

Martha Hennessey, Class of 1976
Dartmouth College Oral History Project
Dartmouth Community and Dartmouth's World
October 15, 2012

DONIN: Okay. So today is Monday, October 15, 2012. My name is Mary Donin. We are here with Martha Hennessey, Dartmouth Class of 1976. Okay, Martha, just to sort of put everything in context, tell us a little bit about how it is you ended up coming to Dartmouth. Were you a legacy? Were you connected to the College somehow? How is it you ended up coming here?

HENNESSEY: I moved to Hanover when I was three years old. So essentially I came to the College at three years old. My father came here for his first teaching position after graduate school, and he came as a tenured professor at the Tuck School. And we lived here practically on campus for my entire childhood except for one year when we lived in Switzerland. But other than that, we lived here the whole time.

And so in the fall of my senior year in high school, my father told me there was an important message that President Kemeny was going to give on the radio. It was 1971. And he announced that Dartmouth was going to be accepting women into the Class of 1976.

DONIN: This was like November of '71?

HENNESSEY: I believe about November of '71. It was around the time that most people—I had already decided where I was applying to college. So it was a little bit late in people's application process. And at that point my first choice was—before I heard about this—my first choice was Vassar College where all the women in my family essentially had gone. My mother, two aunts—my grandmother was Class of '18 there. And they had the kind of psychology department that I was really looking for even as a high school senior.

But I listened to that message, and I remember just being blown out of the water. My father, I think, had held it from me so that I could be excited when I heard it on the radio because certainly he knew. And the next morning I got up earlier than usual and ran to the admissions office so I could be the first person to get—the first female—to get an application to the College. So I did apply.

And I should say that I grew up literally at the end of Frat Row. So every morning walking to school, I walked up Frat Row. Every afternoon I walked back. And my father used to always talk about how much he disliked that. And many times tried to move us to other places because he thought it was a terrible thing for us, his children, to be walking up and down Frat Row, especially his daughter.

DONIN: Because of what you would see there?

HENNESSEY: Because of what we would see there. In fact, I'll never forget the time that I was driving with my father, and I was in the front passenger seat. And a student came from what seemed to be from nowhere and jumped on the hood of our car and pounded with his fists on the hood of the car. And my father, who was a very mild-mannered man—who still is—jumped out of the car, asked this fellow for his name, and he gave him a false name. And he asked him where he lived on campus. And I guess he must have given him the correct place where he lived on campus even though he gave him a false name. Anyway, my father got back in the car, and I was horrified by the way he had accosted this student because I'd never seen that out of my father before.

At the time I believe my father may have been the dean of Tuck. And what I remember was that he found out somehow through the campus police who he was and summoned him into his office at that point. And told him that what he had done was terrible and that people live in that neighborhood and that he had terrified his child and all this. I think my father scared me more than the student did. [Laughs] But anyway....

DONIN: The student must have been pretty scared, too.

HENNESSEY: The student was terrified. And the funny thing is I remember later.... Maybe I was only about 13 or something. And I remember later - after he told me the whole story of what he'd done with this student - And I said, "But, Dad, what if he now doesn't want to apply to Tuck School. He may, you know...." Almost like I was worried about the marketing side of all of this. And it was at that point my father said, "Martha, going to Tuck School is a privilege. You know he's the one who should be worried about it." You know how when you grow up, you just don't understand how these things work?

So anyway... Yes. So there were things like that. I mean he just didn't like the idea that we were walking up and down that street. We literally used to Trick or Treat at the fraternities. And the fraternities used to have bags of candy and things. We Trick or Treated at the President's House. I remember because he always had a full Hershey's candy bar, which was just unheard of.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: I doubt anybody Trick or Treats at the President's House and certainly not at the fraternities anymore. But anyway my father was very concerned by the fact that we lived at the end of Frat Row. We weren't on the pond, which was somewhat removed. We were really... in a house that actually was owned by the College originally. Still to this day they have the right of first refusal because the house is so close to the campus that any faculty member who comes, the College wants to be able to offer that as an option.

So anyway, let's see. So I applied to Dartmouth, and I got in as a freshman and went through a sort of painstaking process of deciding what was the right thing for me to do. And I had absolutely no pressure on me to go to Dartmouth. I had not a single relative who had ever gone to Dartmouth. Of course my father was involved at the College.

At that point my mother was not involved. She worked in Concord. And I felt—although I don't know that it was real—I felt a pressure, some kind of pressure, to go to Vassar. We had Vassar plates. We had Vassar pictures and watercolors on the wall. My father went to Princeton. So we had some Princeton things around. But we didn't have anything Dartmouth really.

DONIN: And you were the oldest in your family?

HENNESSEY: No, I was the second in my family.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: Of two. There were just two of us. And my brother was much more a child of the sixties in many ways than I was. There was no way he was going to go to Dartmouth. I mean, you know, he was rebelling against everything. There was no way. And yet I had literally grown up telling my parents I am going to Dartmouth...from a very young

age. Just saying, I know there are only men here, but I am going to Dartmouth. I am going to Dartmouth.

DONIN: What was the appeal of it to you?

HENNESSEY: For some reason I and my friends immersed ourselves in a lot of the traditions. At that point there was a bonfire for every single home game. We went to every bonfire. We always collected acorns ahead of time and threw them in the fire to hear them pop. You could go right up to the fire. It was a tradition for high school students to steal the beanies of people whose year was the same as our high school year. So we did that. We snuck into almost every single home football game. We knew exactly where the bars were wide enough. And the campus police would watch us do it. They didn't care, you know. We went to the football games. We rooted for Dartmouth. I had a Dartmouth scarf before I graduated from high school. We bought our notebooks at the Dartmouth bookstore. And that's the only place you could buy your notebooks for high school. So they all said "Dartmouth" on them.

It's such a small town, and there was virtually no difference between town and gown. And they worked very hard to have that relationship be very, very strong. And at that time the parents of almost everybody with whom I went to school either was a doctor at the hospital or worked at the College. One or the other. In Hanover the professors could afford to live in town, so they did.

DONIN: Times have changed.

HENNESSEY: Times have changed, right. So there was very little difference between the people who lived in town. Of course there were people who lived in town who were not affiliated, who were more the blue collar workers, you know...even people who worked in the dining hall and such; some of them lived in town. Or they lived in Lyme and took the school bus into town or lived in Etna. So there were some. But it was a very different kind of insular population. So I think I just felt so much a part of it that it felt as if I should be here.

DONIN: So there was no stigma in those days of being sort of a townie. It sounds like it was almost the opposite.

HENNESSEY: We didn't see a stigma as townies. We thought it was very cool to be a townie. I think that the college students probably found us annoying. On the other hand, we never ever went to a fraternity in

high school. Never, ever. At least I didn't. I'm sure there were people who did. But I think we had a very clear idea of where townies were allowed and where we weren't. We could go to the football games. We hung out in the HOP. I was in plays starting in about eighth or ninth grade because they didn't have females for their plays. So I was very involved in theater. And so I was sort of a HOP brat as well. I just was always there building sets, being in theater. I did that at the high school as well. But I loved doing it at Dartmouth with a couple other friends. And so there were certain places that we were welcomed.

When the United States invaded Cambodia during the Vietnam War, there was a huge protest, and they closed down classes at Dartmouth and around the world—around the country—as you know. In fact at that time my father got a lot of flak from alumni because he went to Wall Street and talked about how much he was opposed to the Vietnam War and what had happened. And a lot of old wealthy Tuck alums did not appreciate that.

But anyway, what I was going to say is that a group of us, for example, they came to the high school and asked us to fill in for all of the people who were working in the dining halls so that they could also be part of what was going on on campus. And so I remember serving food to Dartmouth students there. And that was the only time I'd ever been in Thayer.

So I wasn't...there was a very clear distinction between where townies could be and how we could be a part of things, and where we couldn't be. And if you think about the fact that most of our parents were involved with Dartmouth at that point, I think it meant that it was kind of a safe melding.

DONIN: It sounds idyllic actually.

HENNESSEY: Yeah, it was really lovely. It was lovely from my perspective. I wouldn't be surprised if students from that era thought that townies were a little annoying. But I don't think we got into the heart of it in ways that bothered them. That's coming from a townie, so I don't know.

But the other thing is—and I think this is still true but more so when I was in Hanover High School—is that we still, I think Hanover High still doesn't have AP classes. So if you get to a certain point in the curriculum at Hanover High School and you need to go beyond that

or you want to.... It used to be if you wanted to take any class that Hanover High doesn't offer, you could take it at the College. So I had taken three classes at least by the time I graduated. And then over the summer I was in the Summer Repertory, which gave me three more classes. So I had six college credits when I went to college. And I mean many high school students—I didn't, I wasn't a math person—but many of my classmates took calculus with John Kemeny as high school seniors.

DONIN: Wow!

HENNESSEY: At Dartmouth. So we were in the classes as well.

But nonetheless, I didn't socialize in any way with even the people I was in the classes with. It was pretty clear where the boundaries were. But otherwise things seemed to be more a community kind of thing. We would—on Winter Carnival, we'd go to all the events. We went to the ski jump, we went to watch the Winter Carnival queen be crowned.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HENNESSEY: All that kind of stuff.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: So I think I knew much more about Dartmouth traditions than current Dartmouth students do. And I should count again, but I think maybe between eight and ten of my classmates went to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Yes, yes. But that's common, I think, isn't it?

HENNESSEY: Yes.

DONIN: Back then?

HENNESSEY: Back then it was common. I don't know if that many go now.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: It was very common. And also back then it was free to go to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HENNESSEY: If you went to Dartmouth and your father or mother was a tenured faculty member, it was 100 percent—the tuition was completely free. And they paid 70 or 75 percent of Dartmouth tuition wherever else you went. So my brother went to a state university, Olympia State College, so his tuition was free as well. So both of us had completely free tuition.

DONIN: Amazing perks.

HENNESSEY: Yes, yes. So that also played into the fact that we realized we were coming here for free. They paid a good part of my first year at Vassar. So I did go to Vassar as a freshman, feeling that that was where I should go for my love of developmental psychology, as well as just getting out of town. I came back a lot. I had a lot of friends at Dartmouth because of being in plays. That was how I had friends here. And so I met a lot of the women who came into the first class before I actually transferred here because they were in the theater, and I had friends who were in the theater, and we met through that. I also was in an a cappella group at Vassar my freshman year. And we came to Dartmouth for Spring Sing because I knew people who were in the Aires, and they knew me. So they invited us to come to Spring Sing.

There were all sorts of ways in which I was kind of enmeshed in both campuses even my freshman year. My friends at Vassar ironically (and in not very complimentary fashion) nicknamed me “Dartmouth” when I was a freshman at Vassar. [Laughter] It was because I talked about it all the time. “Well, at Dartmouth they did it this way. Well, at Dartmouth...” You know.... And so....

DONIN: You must have been very annoying.

HENNESSEY: I was very annoying. [Laughter] I was very annoying. And I had no clue I was very annoying. I thought everyone loved Dartmouth, you know. So until they started saying, “Hey Dartmouth, get over here! Hey, Dartmouth!” You know. “Hey, Dart!” ... Maybe I’ve overstepped the whole Dartmouth thing. But that was my whole world, you know, because I grew up here. Unlike somebody growing up in Cambridge who wasn’t necessarily part of Harvard. So that’s how—that’s a long-winded answer, and I’m not sure exactly if that answered what your first question was.

DONIN: Well, that puts us in a good place now to find out why is it you came to Dartmouth then.

HENNESSEY: Yes.

DONIN: What made you transfer?

HENNESSEY: So at Vassar.... First of all Vassar had just accepted men. I think I was in the third class that had men in the freshman class at Vassar. And they made what I think— Well, my mother thought it was a big mistake to accept men, period. I thought it was a big mistake to accept men who were less qualified than the women. And yet it was a good deal harder to get— attract— men to an all-women's college than it was to attract women to an all-men's. And so they tried to get as many young men to come as possible to Vassar. And as a result, many of them were very unhappy because they were not doing well, and the women were doing very well.

And it was also a time when there was a lot of drug use and particularly at Vassar. Vassar was in New York, so New York had the drinking age of 18. So the drinking age was 18 there slightly before it was in New Hampshire. During the rest of my time at Dartmouth the drinking age was 18. But there was a lot of overt drug use at Vassar: Quaaludes and heavy-duty stuff honestly I hadn't heard of.

I thought I was very worldly when I went to college, but I wasn't. And I felt—and there were lots of support groups even around campus for people to talk about why they were unhappy at Vassar. And it wasn't the kind of 'rah rah I love where I am' kind of environment. The psychology department was great, really good, and I loved it, and they had a nursery school on campus, and I worked there, and that was great.

I was shocked, for example, by the fact that on a Saturday night at Vassar I could never find anybody—first snowfall I couldn't find anybody to go out and cross-country ski with me. I couldn't find anybody to just hang out on a Saturday night. They were all in the library. At that time the Dartmouth library was closed from Friday night at midnight until Sunday noon, I think.

DONIN: Is that right!

HENNESSEY: I'd have to check the hours, but it was never open on the weekends except the [19]02 room. Everything else was closed, with the idea that students should not be always in the library. So at Vassar people were either jumping out windows on Quaaludes, it seemed to me, or they were spending their whole time in the library. And I couldn't find anybody to just even go to a movie or do anything. I did join two different singing groups, and again my life at Vassar was through music. But it was really bringing me down, and I had been basically a pretty positive, optimistic kind of person.

There was another whole faction at Vassar that I never had heard of before, which was a group of debutantes. I had never heard of that. I didn't know what it was. I mean I was truly discovering what a country bumpkin I was. I'm sure my mother had the same experience when she was at Vassar, but she had never discussed it with me. And so that was jarring. I thought the whole thing, the whole thing in general, didn't make a lot of sense to me. So I came back to Dartmouth a lot on weekends and stayed with my family, so it was easy to do. And saw my friends here and came for every play that my friends were in. And I came for all the—I had always been a fan of the Aires. So we came for Spring Sing. But anyway, by Thanksgiving I had applied to transfer back here.

DONIN: Wow, that was fast.

HENNESSEY: It was fast. I wasn't—I wanted to get the application in. I wasn't going to make my mind up until later. It was a transfer so it wasn't like it was an early decision thing. I had until April or so. And then April came, and I really wasn't sure. I felt as if it was a cop-out of some sort to transfer.

So I took the fall off. Went to Europe with a Vassar friend. Traveled around on our own and came back still somewhat torn both ways and, at the end, driving the admissions office absolutely crazy. They essentially said to me, okay, you're going to have to reapply for transfer if you're not going to take us this time. So I reapplied and was accepted, and they said, "And by the way, if you don't accept this one, we're not going to take you again." [Laughs] This was my third time applying. So it wasn't without a lot of angst that I made the decision. But I decided to do it. So my first term here was as a sophomore in the winter term.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: And I immediately auditioned for the first women's a cappella group, which had just begun in December. So it was brand new. It'd had one concert. And I was accepted into that. And at that time you had to also be in the Glee Club. So that was—Steve and I were trying to think. My now husband Steve was at that point the leader of the Aires and in the Glee Club also. And I believe that each of us had probably ten hours of rehearsals, at least, a week for those two groups. So that took a lot of our time. We did a bunch of other things, too, but still that was a lot of our time. And I did theater—some theater. So that's how I ended up deciding to transfer here.

DONIN: And was that sort of your.... I mean if we're going to get into this whole discussion of community, it seems to me that you were focused immediately on making your community the theater and the singing.

HENNESSEY: I was. I was very focused on that. It's where I had belonged before I came to Dartmouth. And so it felt as if it was the place to go when I got here.

One thing I didn't say is that I think a big part—and I've gone back many times trying to think why did I transfer—a big part of it was the fact that I had grown up thinking I'd come here. And I felt something exciting was happening here, and I actually could go here. It's almost as though I had to do it. I was driven by the fact that my whole life I had been telling everybody I was going to come here. And I somehow had this option.... If I'd been gloriously happy at Vassar, maybe it wouldn't have happened. But anyway.... So when I got here, the people I knew immediately were people who were in theater and singing—in the choral groups.

DONIN: And your Hanover friends. Or is that one and the same?

HENNESSEY: And my Hanover friends. No, it wasn't one and the same. I only had one good female friend who came from Hanover High, and she was very involved in theater. Her dad was the director of most of the plays at Dartmouth. And so it was through her, when I came back to visit, that I met a lot of the other people who were involved in theater in the year that I wasn't here. And the others were people who remained friends, but I saw them more casually. They were, you know, across campus, hello, how are you, nice to see you. They weren't people that I necessarily hung out with here.

- DONIN: Mm-hmm. Do you think you had an edge over other...you know transfer students often talk about how difficult the transition is because they missed the opportunity to do all the freshman orientation kind of stuff.
- HENNESSEY: Right.
- DONIN: Did you feel you had an edge because you came from Hanover and knew Dartmouth better than most?
- HENNESSEY: Absolutely.
- DONIN: So you didn't have any issues with sort of transitioning into life here.
- HENNESSEY: No, the issue I had was not feeling.... Well, first of all, the women who had come here as freshman had almost all lived together in the same dorm. So they all knew each other very well. I think there were two all-women's dorms and maybe...I don't know if that first year if there was a coed dorm they could live in but... So there had been a kind of camaraderie among the first group of women, and I missed out at some level. I lived it through my friend who was there. I mean I was in my friend's room when a brick was thrown through her window with a note on it that said, "Cohogs Go Home!"
- DONIN: Hmm.
- HENNESSEY: And her roommate became a friend of mine. So I sort of experienced that. I experienced the fact that the class that was going to have their 50th reunion when we graduated had done a lovely thing, because I'm sure many of them were against coeducation. They had put a rose in each woman's dorm room when we arrived. And when I say we arrived, I didn't arrive at that point. But I again was visiting a friend.
- So I sort of lived it from the edge, but I've always felt as if I was a little bit of an outsider from that perspective. And yet from another perspective, I knew more about the College than anybody else. Even the people who'd been there a year didn't necessarily know how to go up Balch Hill or where the co-op was or any of those kinds of things. So it was an interesting mix. And obviously I had lived here forever. I knew the song, which at the time was still "Men of Dartmouth." I knew that probably before anybody else. I mean all those kinds of things.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: And by the time I graduated, even still I bet, there were lots of people in my class who don't know that I transferred because they saw me around freshman year.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: They figured I was.... They probably all think I'm a legacy. I mean there are all sorts of things that people didn't know but I knew and I knew I had missed out on. And I think I never made that kind of female connection to some of the women. And there are a lot of other reasons I didn't make a connection to that group. I never was somebody who hung out with groups of females so much. And that's sort of another part of the story of community, of why I think I didn't relate to some of those people. But at least in part I blamed it on not being here as a first-year student.

DONIN: But you really straddled that line because, as you say, you were the ultimate insider in so many ways.

HENNESSEY: Absolutely. Absolutely. And part of that was I felt more entitled, as I've mentioned, I felt more entitled to be here than many of the people who had been here for a year. In fact, probably most of the people who'd been here for a year. And that was a key ingredient to surviving – feeling entitled to be here.

DONIN: How was it in the classroom surrounded by more men than women?

HENNESSEY: Well, again, I'd already taken classes at Dartmouth. And then I was a high school student. So this was—I was more legitimate than I'd been as a high school student.

DONIN: Of course.

HENNESSEY: On the other hand, there were lots of times when it was really not good to be the female....and it wasn't because of the students. Whereas at Vassar, it had been hard because most of the professors were women; the students who were men in the classes were trying to dominate conversations, and women were furious with them.... Here I didn't feel as if men were trying to dominate conversations. I didn't feel as if I couldn't say anything I wanted to say. But I had professors who were profoundly—I want to say

misogynistic, but they were certainly not supportive. I don't know if you want to hear about that, but I had a couple of incidents where—

DONIN: Sure. Yes.

HENNESSEY: I had a social psychology professor, of all things, who when he would talk about...when he would be wanting to say, in my opinion, he'd be wanting to say, "So when men and women blah blah blah" in the frame of social psychology. Instead he would say, "So when you—pointing to the class—and your Smith dates..." Or "When you and your Mount Holyoke dates are blah blah blah." It was always you and your some female....

DONIN: Excluding the women in the room.

HENNESSEY: Women were not there from his perspective. And he made a real point of it. And women complained, and he didn't change. And one of funny and sad moments I remember...There were only—it was in a huge lecture hall, so there probably were a hundred students there, which at Dartmouth is a huge lecture hall. And I'm guessing there were maybe ten women. Maybe. Probably fewer. We all talked after class about how annoyed we were by this, and we complained together. Finally after one class we said, "Okay, the next time this happens, we're all standing up and leaving." So the next class of course it happened again, we all stood up and left. And I don't think he even noticed. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh, honestly!

HENNESSEY: We thought we were so clever having this major protest. And class went on, and we asked people later, "So what happened?" "What do you mean? What happened what?" The students didn't even notice we got up and left.

And another time there was a math professor who was an old guard math professor who memorized all of the men who were Eagle Scouts. He memorized their names. He went through the Freshman Book and memorized all the men's names and knew every single one of them who'd been an Eagle Scout. Turns out my husband had been an Eagle Scout, for which he gets a bit of flak now. But he would call on them, on the men, and talk about, oh, you know, "You were an Eagle Scout. Blah blah blah." He just coveted these Eagle Scouts. And he would not call on women.

And he also knew every sport every freshman played—or every student played. And if a student had to miss class, he was very strict about homework and missing class. Well, for some people. So if you had to miss a class because you were going to be in a football game, he would spend ten minutes talking about this wonderful athlete who was going to miss class because he was in a football game.

And one time our singing group, the a cappella group, had to go sing for alumni in Boston. And we had to leave early on a Friday. And so I turned in.... Oh, he wouldn't accept homework ahead of time; you had to turn it in in class. It turned out that my then boyfriend, Steve, who had had this class with him and he knew him because he was an Eagle Scout, came to class for me, turned in my paper, took notes because I was so afraid of the repercussions of not being there, and he lambasted Steve, saying, "I know who you are Steve Severson. And why don't you go back and tell your friend Martha Hennessey that if she can't take Dartmouth seriously enough to come to class herself, why doesn't she just go back to Vassar —

DONIN: Unbelievable.

HENNESSEY: —where it's probably okay not to come to class." And I had told him I wasn't going to be there. I had told him I had arranged for someone to take notes. I had done, I thought, everything right.

But that's the kind of stuff we would run into if you were—the difference in the way you were treated as a man or woman. And of course there were heroes, too. There were people who were very, very wonderful to the women. But basically in terms of professors, I often felt that the old guard were resisting. If it had been up to them, they wouldn't have had women in their classes. So that was a big difference.

DONIN: So in terms of your other activities that occupied you, athletics?

HENNESSEY: Well, you know, when I came, if you wanted to be on an athletic team, you had to start the team essentially because there were no women's athletic teams. They had hired some coaches. I believe some of these coaches had already been coaching other teams and had said, "Sure, we'll also coach the women's tennis team." Or, "Sure, we'll also coach"...Of course at the time it was the men's tennis and the girls' tennis. I'm sure you remember this—at that

point. It still bothers me that my daughters call women girls. But we were all about how we were women, you know, not girls.

So in the four years, by the time I left, there were a lot of women's teams. But you could just walk onto them because if you started it, you were on the team. So I worked out with, but was not on technically, the crew team, because I wanted to get exercise. But because of the schedule I had for performing and rehearsing, I really couldn't be on an athletic team. I did a little working out with the track team, although it wasn't much of a track team because it hadn't really come into fruition. And I worked out a little with the track team.

Ironically, the coach of the crew team was a Tuck student who, by the way, was the one who pounded on the hood of my father's car. [Laughs] He remembered it so well. And he was the coach—of course he let me on the team. I mean it was such a small town; it still is. But, boy, was it then. And I did teach skiing for the phys ed department, you know, at the Skiway.

DONIN: Men and women, or just women? Were they separated?

HENNESSEY: No, they were all together, men and women.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HENNESSEY: And let's see. And my husband, Steve, was also a ski instructor. He was on ski patrol. I did not do that. I was a DJ on the radio.

DONIN: Uh-huh!

HENNESSEY: WDCR.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: And that was fun. And I took photographs for the *Aegis*. And developed them down in the basement.

DONIN: Darkroom?

HENNESSEY: Yes, down in the darkroom. And I elected to—there were two students, I don't know if it was prescribed that it would be a man and a woman, but it was a man and a woman. In your senior year you could run for the student positions on what was then the CCSC,

the College Committee on Standing and Conduct, which did all of the disciplinary things - now COS, but I think they don't do it all—I think it's now divided into more than one group. So I did that my senior year. As I said, I did theatrical productions which was very hard with all the rehearsals we had for other things.

DONIN: It sounds like, yes.

HENNESSEY: So sometimes I would take a leave from Glee Club, for example, in order to be in... The women's group was called the Dartmouth Distractions.

DONIN: Oh, is that right?

HENNESSEY: Yeah. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh....

HENNESSEY: Which at the time we.... It was ironic, you know. It was really meant to be ironic. People loved the name. They thought it was funny. We were a very hearty group of women. We sang in the lower register, we were strong, we were tough. We were no little wilting female singing group. And so I confess I kind of liked the name. I sort of thought it was a bit of the tongue-in-cheek kind of....

DONIN: Yeah, it was a statement.

HENNESSEY: It was a statement, yeah.

DONIN: Yeah, for sure.

HENNESSEY: And I liked that. And we were the Dartmouth Distractions. Now they changed their name. At one point, I think when I had just graduated, they changed it to Woods Wind, which lasted one year, and then they changed it to Decibelles. And so now it's the Decibelles. I don't even think they call themselves the Dartmouth Decibelles, though. For some reason I liked—we called ourselves the DDs. We were the Dartmouth Distractions. There were just two a cappella groups: There was the Dartmouth Aires and the Dartmouth Distractions. I'm sure I'm forgetting things that I did, but those were the bulk.

DONIN: Well, we can look at the *Aegis*.

HENNESSEY: Yes. [Laughter]

DONIN: So did you have the sense that campus life was open to you as a woman, as a female student? That whatever...and, you know, with the background, understanding that some groups just didn't exist for lack of enough people to populate whatever the group was.

HENNESSEY: Right.

DONIN: Besides that, you felt there was access for everything except, I assume, Greek life?

HENNESSEY: I did. And I'm not sure how much of that was my entitlement, you know? I don't know honestly whether you'd hear that from all the women in the Class of '76. Although I think if you look in the yearbook, you'll see that there were women on almost every single panel and group; and they were on the *Aegis* staff, and they were on the Winter Carnival Committee, and they were everywhere. I think it was kind of an exciting time, and people were—even if they were excited because it gave them a chance to complain, you know—that people didn't mind having women show up for these committees. There were only male senior societies. There were only fraternities. There were no sororities.

In my senior year—oh, no, the year before my senior year—my junior year - the first coed senior society started. And I was actually asked if I was ... tapped—or whatever you say—I was asked if I'd be a part of it. And even then I had the same attitude I have now, of right or wrong, I don't believe in those kinds of elite organizations that decide whether you're cool enough to be a part of them. Sort of the country club mentality. I just don't—it's not something I grew up believing—it wasn't okay.

DONIN: So where did you go for your social activities? What did a group of women who wanted to be together socially, what did you do?

HENNESSEY: Well, when I moved back here, when I transferred back here, I also had just ended a two-year relationship with someone who had just graduated from Dartmouth who was on the hockey team and a member of Heorot. So I had a lot of friends there who had been his friends. So I used to hang out there some with them. In senior year I lived in Topliff so I was close to there. I lived in Mid Mass when I first came, with two other women who had transferred—actually an exchange student and a transfer. And so we had a lot of activities in our hallways with other people from the hall who would show up.

The theater groups always had parties together. If you were in a play together, you'd have a party in somebody's dorm room or somebody's hallway. The lounge in North Mass, which was the women's dorm, was a frequent place for my singing group to have get-togethers. And sometimes people from the dorm would show up, and we'd just hang out there. For one thing, there was also only one place to eat; so everybody ate in Thayer Hall.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: So you always saw everybody at meals and that was a place to convene. The HOP had activities. There were dances at the HOP.

DONIN: Oh!

HENNESSEY: And they'd bus in the women from other colleges.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: But there were dances in Alumni Hall pretty regularly. And in the Top of the HOP. Concerts. We'd go to concerts all the time together. And then maybe after—Oh! And the big, big place that we all convened was...in the basement of the Hanover Inn. I forget what they call it now—but it was called The Tavern. And the drinking age was 18. So pretty much everybody on campus could go there. And they had big round tables and almost always a live performance from a Dartmouth musician would be playing there. And in fact my friend Parker MacDonell was often that person. And mostly students who would deliver the beer—they'd come over and just put a pitcher of beer on the center of the table, and people would drink beer and eat beer nuts and pretzels. And that was the social life.

DONIN: That was the alternative to being in a—

HENNESSEY: Being in a fraternity.

DONIN: —fraternity basement.

HENNESSEY: And it was always jam packed. Jam packed!

DONIN: Oh, that sounds pretty civilized.

- HENNESSEY: It was very civilized. You could sit down with all sorts of people, and each person would chip in a dollar or something, you know, for the pitcher that would arrive. I remember a friend of mine who was in the Dartmouth Distractions with me for a while. As a Christian Scientist, she didn't drink at all. And she worked there, and she delivered the pitchers on roller skates. [Laughter]
- DONIN: Great!
- HENNESSEY: She was hysterical on her roller skates delivering these pitchers of beer. And there would be people sometimes from the town there. So sometimes, like over Christmas break, I'd find people whom I'd gone to high school with and would hang out there.
- DONIN: Oh, yes.
- HENNESSEY: It was just having the drinking age be 18 meant that you could do that.
- DONIN: Right.
- HENNESSEY: You had to be 18 to go in, but almost everybody was 18 by the time they got there. So it was a wonderful eclectic combination of people from all over campus, with live entertainment. And they were all Dartmouth students working there to get a little extra money. So it was Dartmouth property because it was the Hanover Inn.
- DONIN: Sure. Boy, having the drinking age be 18 was a big—we won't go into that. That's another whole discussion.
- HENNESSEY: That's right. It made a very big difference.
- DONIN: Yeah.
- HENNESSEY: It did. We couldn't afford to—well, I'm trying to think if there even was... I think the only bar in town may have been at the Hanover Inn, you know, for adults upstairs.
- DONIN: But you're not forced into the basements to drink secretly.
- HENNESSEY: No. No. That's right. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. And if you wanted to have a party on the hall, somebody could go over to—we called it Moe's; it's the store on Allen Street, whatever....

DONIN: Stinson's.

HENNESSEY: Stinson's.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: And you could either get a keg that you could bring to the hall; or you could get a couple of six-packs or whatever and bring it over to the hall, and people would sit there and have a little bit of beer. It wasn't a big deal, you know, because we were legal.

DONIN: Right, right.

HENNESSEY: So I think—that really did make it.... It made it much more civilized. And if I think about where I saw most people, it was a little like walking into a dining room; you'd walk into this room, and you'd tell somebody I'll see you there at ten, and, you'd find a place at a big table. So you wouldn't be one on one just sitting there. You could do that. But generally people would just sit down and meet new people sitting at these big tables.

DONIN: So what would cause a woman to go into a fraternity if you had a venue like that?

HENNESSEY: They had parties. They had parties. I went to a birthday party there. You know there would be—Heorot always had—they called them 'Tails.

DONIN: Yes.

HENNESSEY: Cocktail parties. And that was more the reason to go into fraternities. And they often had Faculty 'Tails.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: They would invite faculty members. And you'd go there, and you'd meet your faculty members. They were civilized. You'd get a little dressed up, and you'd be in their living room, and you'd have cocktails because, again, it was legal. So that would bring people there.

You know I'm not going to say women didn't go to the basement of fraternities. But it's certainly not my memory of being at Dartmouth, isn't being in basements of fraternities. I know that women did go to

basements, and I went to basements of fraternities as a college student. But I think then they were dangerous places as well. They were certainly very male dominated, and there were usually very few women there. And again, in the basement of a fraternity if somebody came up and said, "How nice to meet you? Where are you from?" and if you said, "Dartmouth," you were in trouble. I would often say I'm from Hanover.

DONIN: Oh, interesting.

HENNESSEY: Not often. I would sometimes. If I felt unsafe, I would say I'm from Hanover.

DONIN: Yes. Right.

HENNESSEY: If I were among friends, and often I wouldn't go into a basement of a fraternity unless I had male friends with me, then I would say I'm from Dartmouth, and if you don't like that, tough luck.

DONIN: Right, right.

HENNESSEY: You know. But there were many.... I felt like there were more options. And we had no Collis [Center], you know.

DONIN: Yes. There was nothing there.

HENNESSEY: There was the big hall that is called Common Ground now.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: And so there were bands that would come and play there, and we'd dance there and listen to bands.

DONIN: But none of the rest of the stuff that goes on in Collis, right?

HENNESSEY: No. It was all offices. That's where the career offices were and things like that. But, no, there were no social activities of any type except in that big room, and that was used for high school parties and college parties and all sorts of things.

But, no, I think that fraternities were not tamer; they just were less, from my perspective, less the center of everyone's social life. There were other options. And the main difference, in my opinion, is the drinking age.

DONIN: Yeah. Clearly.

HENNESSEY: Yeah. It allows for different kinds of options. I mean you could keep a refrigerator in your room that had a few bottles of beer. And a friend could come over, and you could have a beer. So it made it a little more like being in Europe where drinking was just a social thing that you did because, instead of water, you had a bottle of beer.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: Yes. It was different.

DONIN: So did your community sort of evolve and change from when you first arrived as a first-semester sophomore—second semester sophomore—to when you graduated? Did it evolve? Did it move around? Or did you stay sort of planted among your friends that were in theater and your—well, the most consuming activities that you had; was that your community that you considered sort of central?

HENNESSEY: No. Actually I thought about that. It did change. I think it changed for a variety of reasons. One is that the people with whom I was closest, most of them graduated, including Steve. So my sophomore year I got to know Steve through Glee Club and the Aires and Distractions. And he went to MIT. So for my last two years he was doing a graduate degree at MIT. And he came almost every weekend to visit. And we hung out with some of my friends who were from theater.

I kind of felt like I was distancing myself a little bit from, as I described, groups of women in particular who maybe had bonded in their first year here. If I'm being very candid, I saw them as kind of the people you would expect to be sort of—I wouldn't have described them as the popular group because I think people have told me now that's how they saw me, and I never thought of myself that way. But I think I was friends with those people; I didn't hang out with them. And largely I didn't hang out with them because I never liked being in large groups of women. It just never—even within my singing group, I found it problematic to have a bunch of women together [laughs] trying to work things out. I honestly saw them as kind of wealthy—for lack of a better description—kind of the country-club set of women. And I think they often thought I was

part of that, but I really wasn't. And in fact I was, at some level—this sounds really almost conceited—but at some level I was kind of fundamentally opposed to what they represented. For example, when the Dartmouth—there was something called the Dartmouth Hums, which I'm sure you've heard about.

DONIN: Yes.

HENNESSEY: The fraternities would put together a performance. And it used to be that they would always perform in front of Dartmouth Hall. And I'd gone to see Hums since I was four years old probably. And in my junior and senior year, Theta Delt put together the famous Cohogs song as their performance for the Hums. And the first year, I believe, it was outside Dartmouth Hall. The second year it must have been raining, so it was practically where we're sitting now, in Webster Hall. And both times they won.

The first time they won, we were all outraged. And when we found out they were going to do the same song again—and we knew before the Hums—somehow they were leaking it that they were going to do the same song again—a group of us got together and passed around a petition saying that they should not be allowed to perform. And some of the women that I went up to, saying, I'd like you to sign this petition, said no. And when I would ask why, they would say they thought it was funny. Or they didn't want their name associated with complaining about what was going on or any of those kinds of things.

And that was really enlightening for me and very disappointing. Even though I felt very entitled in many ways to be here and to be a part of the community, I think I was somewhat happily ignorant of the women's role in keeping things the way they were. And that's one of the first times I remember being aware of that. So I...

DONIN: So let me make sure I understand what you're saying. You initially assumed that all the women here bought into the same agenda that you and your friends had.

HENNESSEY: That's right.

DONIN: You were the pioneers. You were pushing forward with women's rights.

HENNESSEY: Right.

DONIN: But there was this other group here that were sort of the fifties version.

HENNESSEY: That's right. And probably most of them [were] legacies. I don't think all of them were. But an important group of them were legacies. And I think they may have come almost with their tail between their legs, saying, "Yes, but I promised to be a Dartmouth man." And there was certainly a mentality that "You will be just like a Dartmouth man." I mean, "We will sing 'Men of Dartmouth,' and we will not try to stick out."

I think it never really occurred to me until I witnessed it firsthand that a number of the women were unwilling to see it the same way or uninterested in seeing it the same way as I did or fundamentally they agreed with the men. I'm not sure what it was exactly. But some of them were dating fraternity guys who clearly were not okay with somebody being against Theta Delt songs.

And maybe it's unfair but I think I sort of equate this "don't air your dirty laundry" with that sort of upper-class, white, country-clubbish kind of mentality. And part of that may be completely unfounded. But that's how I rationalized it and saw it. And it wasn't something I'd grown up with. It wasn't something I understood. And yet, I think I looked the part. So people assumed. And I was active, and people assumed I was part of it sometimes.

So my community changed when I started to recognize that even though the people I was closest to, who knew me best, were prepared for the fact that that's who I was and that's what.... And so my group of friends kind of shifted in favor of a smaller group of people, men and women, who accepted and maybe even celebrated the fact that I was somebody who was going to be clear about how I felt about what was going on. And suffer the consequences of that, whatever they may be. That I was very comfortable saying to someone who said to me, "Well, if you go to Dartmouth, I don't want to talk to you," I was comfortable saying, "Well, that's your loss." [Laughs] You know that kind of attitude, as opposed to, "Oh, no, next time I'd better...", you know....

DONIN: Keep my mouth closed.

HENNESSEY: Keep my mouth closed kind of thing.

DONIN: Did you get a lot of pushback from people who didn't approve of your, you know, I'm here, and I'm entitled to be here?

HENNESSEY: I think I got more distancing, among women. I got more distancing. A lot of people saying, "Oh, you know what, Martha? I really admire you for speaking your mind." But it was clear they didn't want to be associated with that. [Laughs] Oh, as I say it, I think, gosh, I am so my mother's daughter in that way.

But, you know, I was so lucky because I had parents and a boyfriend and friends, all of whom 100 percent backed who I was and what I believed in. And there were times when I would sit in my room and cry because I was so tired of fighting and so tired of being pushed into a certain box and so angry that I wasn't included in certain groups of things because probably I was seen as the angry feminist.

And just last week, I sat down with a woman who's a college sophomore here now, who told me she's going through the exact same thing and feels exactly the same way. So I said, "Next time, if you don't have anybody to talk to or whose shoulder you can cry on, I'm here. I would be very happy to do that for you because I don't want you to leave Dartmouth." And those are the women who left Dartmouth, who were the ones who couldn't do that anymore—for the most part.

I totally understand that it's much easier just to go with the flow. It is so much easier. And there were many times when I thought, "What is wrong with me that I can't just go with the flow? If I could do that, I'd be happy." And of course I wouldn't have been. But I thought that at the time.

So because of that shift in community during the time I was here, I tended to go more toward a smaller group of people I knew well. I still felt a part of people. I was still talking to them. I could sit with them at dinner. I still had a large group of people I felt comfortable with, but I never really felt a part of it.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: And to this day I still don't feel a part of that group. When we go to reunions, we all say hello to each other, and then I go somewhere else to be with people. Because they aren't the group.... Ironically, one of them is somebody—I don't know if this identifies them—but

was somebody who transferred with me from Vassar. And she immediately became part of a group here. And I think she saw me at Vassar as part of—I was in the a cappella group that was considered sort of the radical feminist, leftist sort of a cappella group. So I think she kind of associated me with that group maybe. But I don't know. I don't know. I come up with these rationales. But, yes. So my community changed and stayed changed.

DONIN: And that's a significant experience to have at that age.

HENNESSEY: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: What sort of long-term impact did it have on you?

HENNESSEY: I've thought about that. I can't really answer that without also saying that my community and my relationship to Dartmouth changed in my senior year because of what happened to me in a fraternity.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

HENNESSEY: And I don't know if you want me to go into it.

DONIN: Yes, you might as well. We should have it as part of your story here even though it's also in the—

HENNESSEY: In the article.

DONIN: —in the [*Valley News*] article.

HENNESSEY: So as I said, some of the times that I went into fraternity basements were when people would have an organized party. This time it was a party for somebody whom I had known all through high school in theater and then through Dartmouth, and it was her birthday. And I went to the party briefly.

And during that time.... By the time I got there, everyone I think was pretty drunk. And I intended to go back because it was around probably finals time. So I intended to go back and study. So I hadn't been drinking, if anything—maybe one beer. And I told people I was going to be leaving. And one of the guys there—I don't think I'd ever spoken with him before, but I knew who he was; he was a classmate of mine—grabbed my keys and said, "Oh, you know her dad is the dean of the Tuck School. She probably has keys to the campus."

And I honestly have no idea where that came from, because I had never.... One thing that I had been really good about and my father had been really good about was separating who I was in terms of my father and Hanover. I think most people at Dartmouth didn't know I grew up in Hanover, let alone that my father was at Tuck School.

So somehow this guy knew, and he was drunk and belligerent and grabbed my keys. So he ran upstairs with my keys. I was not drunk and I was impatient and ran after him and grabbed his sweater to try to stop him. And he went ballistic, saying that I was trying to tear his sweater and how dare I. He threw my keys on the floor. And when I picked them up, he picked me up. And when I went to reach for them, he picked me up and threw me against the fireplace.

DONIN: Oh!

HENNESSEY: And then took my keys again and threw them on the ground. And then he picked me up and threw me on the ground. And then he picked me up and threw me at the fireplace. And I was screaming. And by that point, everyone from downstairs had come up and was watching this.

DONIN: Watching!?

HENNESSEY: Watching this. And doing nothing. I was crying and screaming. I don't even know if I was crying at that point actually, because I was—I was in shock. And protecting myself. And one of the times I—he must have been distracted—I got the keys for the first time, and I tore out of there. Oh, I know. During the time I was being thrown around, one of the students whom I had known pretty well, who was a student member of the Dartmouth Campus Police, came in through the front door. And I think that's what distracted everybody, including this guy who was hurting me. And I grabbed the keys and ran out the open door.

I was terrified, and went back to my dorm room in Topliff. It was probably about one a.m. And my neighbor heard me crying and talking to Steve on the phone. I'd woken him up, and I was trying to figure out what to do. And she came over and told me about a couple of times she'd been sexually assaulted in fraternities and how she knew lots of people who had been. And that was the first time I realized that a lot of people had been hurt.

And so unfortunately when I talked to the young woman whose birthday it had been, I told her that I was afraid to do anything about this on my own. I wasn't sure I should do anything about it. Everyone was telling me not to do anything about it because it would just ruin the rest of my senior year. I asked her to come with me to talk to the dean about it. I knew the dean because I was on the CCSC. And she said she couldn't do it because she had a crush on one of the guys who was there.

DONIN: Oh!

HENNESSEY: Who was the president of our class. And that was the last time I talked to her for 30 years. And I told her that. I said, "I can't be your friend anymore." She'd been my friend. She'd been the friend I'd come back to visit every single time I came; and, you know, whose room I'd been in when the brick was thrown through the window. So anyway....

Do you want me to tell what went on after that? Maybe it's not even relevant.

DONIN: Well, you know, in terms of how this impacted you.

HENNESSEY: Yeah, yeah. It certainly impacted my community.

DONIN: And your feeling of belonging here.

HENNESSEY: Right.

DONIN: It did impact you.

HENNESSEY: It did. I had decided—this was all happening in about 24 to 48 hours. I had decided— There was nothing I could do about it: I wasn't safe. I couldn't.... I had a very good friend of mine who was the fellow from the Aires, who was so angered by this that.... And he was huge; he'd been a football player in high school. I was honestly afraid he was going to do something terrible [laughs] to the fellow who had beaten me up.

But he agreed to go to every meal with me. So I went to every meal with him because Thayer was a little bit of a scary place. I mean I haven't mentioned the fact that in my first year here, sophomore year, men sat at a table where you entered Thayer and, like in the

Olympics, as a woman walked through, the four of them would put up different scores, rating the women as they walked through the door. I mean, Thayer was not a safe place. So I always had my friend Parker come with me.

And then I think probably within the first 24 hours, maybe 48, I got a call from the campus police saying. "We've just gotten a report that you have keys to the campus, and you're not allowed to."

DONIN: Huh!

HENNESSEY: And my guess is that this young man who had been a member of the campus police had come into that setting, the story he was told was that I had keys to the campus.

DONIN: What does that even mean?

HENNESSEY: I think there were at that time master keys?

DONIN: Amazing! That could unlock any door.

HENNESSEY: That's what they believed.

DONIN: Right, right.

HENNESSEY: And I did have, legally or not legally, a master key to the Hopkins Center because people who were leaders of the singing groups at some point were given them. And then they were passed down to new leaders. Otherwise you had to bother somebody to get into a practice room, and the practice rooms were not reserved. If it was empty, you could go in a practice room. So I had a key to those rooms. And it may have been considered a master key. It probably opened the front door of the Hop. I never tried it, but it might have.

So at first I thought that's what they were thinking of. But the guy in Heorot was saying, "She probably has a key to the library; we can go up and, , hang from the—" I don't even remember exactly. But there was all this malarkey.

So I got this call from the campus police and I went to talk to them. I said, "I'd better come talk to you." So I went and told them what had happened. They were suitably bothered by what had happened and convinced that I didn't have a key. I even showed them that I had the key to the Hopkins Center. And they didn't take it away from

me. So I don't think they thought it was a bad thing. They said, "You need to file charges." And I said, "I'm not sure I can file charges. This is my senior year. I just can't stand to. I'm on the CCSC. I'm going to be seen as bulldozing this through. I already feel like an outsider at this point. I just want to graduate. I don't want this to happen." And so they said, "Well, we're going to tell the dean of the College." So they told the dean.

By that point the dean was Ralph Manuel, a lovely fellow who was a friend of mine and had been a mentor of mine. So I made an appointment to go see him. I talked to him. And he was very concerned and said that he would accept my decision, but he strongly urged me to talk to my father, who was then the dean of the Tuck School.

So I walked down and saw my father, told my father about it. He was furious—of course. And wanted to.... But, in the way my father has always operated, he felt that it was my decision. He wasn't going to push me to do anything. And I think he understood. I mean, he taught organizational behavior. He had taught cases about whistleblowers. He knew what was going to happen if I, of all people, went to the CCSC and prosecuted probably not only the person who beat me up but the members who sat there and watched it happen.

So my father did talk to the young man. He asked my permission to do that, and I told him that if that would make it easier on my father, then he could talk to this young man. So he summoned him in. Yes, again, called the campus police and said, "Tell this guy he has to be in my office at this time on this day. I don't care what else he's doing."

DONIN: Whoa!

HENNESSEY: And he did say that he would follow him to "the depths of hell." And I believe he told him that he would personally see to it, if he ever looked me in the eye or ever looked at me in any way that intimidated me while I was here, that he would personally see to it that he never got any kind of a diploma from Dartmouth. I don't know if he actually could have done that or not. Probably.

DONIN: In those days.

HENNESSEY: In those days I think he could. I mean it was part of being a gentleman, you know. That was part of what you had to....

So my father was on his way to a meeting with the president, a faculty meeting, and he knew President Kemeny very well. President Kemeny was very concerned about... He was the one who obviously started coeducation. He was very concerned about the fraternities and social life for women and men. And he knew my father extremely well, and was concerned because my father, he said, looked ashen and wasn't speaking much—My father was obviously enough rattled that President Kemeny came up to him afterwards and asked what happened. My father told him but said, "You absolutely may not use Martha's name." Because I knew John Kemeny, too.

Now John Kemeny knew me well by name. He didn't recognize me on the street because he didn't recognize faces. [Laughs] But if I said, "Martha Hennessey," "Oh, Martha!" You know. Because I grew up with them. I grew up with his daughter Jenny. We had been in school together our whole lives. And he had known my father forever.

But anyway. So when he found out that John Hennessey's daughter had been beaten up in a fraternity, he was livid. And he, however, honored the fact that my father did not want my name used. But he was on his way to a trustee meeting, and all in about less than 24 hours, it went from my saying nothing to John Kemeny going to the trustee meeting and saying that a Dartmouth undergraduate woman was beat up in Heorot. At that meeting—this makes me a little sick to even say it—was sitting this guy who stood there and watched it happen - who was the president of my class at Dartmouth. And he then—

DONIN: Why was he at this trustee meeting?

HENNESSEY: Because it was.... In your senior year if you were elected to be the—and I don't know if this still happens—but if you're the president of the senior class, you are an *ex officio* member of the trustee meetings.

DONIN: Oh.

HENNESSEY: I believe. Or maybe it was just that they were talking about something where they needed him to report on something. I'm not really sure.

DONIN: Yes.

HENNESSEY: I've never really known. But he was there. And so even though they didn't mention my name, he knew who it was.

DONIN: He knew.

HENNESSEY: So he then spread a rumor around campus, which traveled very quickly, that had I not only reported it, I had reported it to the board of trustees and to the president of the College. I'd gone straight to the president of the College.

DONIN: Oh, God!

HENNESSEY: Who brought it to the board of trustees.

DONIN: Oh!

HENNESSEY: So at that point, I didn't know who knew this. I knew people did know it because people came up to me and would look at me like with just disgust. And I'd say, "What is going on?" And they'd tell me, "Well, I can't believe you would use your power and go to the....". Nobody cared about the fact that I'd been beat up. They just cared about the fact that I had gone to the president, which of course I hadn't. So, so much for my not reporting it.

So instead I got.... Well, it felt like I got the worst of both worlds. He didn't get any repercussions except having to have my father read him the riot act. And then I got all the repercussions of having reported it. Really, for years....At reunions people would tell me they'd heard this story and had been horrified that I'd gone to the.... Nobody was horrified that I'd been beaten up, just horrified— Probably they'd heard the story that I had reported, you know, who knows what? Something—probably that I had keys to the College. I have no idea. Anyway, it certainly changed my sense of community. I didn't leave my room for a long time without being accompanied by somebody I felt safe around.

My social life pretty much was involved with my hall. I became for the first time friends with all those people I hadn't known who were

on my hall in my dorm. I didn't go obviously to Heorot or any other fraternities again. Many of my friends from Heorot, who really had been four-year friends because of the boyfriend I'd had, very good friends, I thought, I stopped being friends with because when I said to them, "I can't believe you're taking the side of this guy; you saw what happened and you did nothing to protect me." They said, "He's my brother. It's brother first. No matter what, it's brother first." So I heard that from a number of people, all of whom stopped being my friends. So I unfortunately left here being pretty ready to get the heck out of Dodge. You know, this was enough for me.

DONIN: You were an outcast.

HENNESSEY: I felt like an outcast.

DONIN: I mean you should have been the victim, but you were the outcast.

HENNESSEY: That's right. And that's what I was trying to avoid. I expected that to happen if I had turned him in.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: But it happened sort of under the worst of circumstances because I didn't turn him in. And yet because it was so awful, I didn't want to make it worse by turning him in. I still could have. I still could have gone forward and said this was going on. And honestly I think Ralph Manuel was extremely disappointed—I think it hurt my relationship with him. He was very disappointed in me for not going forward with it.

And, you know, as a victim, you feel as if you somehow.... I was ashamed. Not so much about not coming forward. I was ashamed that it had happened to me.

I can't explain it, and I think most victims can't. But it's a totally irrational feeling that I should have somehow (a) not have been in the basement, (b) somehow joked about it instead of running after him. I don't know. I went through everything I could have done differently instead of recognizing that I had had no—it wasn't my fault. Took me a long time to realize it wasn't my fault.

DONIN: Graduation must have been hard.

HENNESSEY: Graduation was hard. But here's the funny thing: I got married one week after graduation. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh. That's another whole subplot, yes.

HENNESSEY: Yes. And it was my father's last year as dean of the Tuck School and he handed me my diploma on stage. And all sorts of people had come into town, all of my relatives. So they were at my graduation because I was getting married a week later. Luckily I had that very happy—

DONIN: Distraction.

HENNESSEY: —distraction. So for the rest of that time I—really the rest of the time—Steve and I were engaged right before this happened. So for the rest of that time, I was able to focus myself in that direction.

You know what's funny? I don't think—I don't know if I've asked my father this—I'm not sure my mother ever knew that this happened to me because I don't think she could have stood it. I think my father—they were very honest with each other, so it's possible she knew. But it may have been downplayed in some way. I don't think my mother could have stood it. I think it wouldn't have been possible for her to let it go. She might have singlehandedly murdered somebody.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: So she didn't know about it. So we could sort of turn everything about the wedding into making it okay. It took a long time for me to come back to Dartmouth and feel happy. And I have to say, to this day I don't have the same kind of feeling about Dartmouth that I had when I arrived here on campus. I mean I don't....

DONIN: Indeed.

HENNESSEY: You know.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: But not just because of that. I mean I think it's important to know that it wasn't just that. That was a horrible event. But there had been many other, more subtle but also horrible ways in which my

kind of high school, blissful, “Dartmouth’s wonderful no matter what” fantasy had been shattered.

DONIN: Sounds like it was sort of a slow shift that took you....

HENNESSEY: It was. That’s right.

DONIN: Time to get your arms around it and understand it.

HENNESSEY: That’s right. Yep. And, you know, it’s funny because people expect me to be wearing all green clothing every day, you know?

DONIN: Especially because you grew up here. Your father was a senior officer here.

HENNESSEY: Two daughters went here.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: My mother ended up, late in her career she worked here. My brother got a master’s degree here. My cousin went here. I mean I did have - subsequent to my going - more connections.

And because I was in the first group of women graduating, I was asked to be on every single possible alumni committee you could think of. I was on the Alumni Council and all the little committees of that. I was on the Alumni Awards Committee. I was on the Young Alumni Awards Committee. People asked me, and I, for some reason, always said yes. So I was very involved. I was part of the group rewriting the constitution for all the alumni. You know I was really very involved and have been all along. And I’ve never been seen as part of this subversive, angry alumni group, except maybe until recently. [Laughs] So I sort of had a—I did; I straddled.

DONIN: And still....

HENNESSEY: And I still straddle.

DONIN: It sounds like you still straddle.

HENNESSEY: I still straddle. And you know I was saying to this young woman who came to visit me, to interview me for an oral history project, that—and she could relate to this. It’s very much a rollercoaster.

After speaking to this young woman, I was at the high of the rollercoaster saying, “Yay! There are women like this at Dartmouth. This is so great!” And then after talking about all my stories with her, I went into this free fall and spent a couple of days being very sad and blue and depressed and not really wanting to go to Dartmouth events. I had tickets to things for the weekend. I was thinking, “Ah! I don’t really want to see anybody. I don’t really want to be part of Dartmouth.” And then something else will happen, and I’ll go back up and think, this is great, you know.

Aires reunions are—We haven’t had reunions of the women’s singing group, but we go every three years to the Aires reunions, and we spend the entire weekend with these lovely people all singing. And it’s just—that’s the best of Dartmouth for me.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: And I will be at the height. And then another thing will happen where I’ll hear about something not being done about sexual assault or whatever else, or hazing issues, and I’ll plunge. And, now that I live back in Hanover, I’ll find it very tough. So it’s very much a rollercoaster for me. And it’s hard to get the momentum going again, even to be on some of these committees I’m on.

Some of the men on these committees I admire so much for the way that they can just keep going at it. Peter Hackett can keep going at it. And I don’t know how much he understands—I think he does; he’s never said he doesn’t. But I think if you haven’t been the victim, it’s very hard to know how much energy it takes, how much emotional energy it takes, to be combative—or even to be seen as combative. So when I was in *Undue Influence* - when Peter asked me to be in *Undue Influence*, I had to really think about whether I had the psychic emotional energy—

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: —to put myself through that. And he changed the story slightly in the script. So it didn’t feel as if each night I was really telling my story. Although I have to tell you, it brought back my story every single night.

DONIN: Every time.

HENNESSEY: So it was very much a combination of powerfully saying to everybody, “What are you going to do about this?”; and, on the other hand, going home at night and just having to go straight to bed. Sometimes crying on the way home from performances because I’d be walking across campus; I’d be walking home and reliving it. And reliving why didn’t I do something about it?

And, well, of course I know why I didn’t do something about it. Because right now I’m doing something about the sexual assault issue, and I’m already feeling under attack. I’m already being called an “angry alum.” At one point I was at a faculty meeting about what the faculty wanted in a new president. And about a week later I went with my husband to “What do the alumni want in a new president?” And I went to one of the meetings, and I spoke up and made a statement about what I really think is important is to have a president who’s willing to make a very unpopular move because it’s the most important thing for this institution. And that’s what John Kemeny did. And I don’t think it’s happened since then. And we need that at the top. And afterward, I was told by somebody I knew who was in the administration that two trustees came up to her afterwards and said, “Why is Martha so angry at the College?” So, yeah. So you should either love it or leave it.

And this young woman told me. I thought it was so ironic, having grown up in the sixties and seventies. This young woman I spoke with who’s the Class of ’15. She said to me that alumni and students come up to her all the time and say, “If you’re so angry at Dartmouth, why don’t you just leave?” I said, “Well, you know, we were told ‘America, love it or leave it.’” It was a joke, it was so pathetic. And it’s pathetic that anyone at this College would tell you that you you should either love it or leave it. You should either hide your dirty laundry or you should just get out of town.

DONIN: No criticisms allowed.

HENNESSEY: No criticisms allowed.

DONIN: Happy Valley all the time.

HENNESSEY: Exactly. Stepford Wives. [Laughs] So it’s exhausting. It’s exhausting.

I didn't change my name when I got married in 1976. And I had to carry my marriage license with me everywhere I went because we couldn't get an apartment, we couldn't do anything.

DONIN: Oh, I see.

HENNESSEY: It was 1976.

DONIN: Yes.

HENNESSEY: And you weren't allowed to rent apartments if you weren't married.

DONIN: Right, right.

HENNESSEY: About two weeks before we were going to get married, I was in the car with my parents and Steve on our way to some political meeting that my mother was going to, and she invited us to come. And we were driving along, and I said, "You know, there's only one thing that I'm regretting about getting married." Everyone said, "What!! What's going on?" I said, "I was named for my grandmother, and I adore my grandmother, and I have exactly her name. And I'm really sorry that I'm going to be giving that up." Because at that point I didn't know anyone who hadn't taken their husband's name. And all three of them turned to me and said, "Don't." I said, "What?!" They all said, "Why are you taking it if you don't want to? You don't have to do that." Well, you know, there weren't very many people I knew who had that kind of support from not only their husband, but from both parents.

DONIN: Both sides, yeah.

HENNESSEY: It made it possible for me to do it. Steve used to go up to people when we first moved to Denver after we graduated, he'd go up and say, "I'm Steve Severson, and this is my wife, Martha Hennessey. We both decided to keep our names." [Laughs]

DONIN: That's cute. It's a great way to do it.

HENNESSEY: As a way of telling people, "Don't even bring it up. Don't even say anything—we both decided to keep our names." But I'm only bringing that up because it was kind of my first—it was another thing that I had to explain to people. I'd go out, and people would say, "Wait a minute. Aren't you married to Steve Severson? Why don't you have his name?" And then they'd say, "Oh, because

you're one of those, whatever you are. You're a women's libber or you're a feminist or you're a—" And the way they'd say it as if I were despicable. And it was exhausting. There were several times I remember calling my mother, saying, "I'm just going to change my name because I can't stand it anymore. I just want to be like everybody else for once in my life." And luckily she would sort of talk me through it. And not tell me not to, but talk me through it and get me through it.

DONIN: Yeah.

HENNESSEY: But it is tiring, and I am finding that as a result, part of the reason I don't have as much community in general in Hanover as well as Dartmouth is that I'm happier just squirreling myself away in my own little world where I know people understand who I am and aren't going to give me a hard time about it. And where I don't need to leave yet another party being angry at somebody who said something that offended me or they expect me to be something I'm not.

DONIN: So this is.... I mean you're carrying this with you for a lifetime.

HENNESSEY: I am. And I'm sure if you ask my children, they would say that.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: And I think that my two daughters who are seven years apart would tell you different angles on it. I think my youngest—and I have to be careful because I know this is an oral history, and I don't want my oldest to think that I don't think she supports me in every way. But I think she sometimes feels that I'm just angry about what happened to me in my senior year, when I'm angry at fraternities. And I feel as if the fraternity system needs a major overhaul. I think she feels—she and her husband may feel—that it's all because of what happened to me in my senior year in Heorot. And I think I need to be very clear that it's not all about that. That didn't help, but it's not all about that. As you're saying, it was a sort of a glacial shift.

And I think my younger one, who—just the difference between 2002 and 2009 at this College allowed more women to be vocal about what's happening here. And I think therefore the youngest, who also is feistier and more like I was than my older daughter in that respect, she totally gets that it's not just about one instance. My

older daughter also has the complication that she's married to a guy for whom a fraternity was his whole life basically at Dartmouth.

DONIN: Here?

HENNESSEY: Or a large part of his whole life at Dartmouth. I mean he was on the sailing team, and he was a musician. So those things were important to him. But his best friends are all from his fraternity and not so for my daughter who was in a sorority. Both of them were in sororities. So I think that she's...her view of my angst about social life at Dartmouth is somewhat jaded or changed, understandably, by what her life is now, with her husband and child. Obviously my attitude toward the College is very complicated.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: And I love some of the things that Dartmouth has done and represents. And some of them I may sound a little hypocritical about. Like I love the fact that when I went to business school at Wharton, I met people from Dartmouth, and I immediately felt like...almost like people I'd grown up with. I didn't even know some of them. I knew who they were because we all kind of knew each other's faces. But I didn't necessarily know them.

One of them was somebody I didn't ever want to know because I think he may have even been a Theta Delt. But I met him at Wharton, and we were drawn to each other because we had this shared experience. So we both had grown up in a way together in Hanover, New Hampshire. We knew how important the undergraduate education was at Dartmouth. We were at the University of Pennsylvania where it didn't seem like anybody was important. There was none of that camaraderie or being a part of a place. And there is a nice feeling to being a part of a place. And so it was like there was this unspoken understanding of each other in a way. And because we were in a new place, we were able to set aside all those differences we had. And that was a really good feeling. I didn't see that happening for people who went to other colleges. And there were a lot of other colleges represented there.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HENNESSEY: I've seen that also at my daughter's wedding. The people who got together with them who'd gone to Dartmouth, the fact that they all put their arms around each other and sang songs. And of course

my daughter was in an a cappella group, so many of them were in an a cappella group. That part of Dartmouth I love, the music part, the fact that sometimes through songs there's a camaraderie that I haven't seen a lot of in other schools.

There are things about it I like. I've been here now, back here, for 11 years, and I haven't gone to a single football game. I only go to the arts for the most part. I've been asked to be on some committees recently. I've accepted, and I've gotten off pretty quickly. I can schmooze with the best of them, but it's not rewarding to me.

DONIN: Well, you're—it's a bit of a love-hate relationship.

HENNESSEY: It is. It is very much to me. When I've been thinking about it over the last week or so, it's very much to me like a sibling relationship. If you have a sibling and you're blood relatives, and you have this in common, this upbringing, and yet you were mercifully teased as a child perhaps. Or, you know, one of you is a Democrat and one of you is a Republican or whatever it might be. There are ways you can get together for Thanksgiving. You can be civil, and you can enjoy the fact that you share parents and all of those things. But you also don't—you're also okay when that occasion ends. [Laughs] It's very much like that.

It's not that I don't.... If I detested Dartmouth, if I hated.... If I didn't have the history I have with Dartmouth, and if I didn't have daughters who'd come here, who maintained that history, and if I didn't have a father who loved the College but saw it very clearly for what it is and its foibles and all its warts, if I didn't have all those kinds of things to help, I would be like many of my female classmates who left here and had no intention ever of coming back. They never complained while they were here because it was so unpopular to do so.

But I went to a "25 Years of Coeducation" party that was in New York City. I went to New York, and met a friend there, and sat around a table with about eight or ten women around it. And slowly realized that every single woman at that table had been assaulted in some way at the College. And not one person had said anything about it. No wonder they left and never came back. If I hadn't had these connections, I wouldn't have come back either.

DONIN: Right, right.

HENNESSEY: But .it was to me, family, and it was my home.

DONIN: Well, that's the other thing.

HENNESSEY: It's my home.

DONIN: You weren't just coming back to Dartmouth. You were coming back to your home.

HENNESSEY: That's right. And in many ways my husband is much less attached to the idea of Dartmouth and being a Dartmouth alum. He's back in Hanover because he loves Hanover.

DONIN: Right.

HENNESSEY: And sometimes it's harder for the people who are related to the people who were abused, to come to grips with it than it is for the person who was abused. It's an interesting phenomenon.

I didn't mention and I don't know if it's even important—and if this is edited, you can take this out if it's not—but I didn't really realize it until recently when I was in *Undue Influence* that twice I, by the skin of my teeth, avoided being sexually assaulted as well. Twice people came into my dorm room who I thought were friends and tried to corner me. And I screamed, and they wouldn't let me out of my own room.

DONIN: And these are your friends?

HENNESSEY: These were people that I had met at a party somewhere or something. No, they weren't good friends. But, you know, one of the times I was able to wake up the person nextdoor to me who came by and helped. The other time I just was scared to death and had things in my hand ready.... I mean it was that kind of—I was ready to hit somebody over the head because I thought he was going to rape me. And I never told anybody that. Never told a soul. And I didn't.... No one was talking about that sort of thing. It wasn't until we got to this 25th year anniversary that I really heard all the people who had stories.

DONIN: Well, you felt safe being able to think about it there because you weren't alone.

- HENNESSEY: Right. I can't remember how it was brought up.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HENNESSEY: I think somebody said.... You're always asked when you're from those classes, what was it like to be here?
- DONIN: Yeah.
- HENNESSEY: And maybe somebody who was there said, "So what's the worst thing that happened to you?" Or whatever. And it went around the table.
- DONIN: And that's very telling that people want to talk about the worst thing that happened to them in college. Women.
- HENNESSEY: Right. Or maybe they wanted this to come out so that people could then share.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- HENNESSEY: I mean they may have prefaced it with what was the best thing, what was the best part about being there in the early years? I don't know.
- DONIN: Right. Well, I suspect you're not the only person who's going to have these stories to tell in this oral history, I'm sorry to say. You're not the first already.
- HENNESSEY: Mm-hmm.
- DONIN: So.
- HENNESSEY: You know it's hard to answer the question when somebody says, "What was it like to be here in the beginning of coeducation?" And I've always felt I don't have a standard point of view. I don't think anyone has a standard point of view. I don't think anyone's story is like anyone else's.
- DONIN: That's why this collection of stories is going to be phenomenal.
- HENNESSEY: That's right. Yeah.
- DONIN: As you said, nobody's story is the same.

HENNESSEY: That's right. I have to say right now, if I quickly were asked what's your favorite Dartmouth experience, it was at my 35th college reunion when suddenly I met new people, and some of them people I never would have wanted to talk to before because I saw them in a certain way, as being very anti-women. And they were married; they had kids who'd gone to Dartmouth—females who'd gone to Dartmouth. Their children—they could finally let go of some of that baggage, and I could finally let go some of that baggage. And the women were so happy to see each other. There's still that little group that I see as this little...they were off on their own doing their own little thing. But for the most part, people were really meeting new people and seeing people in a way I wish we could have as undergraduates. But there wasn't any way to do that as undergraduates.

DONIN: No. No.

HENNESSEY: But it's nice to have that flavor left in my mouth a little bit.

DONIN: Absolutely. But it does take—it takes the maturity of 35 years.

HENNESSEY: That's right. That's right.

DONIN: Alright, I'm going to turn off this tape.

[End of Interview]