You know, there's always a possibility you're going to get full crab. Somebody is going to get knocked out of the boat. I was like, Wow. So tell me about flipping at the dock and standing there laughing.

Like, that was sort of like what they call eating crow. Right? Because somebody at the plug had caught a crab and jettisoned out of that boat. That eight. Oh we were just - I'd never seen anything like that either. Right? That was, like, way out. And then so you just land, but you're just like in awe. The only thing closer. Was one day we were rowing, and do you remember there was a storm and we were in fours. And like, Signe's boat swamped - Signe started swimming. Were you on the team then? Everyone was supposed to stay with the boat and she swam to shore. Crazy.

No, I don't think so.

Yeah. That was kind of gnarly. Boats were sinking. That was a bad spot, and I think Daig was absolutely freaked out beyond anything because he had some people taking off and swimming to shore, some people there who could have like, I don't know, who knows what. You know, So that was

something. But I had never seen anybody literally jettisoned out of the boat on the day Patty and I flipped at the dock. So we were laughing. And then we get to we get to the dock and we got our comeuppance. And I just remember going. Right. So, yeah. "gotcha" That was that was funny.

But Patty is such a good soul. She is such a good soul and I was so happy when she made that team and so sad that it turned out so (coachingly) badly. But we medaled and we got to experience Yugoslavia together, which was gorgeous. Just a gorgeous, gorgeous country. So that way was it was so hard for me to even understand the Serbo-Croatian war. It was so - to be in this country where it was stunning, beyond stunning, the only kind of inkling that you've got about the turmoil was that it was the first time we landed (in Italy or something,) we took a train to Yugoslavia to race in Bled and on that train were armed - I mean like huge machine guns - military people walking, walking around, just like walking around, like we have to guard this place. And so we're all like. I think that's where people just kind of sat like 'what is this?!' They were all over. So that was amazing. Yeah.

Was Daig your only coach at Cal, did you. Did you have Sweeney?

Oh, no, I didn't have Sweeney. I just had Daig. Loved his pre-race speeches. Love the fact that he started a women's team. Well, I think in this history there was somebody else who started sooner, but for me, who really heart and soul was into this and was a practicing engineer, you know. I have the utmost respect for him. The only year I got mad was my senior year. 79. And anyway, I didn't - I was not happy with the final line up - just leave it at that. I think some people deserved to be in that final lineup boat and we could have been national champions. But. Yeah.

Do you have a favorite race from your time at Cal? Is there one that stood out in your mind? I know there's one that stands out in Joy Stockton's mind that I don't mind if you don't mention.

That was really something. My favorite race at Cal? You know, I just loved racing. So it could be a seat race that was my favorite race. Or it could be, you know, a big time race. I have to say, I loved racing under the cut at Washington. It was great. And beating Washington like every time. And you know, that legacy lived on with Elise. So I think that's my favorite legacy is that you know Elise rowing at Cal and not losing to Washington.

What if you hadn't rowed at Cal? What would your college experience have been like?

Oh, I can't even imagine. I literally can't imagine. I thought that I was meant to be at Cal partly for this experience with rowing. Because if I had stayed at Washington, I don't know that I would have discovered it. And I certainly know that I could not have taken up rowing for Bob Ernst for four years. So it was just such a blessing. It's truly been the blessing of my life.

How did it affect your life on campus and then beyond? In that I just sort of mean - and maybe we've touched on it enough, but let's talk about beyond Cal. So you rowed at Cal, and we're going to talk about your international stuff in a second. But let's just talk about the relationships. How have the relationships that you developed on the women's crew team at Cal affected your life?

Oh, immeasurably; All of my dear friends are rowing friends. You Joy. Patty, Kate. You know, we've all had our journeys, our life journeys, but I feel like collectively, we've raised our kids together. That's been the best, the absolute best. So we've raised our kids together, even though in sort of this time between graduating and kids, other than training, you know, these early kind of years where we're

early marriage and things like that, we're kind of focused in on that. But it's how I met Rick. I met my husband rowing. He rowed. I think it helped us have a legacy of family athletes. So much of rowing has been so meaningful beyond rowing, you know, just from traveling, understanding cultures, to life after crew. Every single year going and cheering down at the Crew Classic with friends. But beyond that, staying friends with friends through the ups and downs of life. And it's really been the Cal friends. Because I think of the national team friends, if they aren't Cal friends, the national team friends. I enjoy them, but I don't it's not as tight knit, collegial or kind of family like it is for Cal.

Is there one life lesson that you learned while you were rowing at Cal? It sounds like I mean, you've given me lots in a way, but some of them were in you already. You know, I almost feel like you're giving me a lesson, and I wish I could go back and be a student again and take in some of the focus and philosophy that you approached your collegiate experience with. But did Cal give you a life lesson outside of the relationships?

You're right. There were so many. I think it's still the lesson of humility and finding joy. Cal was just the best. So I still contribute, for example, to the student housing co-op. So I know some rowing friends and people I knew were part of sororities. And my living co-op was amazing. First of all, I'm all about cooperative ownership. So, as soon as I heard, hey - there's something that the students actually own student housing, they own it, they run it, they operate it. I wanted to be a part of that. And so I lived in the student co-ops as an undergrad and one year of my grad years to help with that collective effort. So I still give to student co-ops. And they were just full of folks. And, we'd sit down and we'd have group dinners and so you'd hear about what people were studying. So I would say that the one thing that really shaped me as I'm thinking about this in this interview. Is where you live matters. With whom you live and where you live really matters, whether you're in college, whether you're pursuing something like rowing or on a sabbatical. It really matters who you're living with and where you're living and what you're absorbing and sharing, you know, what are you contributing to that particular family at the time and, you know, rowing the student clubs were pivotal in my college time. They really were. From, that's when you see, oh, gosh, this major, this person is a is an architecture major. They stay up all night like just about almost every night, building models and doing all this thing, you know, it was just amazing. So when Carolyn was going through her thing about that, I just saw it on the side of having two people in my co-op who were architecture majors and I just thought how is she doing that? So just kind of lessons like that, you know, who's working, who's working on the outside. In the co-op, two brothers - started a whole bread company. They learned about managing supply chain of food by working in the co-op because there are many student co-ops. And so they buy collectively for all of them or for houses. And then they started their own bread company. At Cal - the future is infinite. It's limitless. What you can pursue if you avail yourself of absorbing and working where you are, like start from where you are. And I think at Cal you've got to start from where you are and you didn't have to apologize about where you were, right? Like when I left the team, I didn't have to apologize and say, Oh my god, people were just giving me signals. I can be good if I did this. And so you got to do that (prepare to thrive.) And it happens all the time in people pursuing disciplines, starting companies. Kate's going off and saying, I'm going to go live in China. I'm just like, good for you. I mean, here's this White woman majoring in Chinese, absorbing it, not apologizing for majoring in Chinese. It was great. I just got joy out of all that. You know.

From 1979 to 1984, you were on the national team or the Olympic team every year. Did you ever medal? Did you medal '81? '82?

Yeah. So we in '78, we medaled in those development races roughly. That was fun. And then in '79, we won a bronze at the World's. '80 was the boycott year. That was so sad. '81 we medaled. We got a silver in... Because '81 and '83 were both in Germany, and both were silver medals.

Munich was '81.

Munich and Duisburg. Ah, so we got silvers there. '82, I took off. So because I really I said I need to kind of figure out - that was my first year of grad school, so I took off. Met Rick, that summer and then '83, was back on the team. That's great. Well, you sent me this picture. It's so great. You sent me this picture. Have a picture of me and Patty rowing in our pair. But I'm on this committee now with Mary O'Connor. How did you hold that up?

Oh, my God.

Yeah. And when you sent me that, I was like. I always imagined myself as so nice. You know, easy going. And you sent me that picture and I was like. That's why people always felt I was a little fierce. And it was funny to get that picture.

No I just looked at it is an individual.

I see this fierce look. Like - don't even bother me.

Don't even. So 1984, not only do you make the Olympic team, but you're going to get to race because of Bob Ernst, not in the eight, you're going to get to race with two people, other people from Cal and I think How many times in an Olympic Games do you have three athletes in a boat of five people that are all from the same college program? And so what was it like being able to race with friends? And I know by then Patty had stepped away from injury and not emotionally wanting to go there, But what was that like to be there with friends and racing? Yeah.

So you know what it was? It was. Phenomenal. It was really phenomenal until and it was a great four, because originally Hope Barnes was in the boat with us and that was a fast four. And we did so well at Lucerne. And that's when he put in Jan. And so, you know, there again, it was bittersweet.

You missed a bronze medal, but that much I know.

And I'm telling you, with Hope, we probably could have had a silver for sure. It was just such a fast four. So, but with yeah it was just a great, great and you know, being coxed by Val was great. I think the thing that also got us was it was one of those lay down fours. And so it was hard to see the race in those boats. Um, but. So anyway, my favorite coxswain in the world is Val, She's amazing. And so that was good. It was. But again, it was bittersweet, but it was great to be in the Olympics. It really was great.

What is it like walking into the stadium at opening ceremonies?

It is everything you would think and more. It was packed. It was absolutely packed. You're walking in. You're wearing your country's uniform. So I happened to be right next to me is Joan Benoit. And I was just like, okay. So it's like - unbelievable. And, you know, I was feeling at the time, because Connie's

race was the next day, Connie Carpenter, so she didn't walk through. So I was just trying to say, Oh, Connie, I wish you were here. You know, I just thought we were having these just flood of thoughts and it's like, Oh, you really should be here experiencing this. She did go on to win the first gold medal. You know, it was awesome. So there's just so much there. You're thinking of being thankful for literally everybody you ever rowed with. I remember thinking - this is for everybody I ever rowed with. It was awesome. It was really, really awesome. And to be there with your just the whole team, the people you had gone through 1980 with, and it was unbelievable. Yeah.

Were your parents there?

They yeah, they came to Ojai. So they weren't there at the Opening Ceremonies, but they did come, my sister flew in, so it was my mom, my dad, and I think my two sisters came. So that was great. Yeah, it was great to see them. I so wanted to have medal I so wanted to have a medal. So but...

In fact your boat was told that it medaled. You went down to row in the lane three and, and then they looked at the photo finish and pulled you because I was there, I remember just kind of going, oh, U.S. won a medal, but they hadn't announced it yet. And then they came. You guys rowed down and then you had to turn around and come back.

Oh, yeah. That was, oh, that was so bittersweet. You know, I just so many emotions there. I felt so badly for Hope. You know, she really deserved to be in that boat. Anyway. So it was to me that was just another one of Bob putting one of his Washington people in there. Um, but yeah, it was, it was. It was definitely a great, just a great, I don't know, way to say so long to my, you know, my career. I knew I wasn't going to continue rowing. I really wanted to do grad school and Rick and I were going to get married. So there were just so many things that I wanted. I had no. I guess it's like a lot of things. I had no reservations of that being my last race, my last national team race. I felt I had accomplished exactly what I wanted and I didn't want to subject myself to things like that, to the coaches, to you putting out 1,000% really being great and then have these discretionary things going on. So I just there just times I'm like that in my work life. It's just if I'm putting out and doing this and that decision impediment driving and demanding things but you know my toleration level for having that kind of uncertainty of - is somebody's going to trip you up or somebody else - it's just like, this is been great and I am happy to move on.

So I'm going to spin backwards for just a second because I forgot to ask you about. Running the fire trail. And you kind of talked about it and doing stairs. And I always remember when I was training in 80, you did around the stadium that you did every single row around. And I just remember kind of going, okay, did you enjoy those workouts?

I did.

And what did you what do you think they did for you? Because I think most people think of the training's all on the water. And it's like Joan Lind told me running the hill was the hardest workout for her. And if she could do that, she wasn't going to lose on the water.

Yeah, it's really true. Oh, I love the stadium stairs. Loved it. Not when we first did it. I remember the first time we did it, I think we ran like twice or something. Just was like, That's when I knew. But, you know, you do that and you feel getting better at that. And then you look around at this whole Stadium

and it's just like, okay, this is like hard work. And then you go, get better at it, to get to be good, you could run this whole thing. And then, you know, a couple of years later I could run the entire stadium, no problem. So again, I think it's you have to be happy with where you are. Like, you just have to acknowledge, right. Okay, I suck at this right now. The first time with that, I could do two and just like collapse. But it's where you say, okay, to be good, I need to be able to do this entire stadium. And in order to run the entire stadium, I need to enjoy it, I need to learn how to not make it be painful. So you just as I got to be a better and better athlete and oarswoman, you learn to execute more and more and not be fazed like you either grow you're executing above the pain. And so that's kind of how you could do the whole stadium. You just get into this sort of euphoria and you're that you first thing is to be able to run the whole stadium. And I would love again, I would love the mornings and there would be mornings where I would get up and you could run the whole stadium. And like, the football team would come out and train. And, you know, before you kind of look at how could they do all that? And then when you're really good, you look at them (football team) going like, "they've got to pick it up over there," you know, so it's just really your whole perspective changes when you're there. But, um, I love the stadium stairs - probably one of my favorite things to do is just running stairs. As a matter of fact, what, some 30 years later, probably ten years ago on a business trip, we were staying in an AirBNB, ironically, near the stadium for Cal. I was like, gosh, I can get up and run the stadium. I did. I got up and I ran 45 minutes of stairs, and still saw to see the (football) players practicing. It was awesome.

You need therapy.

It was so - it just took me back. That's what - it took me back to rowing and how great it was. And the fire trail, you know, I wasn't a great runner. And then I just said I got to learn to, like, win. I got to learn to be the fastest at this trail.

I've got one more question for you. Two more questions. What did it mean for you to raise a daughter that went to Cal as a swimmer and then to decide to do what you had done. And to have just a remarkable career. And the friendships and stuff she got out of it. She did it! It still exists.

Yeah. First of all, it's great. It was awesome, you know? First of all, Elise, her rowing career, all the kids, you know, great athletes. And so all we just got to enjoy it and admire that, you know, just admire their talent, their gifts. And it was great to see Elise swim, her beautiful butterfly, really kind of until her body changed. Right. And she was just it got to be a little bit more tough to keep her form....swimming at Cal was at that other level, too. So I what I admire about Elise is her ability to navigate the switch itself, because that wasn't easy and she wanted to do communicate switching to rowing on her own and she wanted to go in there and talk to McKeever and she really wanted to row. I credit her with that. That was huge to be able to navigate just from being a recruited swimmer to leaving the team and rowing the next year. And staying at the same university. I give her that, you know, that she has the political savvy to be able to do that. So that was great. And then she loved all rowing. So her first year learning was in the J.V. and she loved it. She was back in her element. That was great to be in a new sport. She'd swam all her life, so, she was so happy not to see the bottom of the pool. You know. I have to say a second family for sure. Liz and Deirdre. Hands down. You know, for her in her career at Cal, just James and Kathleen, her little brother and sister, you know, that was just over the moon for her. And you're right. Her friends that she made there are lifelong. She's just

traveling now and meeting both generations of rowers, hers and ours; she was much more collegial also with the guys team members than I ever was, you know, as an athlete. But, you know, she made it her own in terms of not having to wear anything of me She kind of made the space her own and. She did super-duper well. I mean, in terms of a student athlete, you know, she was academic, all-American. Like every year she was there. So good on her. And I was so proud she was PAC 12 Rower of the Year for her senior year, much deserved. And at that time they instituted; I don't know if we had captain's? You know, I don't think we had a captain anyway. They had a captain, so being co-captain. And that was so Elise to be co-captain, you know, to share it and share the responsibility. I love the fact that she loved what she was doing. She absolutely loved it. And my favorite picture is the one you took. Thank you. For winning under the cut and my mom coming down and all her (Washington) purple. And Elise goes, Mom, Grandpa. He came down, at least (in a Seahawks shirt) But grandma came down with that big white W. So funny, but so we just laugh at that picture. We love that photo. We loved that photo. Cal won!

When she was so wonderful at your dad's memorial. I just thought, you know, what she said was just, I still wish I could get a tape of that. Okay, Pat, is there anything I haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about in relation to the impact of being a member of the Cal Women's Crew team on your life; any anecdote you want to share or anything? And if you don't think it's something now and you called me two weeks from now and said, I thought of something, I want to say, we could just get another interview too. So but we actually have an hour and a half of tape right now.

I know - I'm sorry - way too long. I just want to give a shout out to all of the women with whom I rowed. Hello to you all. And it just kind of however our friendships manifested. You know, you're just wonderful. So, you know, I just appreciate all the memories that I have. I learned about so many different careers, you know, from Storrie and food science to Pauline and her surgery to you and your film. And there was so much in terms of leadership there that people who now are leaders, Nancy Denison, over doing you know, leadership for her field over in Tennessee. So I just you know, we were all giants and we were all trailblazers and all leaders. I just appreciate that. Just the things that we shared and how we helped one another navigate to where we are now.

You know, this whole project that Oliver started was to focus on Title Nine. And I didn't ask about Title Nine because a lot of the athletes I've interviewed already, including Joan Lind, said Title Nine didn't have an impact upon their lives that they were aware of at the time. Do you feel Title Nine impacted your life or your daughter's life?

Oh, 1,000%. And I remember having conversations at the time of Title Nine. You know, there we as teammates discussed elements of Title Nine. Because at the time it was going to increase the number of scholarships for women. Now, not for rowing, but I know for like basketball and tennis and all these other sports. I think at the time we were saying, oh, well, we would do this whether we got paid or not, we weren't. So thank you to moms and daughters and people, senior to us who saw what Title Nine could do. And not just for us, but for people who didn't have the support systems that we had to get to Cal that would actually change the landscape and make college more available to people. So but it absolutely impacted absolutely impacted Elise. You know, we just went on a full ride, not in swim, but in rowing. And so that - my gosh, for our family at the time, we're paying for it, you know. Emerson At Shattuck, Martin at Syracuse, and Elise at Cal. That, you know, we were paying for the

housing but it made it possible. It really did. So it definitely impacts so many women and so many women and the educational opportunity - kind of back to harkening to what I say, I think Elise had the same (and always women) have the same ability to be there with great minds. You know you've got to live with great minds, to understand how you can take things to different levels. So. Absolutely. It's impacted.

We haven't touched on because it's not relevant. But what's going on in our society in the last decade is truly troubling in terms of rights and things that we've enjoyed so much. All of a sudden being chipped away at and that's a discussion for another time. But that's why the interview to me is so powerful is it's like, look, all of this stuff was just kind of gifted to us in the Seventies. It just came. We just were lucky we were born then, you know, when we were born and we got to benefit from it. And now here, as the group with Annie is trying to do, people are trying to protect that. And yet it's, it's, it's kind of like - it's the best of times, it's the worst of times.

Oh, it's always being an advocate, being engaged, you know, that's what I'm kind of talking about. But if you grow up in I grew up in a household where it's our, it's part of the responsibility. You know. Pick some causes. Stay involved. It's not just about you. It's not just about you being in a good spot. You know? It's about helping other people getting to be in a better spot and for the collective good. So I still live that. And I'm instilling that still in our children. Yeah.

Thank you, Pat.

Thank you, Jeannie. Oh, my gosh. I'm so sorry. Well.

No, no, no, no, no. I'm, you know, it's I had three pages of single spaced notes, questions I wanted to ask, and I pretty much if I hadn't asked it, you answered it in a different way. Just for the very first time in my life, I was in Charlottesville, Virginia, to the Virginia campus where your mother had been turned down. And and so Lois was in my mind when I was there. The fact that your mother grew up in a in a geographical location, that right now to me is so pivotal.

Great. Yes. So you asked also about memorable moments rowing. And there's a memorable there are memorable moments I've had rowing at Cal after I graduated. And I credit Steve Gladstone because he let me row with the men. And, you know, it's funny you talk about Title Nine. There is a cost that we are all incurring, that we are pursuing something. We have to have a place to live. We have to have a place to actually train and do the things that we want to do and all that. There's a cost. And I didn't have the knowledge of really Long Beach Rowing Association. I wanted to stay and get my degree, my graduate degree. And so from 1980 to 1984, I was in grad school three of those years. And I needed to minimize my costs and be at a place that I love. And Steve Gladstone let that happen. He let me row with the men for two years. And so he would always have, kind of, I won't say spare guys, but he would have like, you know, there's supposed to be a four of guys and one guy isn't there something. So almost every day that I showed up there, I had a boat to row in with guys. And it was another level hard. And it kind of actually gets me to some of the things going on now about transgender rowing. The power of men physically in a boat is astounding. I never let up, but I just had to take it to another level because it was intense. And these are kind of like, you know, guys that are not going to make JV, I don't think that I or maybe they'll, you know, it's a JV four that I'm racing with. But every day I got to row from 1980 through 1984, pretty much with the Cal Men. And I even was able to bring down Jean

Flanagan. She and I trained in a pair. He let us train and he let us use a boat. You know you have to have equipment. You have to have a structure to be able to train. And without a dime. He let us do that. So I just have to say hats off because at a time, too, you know, amongst sort of grumbings, that's when it was the men's boathouse and he was having none of that. It was like this. He goes like this, "Guys, are you an Olympian? Okay, then move over - these people are going to be here." So I truly, without flinching with his grace, he just embraced us being there and told his guys, "You can learn from these people." So it was remarkable.

I'm really glad you brought that up, because I remember at the very first meeting of this legacy project, there was a woman who said, I don't want any men interviewed about this because they're not a part of the story of women rowing at Cal. And I'm like, you know, there were men that enabled this to happen and were our staunchest advocates, sometimes more than women were. You know, Steve Gladstone was a part of the founding of the crew. He's the one who brought that barge to the aquatic center. He drove it over there.

Yeah. Yeah. No, I'd love to interview him. I actually would love look to interview him and Daig and Lu Lilly. I would like to, um, yeah.

Steve's on my list. He's one of the ones on my list, but.

Oh, good.

If I talk to Steve, I'm going to tell him that you'd like to interview him also. And I'll let you know what he and I talk about. Because we will talk about the very beginning.

Yeah. Oh, I just want to thank you. I mean, talk about being the coach of coach. He can go anywhere and like, literally, he's amazing. So you know, to be able to have that caliber of coach, also coaching me, to help reach my dreams, to embrace Val. That's at a time when it's just not culturally accepted. It is great and he will make the environment make you feel at home. Like he will literally say, this is what the environment here is going to be. Just remarkable. So he is, you know, and then we learn from that, right? So in our workplace. I wish I had sort of had the say now, because in my workplace, that's what I can do. Even to the CFO, I can say, look, this is the CEO accountable. This is how we're going to have the environment in this organization. You know, this is the mission, this is it. And you learn that from strong people, setting that example, whether it's my parents or Gladstone, friends.

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