

Betsy Diffendal, LLyn De Danaan, Maxine Mimms

Interviewed by Nancy Koppelman

The Evergreen State College oral history project

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FINAL

Begin Part 1 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17

Koppelman: I am Nancy Koppelman from the Evergreen State College—I'm a faculty member—and I'm sitting with Betsy Diffendal, LLyn De Danaan and Maxine Mimms on July 27, 2017. These three women, who were pillars of Evergreen for many, many years, decided that they wanted to have a joint interview instead of an individual interview. So, here we are in Maxine's beautiful living room, about to get started.

Why don't one of you decide where you would like start telling the story of your collegueship, friendship, intellectual partnerships with one another? It's easy to start with each one of your individual autobiographies, but what this is, in a sense, is an autobiography of a collaboration, of a friendship between the three of you. So, where does that begin?

Diffendal: Well, I will just start. The beginning, I guess you would have to say, the thing that makes the era that we came to Evergreen, I think, at the very beginning of the college, somewhat unique is that many of us, in particular many of the women who came to Evergreen, came from backgrounds of working in community, and working in and with and around civil rights issues of that era, just before coming to Evergreen, or for the period before coming to Evergreen. The three of us are different ages. LLyn and I were in our . . .

De Danaan: Graduate school.

Diffendal: Well, LLyn and I were in undergraduate school in Ohio. We had met each other as undergraduates in anthropology.

Koppelman: What year was that?

Diffendal: That was about 1964.

De Danaan: Yeah, it was when I returned from the Peace Corps, and you were working in the project.

Diffendal: Yeah. So, another characteristic of this group is that LLyn, and many others of that era, were in the Peace Corps before coming to Evergreen, and had done work overseas, and with cultural groups that were different. She went to graduate school at the University of Washington, and I went to graduate school in anthropology at UCLA.

I did fieldwork in an Alaska Eskimo village, I did archeology fieldwork in France, and did other things, and then quit because of the civil rights movement, and the poverty program was coming, and moved to Seattle, and worked for the Office of Economic Opportunity in program evaluation, evaluating the Great Society programs in that period. While Llyn was working for the Puget Sound Council.

De Danaan: Well, my fieldwork, though, while you were doing Alaska, we were doing farm labor. I was in farm labor camps in Yakima Valley, and that was the basis for my master's thesis. So, we were doing projects over there, which also dovetailed with poverty programs, and Office of Economic Opportunity, and all of that kind of stuff. Then, I did do evaluations of Model Cities, and New Careers, and things like that. So we were dovetailing in that work.

Diffendal: And we were about the same age at that time. And just before I came to go to graduate school, and what got me to graduate school, was I took a job in social work in Columbus, Ohio. And, as a 21-year-old white woman, had a caseload of 70 African-American families that were either Aid for the Disabled or Children and Young Parents. I realized that it was an absolutely obscene way of social engineering, if you would. So, I wrote a letter, and said that I was going to graduate school, and had hoped that I would be the head of—rather than operate at this level, this entire program in this entire country needed to think about what it was doing, and I wasn't going to participate in that. So, I left, and came to graduate school. That pushed me to graduate school.

De Danaan: She pushed me to graduate school, and I pushed her to graduate school, too.

Diffendal: So, we came from the era of much conversation, and those issues were big.

Koppelman: So, when you say, at the time that part of what was happening for the two of you was recognizing a really important overlap between community service work and community engagement, and institutions of higher education. That sounds like you couldn't think about your intellectual work outside of your community work. Is that accurate to say?

De Danaan: Well, yes. And remember, this is Vietnam War era. I mean, I was on the streets marching. Well, I was at the University of Washington. And the students in our department were sick and tired of being used as teacher aides, and not compensated, and so we went on strike. There was a lot going on. And the rallies on campus were, you know, the people with the guns and the cameras were on top of buildings. It was a tough time all around.

And, yes, opportunities to work in the community, and work in the OEO programs at the time, was really, really critical. I mean, I had worked for Portland State during this period, doing community organization all over Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. So this is all, all of this stuff is going on before Evergreen was born. [laughter] And we knew each other.

Diffendal: How that happened was I was—

Mimms: Well, I didn't know them at that time. I met them—I was very active in Seattle. I was with the Seattle Public Schools. I had started there in 1953, and I was asked to come with the OEO program, New Careers—very active—and Betsy worked for me.

Diffendal: Actually, how we met was I was the head of evaluation for the Office of Economic Opportunity programs, and she was the . . . what was that called? . . . your title at Seattle Public Schools?

De Danaan: Yeah, you were in the schools.

Diffendal: Inter-Group Relations Coordinator for the entire school district.

Mimms: Yeah, Director.

Diffendal: And at that time, when I met you, African-American students were protesting in Sealth High School. And Maxine would go in, and get all the African-American students together in the gymnasium to talk about how to be—

Mimms: Race.

Diffendal: Race, and about how to be effective in school, how to get the most out of school without shooting yourself in the foot, essentially. And she then asked, could I become an evaluator for that Inter-Group Relations program in the Seattle Public Schools, since I was going that way over here. And so, I did do that. So that's how we met, and that would have been 1969.

Mimms: Somewhere in there, yeah.

Diffendal: So we've known each other roughly, well, it'll be 50, 60, however many years that is.

Mimms: A long time!

Diffendal: A long time!

Mimms: And then, I was appointed to be the Assistant Director of the Women's Bureau in the Nixon administration.

Diffendal: In the Department of Labor in D.C.

Mimms: And then was—

De Danaan: I went to Evergreen.

Mimms: Yeah, you went to Evergreen. And I'm back in D.C., and this new college is built.

Diffendal: Yeah, and then I was in the OEO program, and at that point, they wanted to spin off these programs that had just begun in the inner-city, because they'd had a year or two, and they just [unintelligible 00:08:12] local funding. And they wanted me to recommend what to spin off. I said, "I

won't do it." They said, "You're fired." I said, "Fine." So I got fired because I refused to do things that I thought were unethical for the poverty program.

So, I went back to D.C., where Maxine was, and told the Office of OEO that their evaluation was a mess, and that they were doing not good things. And they offered me a job. So, then I stayed in D.C. for two years.

De Danaan: I want to build on the firing thing, because I got fired three times before I came to Evergreen, and it was basically for these kinds of reasons.

Mimms: The thing I don't want Nancy to miss, in telling individual stories, if you could conceptualize, we're talking about true social justice. It was action all the time. Evergreen was not built on theory. It was built on action, and it was built with the experience of people who came and brought this to the [unintelligible 00:09:16].

De Danaan: Which is why it was attractive to go there.

Mimms: That's why it was attractive. So, when we came, us being friends, LLyn recommended me to the—

De Danaan: Merv [Cadwallader]. I told Merv—

Mimms: To Merv, but Mary Hillaire was also back in D.C.

De Danaan: And Mary Hillaire. That's right, because she was hired, but she didn't come to the college the first year. She might have been hired, but she wasn't there yet.

Mimms: But remember, I had been on a board to build the new college. I'd been selected to build the new college, and this college was supposed to have been Southwest University of Washington.

Diffendal: That's right.

Mimms: So when she got Mervyn Cadwallader—Charlie Teske?

Diffendal: No, it was Mervyn.

Mimms: Mervyn came first to D.C.

De Danaan: Absolutely.

Mimms: And recruited me, because I had been recommended—this was years and years—

Diffendal: That was also, we weren't handing in resumes. People were coming—

Mimms: We were recommending people, but it was—the most amazing thing about those early years was everybody had a consciousness of action.

De Danaan: Well, everybody? I don't know about that. I wouldn't go that far. No, I wouldn't.

Mimms: You don't think so?

De Danaan: No.

Koppelman: Say what that means. What does that mean, a consciousness of action?

Mimms: To be, as an African-American woman, and at that time, I was in my forties, it was extraordinarily elegant and glamorous for me to participate. I had just left D.C. D.C. is blacker than black. And the elegance of D.C., the contrast to come and find Birkenstocks and blue jeans, and white people who said to me, to my face, and to, I think, Mary Hillaire, "This is workable." And every day, a part of your suspicion was chipped away. As a black person, my suspicion was chipped away, and I could freely move about an entity that allowed me to feel safe. I don't feel safe up there now, because it's so individualistic, which makes the competition there, so I find nowhere to collaborate.

Koppelman: This is a strange question maybe, but how do you account for that willingness, or that openness?

Mimms: The experience, you cannot be in higher education and have a successful vision, unless many of the white people, the majority of them, should have had some sort of social justice experience. They should have been in some urban areas, someplace without a toilet. They should have experienced something that caused them to be uncomfortable.

And what happened with the model for those of us of color that came, you could be around white people that had been uncomfortable, and there was a miniscule piece where you could have a dialog and feel comfortable, and safe.

Koppelman: That's really interesting.

Mimms: See, it's safety. People don't understand why people of color get upset. When you feel unsafe, you're going to fight for some sort of corner to be safe in. And that was what caused Evergreen to be successful. The atmosphere felt safe, and it felt that you could go to a faculty meeting, or maybe up to the lunchroom or something, and have some sort of dialog. And if you said "outhouse," somebody would remember that they had an outhouse.

De Danaan: . . . would know what you mean. That's right.

Diffendal: Or, you could call somebody. You could call. I think about, it was a very good thing that I had had experience with lots of African-American families in Columbus, Ohio, and realized what all kinds of life situations are, and how people feel. If you have six children in a one-bedroom apartment, and a person is sent in at 21 with a notebook to see if there's somebody under the bed sleeping. I thought, who lives like this?

Mimms: But you had enough sensitive people that squashed the arrogant people. Not that there weren't arrogant people there, but I was protected from them. The sensitive white ones paved the back way for me to meet only the sensitive white people.

Diffendal: Yes, and I think—I guess what I'm trying to say is that it matters that you have—if you're white, and if you've come from a predominantly white schooling and background and traditional academic whatever, and you really haven't had experience that has thrown you off your line in some way, that has put you in a position that you recognize that these are really different realities—there are many different realities—it's very, very difficult to then have a colleague come at you and say, you know, whatever it is. And because, at some point, you learn that these are legitimate points of view that you need to be able to hear, and consider, and think about how to collaborate with, and not fight. And I think that that takes experience. And that's the anthropologist as well.

Mimms: But you all were able to be white, which allowed us to be black.

Diffendal: Well, and we could be white.

De Danaan: And lesbian.

Mimms: Yeah. But it wasn't that much that, it was skin coloring.

De Danaan: No.

Mimms: And when you have skin coloring that is permitted then, I think it makes all the difference in the world.

De Danaan: Well, this is jumping way ahead, but on the other hand, the only men accused of sexual inappropriate behavior were men of color on the faculty. There was a lot of racism that was overt, in my opinion, in the early years of the college. I'm not denying your experience, but I don't share some of your views of the social justice context for the first two or three years.

Mimms: Well, if I romanticized it, I had to. That's the only way I could live.

De Danaan: That's why I say I'm not denying your reality. Mine is a little different. The initial pay scales were different for men and women, and it was a group of women, in the second year of the college, who went in as a protest, and got the faculty scale changed, because of the inequality.

Koppelman: Do you think that the reason why that was able to happen in the second year, for example, is also a function of what Maxine is describing? What you're describing, Maxine, it seems, is that there's a responsiveness. People are listening—enough people—and they're responsive, so that when something comes up that they hadn't thought of—because obviously, people were thinking, well, of course women were going to be paid less than men.

[Crosstalk.]

Mimms: This is what I'm saying. If LLyn, as a white woman, considered me as a human, and ran interference for me, I would have never met what she met. She had already blocked it by the time it came to me. So what happened is my experiences were good, because there probably was that

interference, I'm pretty sure. That's what I meant by they were able to retain their whiteness, but also their social justice consciousness that allowed me to move.

And she said "lesbian and race." That's a strong possibility that the lesbians saw me as a woman. They might have seen me as a black woman, I have no idea. But I do know they ran interference for me, which made my life extremely enjoyable.

Diffendal: Thinking, too, about Mary Hillaire, who I would bring in also. She was the first Native American that was hired, but in the second year I was there, I taught with Mary Hillaire for several years, and was another woman of color who ran into considerable cultural resistance, I would say, by—

De Danaan: I was a dean for three years. You came in the second year, I became a dean the third year. We did a lot of collaborative stuff on external credit, on the Learning Resource Center, on the Ajax Compact—we can talk about that if we want to. So we did a lot of collaborative stuff. We did collaborative stuff.

Mary Hillaire was being really discriminated against is the only way I can say it. Rudy Martin, who was a dean with me—Willie Parson and Rudy and I were deans together, and we always had the overseer, the white male, who was on—and I don't remember who was there, because they kept rotating them in and out, to keep an eye on us. See, I had a different way of seeing this stuff. [laughing]

But Rudy wanted to fire Mary Hillaire, because she wasn't writing evaluations in a timely fashion. Mary Hillaire had a very specific way that she saw that college could serve Native American communities and students. You were on the team. You were on the team when the four of us were in a room together. We just went over this, so correct me if I'm wrong. The four of us got in a room together. I was the bad cop, and I said, "You're going to get fired if you don't do X, Y and Z." Maxine went to her office. She kept office door closed. She said, "My feet are in the sand." She would not come out. Betsy said, "We'll figure this out." Betsy started helping with the evaluation writing, and we saved her. Thank God!

Mimms: There was a public trial, wasn't there?

Diffendal: Yeah, there was like a public hearing.

De Danaan: It was humiliation.

Diffendal: And her reason about not writing evaluations, Mary Hillaire came from the background of social work, and she believed that—and she would say regularly, "I'm not here as a teacher. Western civilization had the entire Greek Classical period to figure out what college ought to be for that culture. I would like to have 20 years with Native people to figure out what it is that college for Indian people

should look like.” She said, “The only person that could evaluate your learning is the person themselves. So, for me to evaluate students is not something that I’m going to do.”

Mimms: But Nancy needs to know this. Mary believed in a parallel system, I would say. I believed in a separate system. I did not believe that I could come and have a parallel bunch of black people there. I wanted it completely separate.

Koppelman: But that’s what Mary wanted?

Diffendal: Mary wanted what she called a parallel system within a system that is designed for Native Americans.

De Danaan: Yeah, and she said that that day that we were all together.

Mimms: That’s right.

De Danaan: She said, “I want to know if this place really is what it says it is, which is an experimental innovative college, because this is what I’m going to do with this opportunity. So really, one of the key things happening at that period was you and Mary really challenging this dominant culture of Evergreen, and saying, “This is what our communities need. And we’re going to do it.”

Mimms: Right. And the beauty of this, Nancy—and I don’t want you to miss this—the beauty of this is LLyn was a dean. You could go to LLyn day or night, and you were protected. And the pathway was cleared by LLyn. For me to have Tacoma, the pathway was cleared by LLyn. Whatever obstacles I was going to go up against, LLyn had cleared them; Betsy had put them together on paper for the white people. I didn’t care. I wanted a separate system. I wanted nothing to do with the kinds of white people that would theoretically reject a concept that I had, and LLyn [let me back? 00:21:41]. So, hm.

Koppelman: That’s the relationship.

Mimms: That’s the relationship. And that is back to something that I’m just really discovering. If you’ve got white people that are making an environment feel safe—I don’t know of the other behind-the-scenes thing—you can move as a person of color. That is exactly true.

De Danaan: That’s true.

Mimms: Because Mary was able to move, because she really knew LLyn was in the deans’ area. That’s interesting. Wow.

Koppelman: Yeah, and come to think of it, when I was a student in the ‘80s, I remember that I had my eyes open to the behind-the-scenes stuff at Evergreen in addition to my classes—so, I was interested in education then—and I remember picking up on this critique in the air of the Native American Studies.

Diffendal: Because it was right there on the campus.

Koppelman: Right. So, I could see it in about 1985. And then, in '86 or something, there was a DTF to review the program. I think York Wong was the chair of the DTF.

All: Yes.

Koppelman: And I got on the DTF, and ended up sitting there just listening. I was a student, so it was quite an education to hear.

Diffendal: See, Mary had died, and Dave Whitener was leading it.

Koppelman: Yeah, that's what was going on.

Diffendal: And it's very tricky, because Mary—there were several things about Native American Studies that—how do you say?—needed running interference with, given the traditional non-traditional things that Evergreen thought they were doing. And one of them was this thing about being on campus, sitting in classes 40 hours a week, or however many hours a week. And also, the Admissions thing, about only 10 percent of Evergreen students could have GPAs lower than a certain point in any given year, and still get admitted to the college.

Well, I spent many hours working with Admissions on getting Native students in with a whole 'nother argument about their needing to be able to get into the college, and see what college is, and begin the process of figuring out what it is.

Mimms: Yeah. Betsy, what I don't want Nancy to miss, and I tried to get this to Gilda, the interference that you, the white women, ran—the few of you that ran it—made the life of those of us of color smoother.

Diffendal: And I would say that we couldn't have run the interference if we hadn't ourselves had experience learning about systems.

De Danaan: That's true.

Diffendal: And the fact that we had done planning, and worked in organizations, and done all this stuff—

De Danaan: Well, we had a commitment.

Mimms: I think so.

Diffendal: A commitment, and also we knew how things worked, and weren't afraid. My thing always was—and I think it mattered that we'd been fired before—I was never, ever afraid to be fired.

Koppelman: I think you just said something really important about not being afraid.

Diffendal: Yeah.

Koppelman: You can't not be afraid anymore unless you were afraid at some point, and had that vulnerability.

De Danaan: This is really interesting.

Koppelman: So that means that it sounds to me like one of the things that you're acknowledging is an awareness on their part, maybe without even having to discuss it exactly, but just a kind of awareness of, in some ways, hidden obstacles, even as people were claiming the obstacles weren't there.

All: Yes.

Mimms: They were white people who took risks.

Diffendal: Well, sort of. But I guess what I'm saying is that the fact that we were not afraid to ever be fired made us also really fearless in that context. Because I wouldn't have cared if I'd been fired. I wouldn't have done the thing if it was against my whatever.

De Danaan: This is really interesting, because I don't think we've ever discussed this. But, yes, so I'd been fired, you'd been fired. It was years before I ever went into debt or took out a loan, because I knew I was going to be fired within five years at Evergreen. And I looked around, it was 30 years, I couldn't believe it. [laughter] But absolutely, I was ready to be fired at any moment, and that was—I don't think we ever discussed that, but that was a perspective that I am going to do what's right, and what's clearly right, and what's just, on this dang campus, and I'm going to—

Mimms: God! That's interesting. Because if I had thought for one moment—I thought they were the strongest people, and I could do anything. I could do anything, and all you had to do is go to the Library—everybody was in the Library—you'd go up the thing, and then you'd say, "Okay." [laughter] What they thought . . . isn't that amazing?

All: Yes.

De Danaan: That's really interesting.

Mimms: People of color could not be safe in an institutional structure, unless the people that are in the leadership—I'll use that—are not afraid to be fired.

Diffendal: I think the other thing that was really important and different is that I think neither of us needed to feel—for example, I learned quickly in Native American Studies that it mattered that the women of color were, in fact, coordinators of the program, were in charge of the program.

Mimms: You all also taught in Tacoma.

Diffendal: Yes, we did, but what I'm saying, at the very beginning, when Mary Hillaire was absolutely in charge of Native American Studies and of that program, it did not make any difference—I did not make any difference whatsoever. And you have to be willing to be, I don't want to say, invisible. But you don't have to front everything all the time. And I think that—I guess what I would say about that is that if faculty are not any longer teaching together in teams, and in very diverse teams—something I was

mentioning in the car on the way over—it's hard for me to imagine how they really get on-the-job faculty development, if you would, in the way that we did in the early years. Because, when I first began teaching with Mary—and I will just give this as a pithy example—I was trained in anthropology, but then I studied Native Americans. Mary said, "We know about Native Americans. You don't have to teach us about Native Americans. What I really hope you can do is to do some fieldwork. We'd like to get into Mercer Island households and do some fieldwork, studying on Mercer Island, in some of the—

[laughter]

Diffendal: This was my—I'm saying, "Well, let's talk about what I might be able to teach." She said, "Well, you don't need to teach about Indians. We're all Indians here." And I said, "Well, wait a minute. I'm an anthropologist. I trained in—" She said, "Well, what I can see you doing is go set up some fieldwork in Mercer Island wealthy households, and let's let the Native students go in, like you go into villages, sit down and take notes. We'd like to do that on Mercer Island."

I thought, oh my god! Oh my god! What am I doing? What are we talking about?

Koppelman: Did you do it?

Diffendal: No. I mean, I was—

De Danaan: you did.

Diffendal: Yeah, yeah. But anyway, that was the era, in the early '70s, where anthropologists were beginning to be self-reflective, just post-colonial. But it came—boom!—like that. And I'm thinking, how the hell am I going to be able to teach? So it was, how do you say, it would have mattered a great deal if I had come to Evergreen and taught alone, and taught what I thought was some radical and interesting anthropology class. Because there was no way on this earth, teaching with Mary Hillaire, that I could teach anything that was even I could vaguely imagine doing.

That's where, I think, that it matters, not only to have interdisciplinary teams, but intercultural, if you would, teams. That's where I think that if students are going to get—I mean, and Mary was a source of authority in that classroom. She was the authority in that program, as you were in Tacoma. And there was simply the perspective you were always—if you were not in that dominant culture—you were always structured. You were thinking.

Mimms: We had to move past each other. We had to have an exchange of personalities. And I've always felt that the model of the deans rotating back to faculty, which was a brilliant model, because you had to learn how to negotiate and compromise in that [unintelligible 00:30:28].

De Danaan: That started from the beginning, by the way. So I rotated into the dean's position my third year. So we were all rotating then. There was no outside hire for the deans in that period.

I don't want to interrupt what you're saying, but I want to make it clear that my agenda was also, as a feminist and as a lesbian, when I got to be the hiring dean, we really had a very specific affirmative action program. We had gotten on the record somehow—I don't know how we did this, because nobody had been challenged yet at the Federal level—but we said, "Our goal is 50 percent female faculty here." And we were way, way, way below that in the first couple of hires. I think there were 50 of us that came in the first year, and then maybe another 50 the second.

But I got to look for people for a cohort of about 30 the next year, when I was dean. And then, I was hiring dean, well, almost three years. And I really, really did a hard job of not just letting those hundreds of applications come in, but networking all over the country for people—women and men of color, and white women—and I am really proud of the people that I got. Joye Hardiman was one that came in . . .

Mimms: Made all the difference.

De Danaan: . . . and I remember flying to Buffalo to meet her in a blizzard. [laughing] Stephanie Coontz. Her mother came in, to me as a dean, and said, "You really ought to hire my daughter." And I got her file started. And, just as an aside—because, yes, running interference—because the day after she was hired, and the news got out, I got calls from the President of the college telling me of the Board of Trustees members who had been calling, and really complaining about me, and whether I should be continuing as a dean. It was very specific critique and threat, because I had enabled this radical to get hired at the college. So that was happening, too, and that's all behind the scenes. And it was kind of interesting to watch how that—

Koppelman: Part of what you're describing, to me, is this tension from the beginning of the college. And I think it's still there, actually, but it has a different form now, of this alternative, experimental college, but it still has all of these kind of conservative aspects to it.

De Danaan: Oh, absolutely.

Mimms: It's not there now. It's not there, because structurally, you have built into the [unintelligible 00:33:19]. You do not have the interchange. You have sciences in the science building, you have artists in the art building. You do not have a Susan Aurand and a Mark Levinsky with somebody in science. And everybody's gone to the group contract mode, and it's just not there.

Koppelman: Well, that's not completely true. But there's less of it.

Mimms: Your buildings are very separate now.

Koppelman: But I mean in terms of the teaching, there's still tension, but not as much as there was.

Mimms: What is the tension?

Koppelman: Between being experimental and alternative on the one hand, but then this conservative critique of you hiring Stephanie, for example. That we don't want this radical here, even though we're kind of a radical college.

De Danaan: I want to tell you—and these two know this—when I became the dean and faculty hiring, I inherited old files, which included all the interviews of people up to that point. There were homophobic remarks written in those things. Brilliant women who were chastised because their tweed jackets were so scratchy, you couldn't get close to them. You got that in your interview.

Diffendal: I got that in my interview.

De Danaan: I mean, there was all this—

Koppelman: Tell that story.

Diffendal: Well, I was interviewing one of the founding faculty about how they did the initial hiring, since they were all white men, 23 white men except for—

De Danaan: Seventeen.

Diffendal: Except for Rudy, there were 23 involved, anyway. And he said, "You know how that is, when you've got a new organization going, and you've all come from different places, you get in touch with people who you know. You get in touch with people that you're acquainted with, and invite them to come; people that you've liked, and you've met in the past." I said, "Well, that must be kind of limited when you're trying to recruit [unintelligible 00:35:11], trying to do something that's really different." He said, "Well, we did invite women, particularly women that would come, for example, to be interviewed in the sciences. They'd come in with these jackets, these tweed jackets, that were cheap, and so scratchy you could cut your hand on them." He said, "They just looked—you know, it was just very [unintelligible 00:35:31]."

De Danaan: They looked like lesbians.

Diffendal: He didn't say that, but—

De Danaan: But that's what—he was very homophobic.

Diffendal: Yeah.

De Danaan: I heard him say lots of—one time, he said, "Oh, we can't let even the first homosexual get into the arts, because you know they take over the whole department." I mean, I had to listen to this crap all the time.

Diffendal: just like anywhere else, because who they—

De Danaan: It was everywhere else, and it was there, too. In terms of this period, and the hiring, and what was in the files, what they did was have their wives interview women faculty who were applying

for positions, and all of their notes were in there. And one of them wrote “I don’t see why we have to hire any women faculty. The wives can take of all the needs of the female students.” That was in the hiring files.

Koppelman: That’s amazing.

De Danaan: So this stuff was—I mean, yes, this was the way it was. It was we were—so that’s why I want to bring in that feminist lesbian, because this was also a social justice issue. And we were trying also to get women in academics into good jobs, where they felt safe, and where they didn’t have to struggle every minute. So I think we were pretty successful with that.

Koppelman: Now, the college has more women faculty than male faculty.

De Danaan: There you go. Well, that was our goal way back when.

Koppelman: And a tremendous number of LGBTQ faculty.

De Danaan: Yes. And, by the way, I was the first one to bring Sally Cloninger to campus. She didn’t get hired then, because she wasn’t looking for a job. But I brought her to campus. You, in Learning Resources, had her do a film workshop. That would have been probably the second or third year of the college, whenever you were in Learning Resource.

Mimms: Oh, yeah.

De Danaan: So Sally came in. I found her through searches, and she came in and did a workshop, eventually, well, you know the story. So, yeah. We’ve had lesbian students tell us that it made all the difference in the world that we were at the college, and we were out, and they knew it. It was on the grapevine: You go to Evergreen, and it’s safe.

Koppelman: Yeah, and from what I understand, Jose Gomez was a really good friend of mine, and you know that he started the first Gay Resource Center at Harvard in the ‘70s, and it was hugely controversial when it happened, a real path-breaking thing to do. There weren’t any others in any other college around the country. In fact, another friend of mine founded one at Duke in 1994. That’s when Duke started having one. So it’s interesting how ahead of the curve you were, but behind the curve, in terms of what you can imagine. This is something we were talking about. You can imagine what was behind that curve.

De Danaan: But I do want to say the male students did have a Gay Resource Center at Evergreen the first year of the college. So they didn’t wait for Jose, they were there in the first year.

Koppelman: Oh, yeah, I know. We were just saying at Harvard, he did.

De Danaan: Oh, okay.

Koppelman: Jose didn’t do anything around that at Evergreen.

De Danaan: No, but it was interesting, the guys were right there right at the beginning.

Koppelman: But I'm just saying, at Evergreen, you could do that. There was a space to say, "Here I am."

All: That's true.

Koppelman: And it sounds like, from what you're saying, maybe like Maxine describes feeling safe, that it must have been the case that in some way, the gay men felt safe enough to also—

Diffendal: Whereas I think it's fair to say that gay male faculty were not out.

All: No.

Diffendal: And the men were not coming out at all.

Koppelman: Probably the gay male faculty are from an earlier generation that was more homophobic.

Diffendal: And worried about their own unintelligible 00:39:27].

De Danaan: Well, I mean, people could still get fired all over the states. The State workers weren't protected. My own program secretary, [Ora Raymond? 00:39:45], had a picture of a man on her desk, because she could have been fired. And we had one fired. [Christie Robinson? 00:39:45] got fired, a good friend of all of ours. Chris, who was in Facilities, she went on the Wildwater Women trip—big girl—

Mimms: Pool shooter.

De Danaan: Yes, she played pool.

Diffendal: That's why she was fired?

De Danaan: Oh, yeah. And we had no recourse. All we could do was do a big auction, and take up a collection. She was out. So it was dangerous.

Koppelman: Let me pause it for a second.

End Part 1 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17

Begin Part 2 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17

Koppelman: So, Maxine, you were just asking me about what goes on behind the scenes nowadays, as opposed to kind of the public face. I think, just like you're describing now, there's plenty going on behind the scenes—that's not in the memos or the e-mails or any of that—to try to help the college meet the way it is interfacing with today's social justice challenges. There's a lot of stuff going on out there in public, but there's also a lot going on behind the scenes, just like when you were there. And it's tricky, and delicate, and hard and risky, just like it was then.

De Danaan: Yes, she played pool.

Diffendal: That's why she was fired?

De Danaan: Oh, yeah. And we had no recourse. All we could do was do a big auction, and take up a collection. She was out. So it was dangerous.

Koppelman: Let me pause it for a second.

Diffendal: I hadn't thought these sort of first [unintelligible 00:00:08] years in my own experience there. That's something that I have felt watching the college now—and it happened pretty soon after the beginning of the college—was that, I think, we had all of the opportunity to do anything. What we had was forms of study. We could do individual contracts, we could do contracts or coordinated studies, and there was the external credit program, and the [great new students experience? 00:01:12]. So, it really was the imagination that was the only thing that might have shut us down.

All: Yes.

Diffendal: And when I got there and looked around, to me, coming from what I came from, the most interesting things that were happening were Maxine's developing something for African-American students in Tacoma, and Mary Hillaire's working with Native Americans. Because I thought, of all the things that colleges are doing in the State of Washington—

Mimms: But the thing—

Diffendal: Just one minute. For me, those two things seemed amazing. And I had no idea where they were going to go, but they were very imaginative. There were other people that were working on figuring out like how to do Molecule to Organism, and reorganizing the sciences and all of that. But I would say within relatively few years, as the Legislature said, "We're running out of money," and Boeing was saying, "We're not going to grow," and all that, there was what I kind of call the phenomenon of variety-reducing behavior; that people themselves put limits on what is possible, sort of.

And I feel like that variable, over the years—ending with the faculty union, I have to say, which I am not excited, because we had as much possible freedom as we could ever possibly have. And I think that kind of need for predictability and variety-reducing behavior quickly—I mean, it was a darn good thing people moved early to start large initiatives.

De Danaan: That's right.

Diffendal: Because if that hadn't happened right at the beginning, I think it wouldn't have happened at all.

Koppelman: Yeah, I think you're right. I also think that having those programs—I know, for myself, because that's not what I wanted to come to college to study, but the fact that those programs were at my college really said something about not only the college as a whole, but about the way all the other programs at the college needed to be thinking about the world.

All: That's right.

Koppelman: So, it just makes the small world of your college different when you have unusual programs, things that aren't happening in many other places in the country, where people are trying

something new, and there's a motivation behind it that's connected to history and the contemporary world. You could feel it when you were a student.

All: Yeah.

De Danaan: And you know what? Just to build on what you said, and you, about starting all those things very early on, we had budgets. As a dean, I had a big budget. I could say to a Sally Cloninger, "Come and do a workshop here," and pay her to do it. I could bring Odetta in for a quarter or a year, or whomever.

And we started, I want to just say a moment about the Ajax, because you were involved in that, too. Mary Whatshername, she was an older, returning student from the Olympia community—white woman—and said to Maxine she thought we should have a program on campus for older, returning women. This is like the third year of the college, because I was a dean. And she said, "I want to help start this thing. I want to get this going."

So, Maxine sent her to me. We got the money together. We started it. And it ran for years, and it was for older, returning women.

Koppelman: What was it called?

Mimms: Ajax.

De Danaan: It was called the Ajax Compact, and it's one complex story.

Koppelman: I've never heard of this before.

Mimms: Yeah, it's lost in history. Charlie McCann one year stood up and called out the new innovative programs that had started. There were 15 of them, and you and I were involved in all 15.

De Danaan: Yeah.

Mimms: I'll never forget that as long as I live. And we didn't even know where to start. I started the lunchroom program there for all the staff.

Koppelman: I put that down. You started the [first aid? First state? 00:05:15] program.

Mimms: The first state program, Ajax program. But what I was trying to say, when Betsy was there—and it really is clear on July 27, 2017—I have no idea about behind the scenes. But I guarantee you that we would have never had that level of crises that occurred. We would have had beginning stages, but somewhere in the midnight hour, we would have been drinking wine and stuff, to respond. [laughter]

Let me tell you what I admired about Evergreen when I first got there. When I had a problem there, they did not talk about hiring someone to put together a committee to study the issue that I was concerned with.

All: No.

Mimms: I was never put off, because the informal—the relations at Evergreen are very formal. You do have to go through a structure and a system. Now, I could talk to LLyn and Betsy 24 hours. We could

have drinks together. There were informal relationships that were developed that became formal that expanded the safety.

There's something about this thing of being safe that really concerns me institutionally now. Because brown and black students all over the country are feeling unsafe in these structures now, and I never experienced that. So when I go to talk about how safe I felt, it's like I'm from some thirteenth century, because it isn't existing now. And Evergreen is, really. The black students that come to this house, and cry on these couches, about how unsafe they feel at that campus makes me know that leadership is dangerous there. I never felt that. And how to get this out, and how to talk about safety.

Koppelman: And this is what's going on behind the scenes, Maxine. Because, in my view—and now [00:07:28] we're not interviewing you anymore, we're talking about what's going on now. You're interviewing me! But in my view, part of what's going on right now is that the leadership and the public voice of the college says a lot of things that kind of pander to certain, for lack of a better word, sort of stereotypes of liberal stereotypes.

De Danaan: Exactly.

Koppelman: And they're well intentioned and all that, but they're not helpful. They're really not helpful, and there's a dehumanizing in that. And I don't think it's intentional either. I think a lot of it is based on fear, and a kind of liberal guilt, and all kinds of things.

Diffendal: Naïvieté.

Koppelman: Definitely naïvieté. I mean, I give most people the benefit of the doubt that they're not intending to be hurtful. But the thing is, that kind of—but there's fear underneath it, and I think that when that's what's motivating people, you can't go—

Mimms: Nancy, take this message back. LLyn, Betsy, Merv Cadwallader—I can just name them—they saw me as a human. That's not going on now.

Koppelman: Yeah. No, I know that that's true.

Mimms: Once you say "I," Maxine is in me, and you make a pathway for me to be safe. When they come out here, 14 and 15 students, I met with some of the leadership. And let me tell you something about women at Evergreen. You say there are more women. There are more people that act like women that have on dresses, but they're male, white women. That wasn't true. There was something about, mm, feminism. There was something about female to female, race to race, age to age. I mean, there was a glamor in the interaction.

All: Yes.

Diffendal: I know what you mean.

Mimms: There was an elegance in being proud to be women.

Koppelman: That's right. And it was almost as if there was just this assumption—I mean, I remember this from the community I grew up in—there was a kind of excitement and dignity, in the sense of, I'm not sure what's it's really going to be like, but I want to be with you. I want to be with you, and I want to figure out what that means. And I'm curious and interested. And I think that now, instead of curiosity

and interest—which is a risky place to come from—instead of that, there’s this kind of, I don’t want to hurt you. I don’t want to make—it’s almost like I don’t want to make you afraid, so I’m not going to challenge you in any way. I’m just going to—because I’m afraid. I’m afraid of—I mean, I’ve heard this from a lot of white faculty, actually. I’m afraid of hurting black people more, so I don’t know what to do. So I think I should just not—

Diffendal: I think that’s very real.

Mimms: What do you mean, you think that’s very real?

Diffendal: Well, I think that that’s an attitude I see out there, that people—

Koppelman: I don’t think she means it’s a good attitude, but that it’s a good description.

Mimms: Oh.

Koppelman: So you have a student, let’s say. You know how you get students who are other people’s students in the past? And so you find out. So I get African-American students, for example, whose faculty have been afraid to respond critically to their writing, because they don’t want to hurt them. I mean, it’s so . . . it’s wrong. It’s just wrong. And the college is failing people when it’s doing that.

Mimms: Well, I think that what I was probably saying about the safety is the whiteness. If you feel that there’s no way to critique, then the dialog becomes dishonest.

Koppelman: Exactly. That’s exactly right.

Mimms: And that dishonesty is going to continue, and it’s corrosive.

Koppelman: And the thing is, I don’t think people ever see it. They don’t even understand that that’s—

Mimms: Nancy, they do see it.

Koppelman: They do? The students—

Mimms: They do! Nancy, let me tell you what Llyn said to me. [This that do see it? 00:11:24]. We can’t do that anymore. There was anthropologist, a female, that was a friend of theirs, and I wanted another faculty. And I wanted an anthropologist on that Tacoma campus, because I loved the feel, the way they explored the outdoor toilet. And I wanted their friend, Karen. And Llyn—they’re close! They’ve been close for 40 years!—and Llyn said it was between [Dumie? 00:11:47] and Karen. Llyn said to me—this is the whiteness, and this is the elegance and the joy of having the friendship—Llyn said, “I don’t think you want Karen. Most of her field experience has been on the Tacoma Mall.” [laughter] I will never—

De Danaan: That’s so bad, but it’s what I said!

Mimms: I’m trying to talk about honesty. [Crosstalk.] This is a 40-year friend. She’s helping me. But her whiteness, her truthfulness, her everything caused a whole society to change. Because I did hire [Dumi], and as a result of hiring [Dumi], a whole bunch of things occurred. But she allowed herself to be a friend, but stay white, whatever that means, whatever that says.

Diffendal: When you use it, there’s a [unintelligible 00:12:43] that you got from your own cultural experience.

De Danaan: You're reminding me of the time—remember when Joye [Hardiman] and Naomi and them had a revolt against me, and struck overnight, and put all these posters up and all this shit? [laughter] And I wrote to Joye and I said, "You put a burlap bag on you and wear it for the next five years!"

Mimms: Don't you think she doesn't remember that? [laughing]

Koppelman: What's this story? I want to know the story of the burlap bag.

De Danaan: Well, the story was like—what's that called when you—

Koppelman: Why'd they strike against Llyn?

Mimms: That was interesting.

De Danaan: See, I wasn't always like—I would do things that people didn't like.

Koppelman: So, what did you do that got you into burlap bag trouble?

Diffendal: It was Susie Strasser and Joye.

De Danaan: And I don't know who else.

Mimms: They did something in the arts department, I'm sure.

De Danaan: It was something to do with, at that point . . .

Mimms: . . . political something.

De Danaan: At that point, coordinated study programs in those days, when I was a dean, we would sit—we would make these big boards with the titles of programs. And then, when we'd choose which programs, the deans would go into a room with a board, and we would assign faculty. The first couple years, the idea was that we would spread out the people of color and women, so that each program would have somebody to represent diversity. [laughing] Well, I think it was something about that. I think it was some program that was chosen or not chosen, and the faculty that had been assigned to it, and they just had had it.

Diffendal: Joye and Susie?

De Danaan: Yeah, but they got a bunch of other people involved.

Mimms: No, it was a strike.

De Danaan: It was a strike, and it was over—

Koppelman: Who went on strike?

De Danaan: Students. Yeah, all the students. And then they had—oh, it was [awfulness? 00:14:38]!

Koppelman: Oh, because it was on—I see.

De Danaan: It was big boosters everywhere! Big posters everywhere! And then Malcolm [Stilson?] wrote a play in which I was the brunt of the big joke. And they put this woman on stage, being me, and just being this authoritarian asshole. [laughter] But Joye was a friend of mine. And I just wrote to her,

and I forget what they call it when they say you have to crawl upstairs, and wear—you know, it's like somebody—

Diffendal: Penance or something.

De Danaan: Penance, somebody doing penance. And I said, “You know, you need to put on the burlap bags, and crawl up the steps of the cathedral.” Something like that.

Koppelman: That's really funny.

De Danaan: It's funny.

Koppelman: Did you think it was funny at the time?

De Danaan: I thought it was funny, but I was also serious. Basically, I'm saying, “You really let me down. We could have talked about that.” I'm like, what happened so overnight? But we did this stuff, and we got over it.

Koppelman: And you got over it. So, this is a different culture now, right? It's hard for people to get over stuff.

Mimms: People came to me. You know, Evergreen faculty on Olympia's campus taught in Tacoma. They would come and say, “Can I be there next year?” So it . . .

De Danaan: Yeah, we all rotated through. Well, not all of us, but many of us did.

Mimms: Yeah, many, many, many.

Diffendal: But I do think there was, how do you say? This really was the first five, six, whatever years.

De Danaan: Yes.

Diffendal: And this variety of [reducing many year? 00:16:15] that I keep kind of alluding to has been startling to watch, because it has something to do, I do think, with this need for predictability. What would happen is we would get put into these programs—people would get into programs—and some of the programs would blow up. And then, it was a mess in the middle of the quarter; everybody would have to reorganize. And the deans would say, “Okay, you have to break this program up. We're going to spread it around.”

So, after that happened for a few times, people—that was one thing. The other thing was we all had to move our offices every year, and move to different buildings, and be near our teams. Eventually, not too long, people got tired of doing that. So, I'm kind of thinking about there are lots of little variables—structural things and systemic things—that individuals don't necessarily see playing out.

Then, at the beginning, there were very glad to get—let's say, they hired more men of color initially. I think about that, and I've written about that here. Men of color on the faculty in the early years outnumbered women of color by a ratio of three to one. In fact, the first year of the college, two of the 12 team-taught coordinated studies programs were taught entirely by men of color.

[One man art? 00:17:34] was taught by a Chinese faculty musician, Hispanic art historian, and a Native American philosopher. The second program, Contemporary American Minorities, was taught by

a black faculty member in literature, Hispanic and Native American faculty with experience with minority education. And the impact and presence of minority males on the faculty was augmented, in the first few years, by hiring several men in staff leadership positions, like [unintelligible], Smith [first name?] and other folks that were—

All: That's right.

De Danaan: Well, was on the faculty.

Diffendal: Yeah, but he also did day advising center. He was the head of the Student Counsel Center. But anyway, that, two, wherever people of color were able to kind of were able to get together, and think together about wanting sort of a deep and wide program might look like quickly disappeared. Then, one black faculty scientist, who was Willie Parson, recalled that not until he taught at Evergreen for 15 years did he teach on a team with even one other person of color. So, there was this mixing; that idea that if you don't have too many people of color, spread them out.

De Danaan: And that's definitely what the deans were doing, very specifically.

Diffendal: Yeah. So then, there's the question about what difference did that make with the development of the idea that there might be something—as was emerging in other colleges, with bigger faculty—African American Studies, or . . .

De Danaan: . . . Women's Studies!

Diffendal: Women's Studies.

De Danaan: Yeah, Stephanie came on, and people immediately wanted Women's Studies, and that was not why she was brought on to the faculty.

Diffendal: Yeah, so in lots of different ways, there were structural things that either pushed people apart, or brought them together, or made it challenging for them to follow this model forever. People began to decide that it was hard to teach with So-and-So, and I really don't want to do that again. Try this, and try that. So, that variety-reducing behavior had that peculiar effect, in a sense.

Koppelman: Well, I guess, when you think about it, at the very beginning of a college, with all those noes, everything has got to be variety, because there's no template. And so it had to be, I guess, that over time, there would be a reduction in [unintelligible 00:19:43].

Mimms: Back to race! If it hadn't been those noes, we would have never been able to enter. It was because of those noes that we could get in.

Diffendal: That's right.

Mimms: Once you have a series of noes, then, when you bring in Maxine and Mary and all, you're just beginning to introduce the yeses, and this, too, can be. The college now has been so full of yeses, it has neutralized my entry.

All: Yes.

Mimms: I will not have [unintelligible 00:20:17]. I will not call—I'm a black person of that generation. I never knew how to call faculty by first name. But you kept deemphasizing hierarchy.

All: Right.

Mimms: [Unintelligible 00:20:31].

All: That's right.

Mimms: So, Mary and Maxine could say, "Hey, I found a whole place over here. I feel safe over here. Oh, no, this." So the competition was sort of small.

Koppelman: Well, it was different, and everybody could find a niche and not be alone in it. That's what I'm hearing you say.

Mimms: Because you could collaborate. Now, we couldn't collaborate.

De Danaan: Yes, because even though we, in the deans' office, were assigning the faculty, if you came in with a proposal the two of you had developed, you're going to be together. It's not like you're—

Diffendal: Yeah, that they won't accept you.

De Danaan: And I've got to say that part of this whole discussion, too, is that, A, the creativity of those trial balloons. I remember huge meetings, all faculty, all of us putting posters up with our ideas for what we might want to teach. People finding each other through that process. It was really fabulous.

All: It really was.

De Danaan: Very creative. And, mind you, remember, we only had three-year contracts at the time.

Mimms: No tenure.

De Danaan: Nobody could look forward necessarily to teaching more than three years. And we were evaluated constantly. Deans came into your program regularly, and wrote evaluations of you; brought you to task [laughing] if you didn't do this or that, which is the [unintelligible 00:21:54] example of Mary. But we really were all doing something like that. We were really keeping—and then, we mentored. We did a lot of mentoring at the same time, to help people who were having problems.

All: We did.

De Danaan: So, in spite of the flaws that I perceived, there were a lot of wonderful things going on. Very creative, very robust. There was a lot of divorces!

Mimms: Because there were a lot of passionate times outside of that.

Diffendal: There were a lot of divorces. No, there was.

De Danaan: So, all this was blah blah blah blah blah. [laughing] It's exciting! I'm glad you agreed to do this, because this era is—I mean, we can't replicate it, we can't remove it. But this is a little bit of what it was like.

Mimms: I've said this to George. What just happened, if we could relax, was a gift to us.

Koppelman: If we can relax.

Mimms: Just relax, it's a gift.

De Danaan: Absolutely.

Mimms: What just happened with the students and all the da da da da, and suing and all that, it's a gift. Because now, we're in the second season of Evergreen's growth, or the third season, I don't know what season it is. But we can build from wherever it is, but you have to have a vision and planning team. We don't know another—I'm so sick of them hiring people. The worst thing on earth is they have hired a black woman as an equity and inclusion person. And all she's going to turn into is a collector of data. And it's going to be so painful. And she's going to be ostracized, because the black students are not going to want that. And you've got all of these promises that have been planted.

But, if we can get a vision and planning team—vision and planning, just together. Don't look for any solutions, just look for some conversation.

Koppelman: I just want to go back, because what we're doing is an actual oral history. That being said, looking at a way forward, I think about kind of going to the faculty end of it. In my own experience in teaching, I think that I've had some conversations lately with Jolene Unsoeld—interesting conversations about who the students are now versus who they were then. Then, there were many older students at the beginning of the college. And now, there are younger ones.

And I think about this whole question, for me, of faculty development is, in fact, what impacts students' experiences so much, in addition to what they do when they're in the dorms later. But I remember teaching in Tacoma, and thinking about they were primarily older African-American retired military and women. And I will never forget that when Raymond . . . what's his name, one of the older students there? . . . every week—the thing I learned quickly is that when you're teaching in various communities, you need to know what people in those communities are paying attention to, and care about. So, it does matter which students are sitting in front of you, and where they're from, and what they know, and what their life experience has been. So, unless you're either drawing that out in the way you're teaching, or, as you're giving examples—and I tend to give examples and vignettes when I teach—I realized that I needed to read—if I was going to teach in Tacoma—*Jet* magazine and *Ebony* magazine regularly.

So these two guys would bring me *Ebony* and *Jet* every week, and I read every single bit of it, because we're teaching about culture, and how culture works, and we're looking for hidden histories and culture and this and that. And if all the examples that you have are your own examples from, you know, whatever—*17* magazine and whatever—or the only academic literature that you cite were written by the 5,000 Europeans, and there was never an African-American psychologist, or—

De Danaan: Or there was one.

Mimms: Yesterday, there were 100 brown/black kids. The presentations of Upward Bound, Joye, Stone [Thomas] and I were there. Not one Evergreen person was there. And if you ever want to see old Evergreen, that's what it was. To see those—

Koppelman: Was this the event that you just had?

Mimms: Up in Tacoma, yeah.

Diffendal: Upward Bound, [Making Connections? 00:26:42].

Mimms: To see what happens in an urban community, to see the youthfulness, to see the beauty and elegance. And when they come here—when they come here to see the very [Lawrence? 2657] who raised all that hell, to see [America?] being honored by vice mayors and all that, to see the difference between just this highway, and how they act on Olympia’s campus compared to how they acted—just blows me away.

Koppelman: What do you make of that, Maxine? Because I know all those students you just described. [America], she was my student, and I adore her.

Mimms: And you know what MIT did? A lot of those students that did that organizing and blah blah blah, they’re going to MIT.

Koppelman: I know. I wrote a letter for [Chamerica? 00:27:34].

Mimms: Do you hear me? And let me tell you how smart MIT was. See, this is when you’re clever, and understand, MIT said, “If they can take down the college, they sure can build up an institution.” And they’re in. It’s just good.

But what happened yesterday, we don’t participate. I don’t know what it is anymore. I don’t know.

De Danaan: But . . . but . . . well, I don’t know what to say about that.

Mimms: I don’t either.

De Danaan: But in the first years—again, I’m not into romanticizing that period—it was very hard to get people who had been hired to teach at Evergreen to do anything in the community locally. I mean, it was years.

Koppelman: And that’s not the case now. There’s tons of stuff going on.

De Danaan: That’s what I’m saying. Yeah, that’s true.

Koppelman: Lots and lots.

De Danaan: But it was noticeable.

Mimms: Because it used to be Carolyn Dobbs and her husband [who is this?]

De Danaan: It was noted, and noticeable . . .

Mimms: Interesting.

De Danaan: . . . that people didn’t mix with other people.

Diffendal: Town and gown.

De Danaan: Yes, that’s the old saying.

Koppelman: But it’s not the case anymore.

De Danaan: Well, we’re doing the oral history, right?

Koppelman: Hundreds of internships in the community, and lots of programs that are community based.

De Danaan: I'm not talking about internships. I'm talking about faculty . . .

Koppelman: But, I mean, community-based—

De Danaan: . . . involvement in the community.

Koppelman: Well, yeah. Lots of faculty do all kinds of things.

De Danaan: Well, I have to tell you, I still don't see a lot at the kind of meetings I go to, including the anti-race meetings that I've been to in Olympia. I see very few faculty. So, I don't know. But we're doing the history. I'm going back to the first years of the college, and so I can't talk about who does what now.

But I can say that we were not people who were out engaging with the local community. In fact, there was this [did she make a hand gesture?] with the local community for years . . .

Mimms: [Unintelligible 00:29:29] Tacoma campus, too.

De Danaan: . . . and certainly the whole time that I was a dean, we were fending off—when they introduced this bill this last Legislative session, I mean, welcome to the club. [Transcriber: What was this bill?]

Koppelman: I know.

De Danaan: That happened all the time in the early '70s.

Koppelman: And I think one big difference now is that here, Evergreen's been here for over 40 years, so at least the town of Olympia has been completely changed because of Evergreen.

De Danaan: Absolutely.

Koppelman: There are so many businesses, and people working in the state, who are Evergreen graduates, so I think there's not that hostility.

De Danaan: We had the supporters, but there was a lot of hostility initially. People would get accosted in the street. Joye—when the young men were shot here, and we went to the meeting at the Temple that night that they were shot—told me something I didn't know, which is she had been picked up by Olympia Police, just walking down the street, when she was teaching down here. Joye, of course, fled to Tacoma because of the racism she was experiencing on the campus, and the discrimination. Willie [Parson], the same thing. Willie got out of the main campus.

Mimms: See, this is very helpful for me . . .

De Danaan: This is true.

Mimms: . . . because I must have had a hell of a lot of support. Because what Joye and Willie and a bunch of them tell me from [unintelligible 00:30:52], I left and went there, so I don't know. And, as I said, the pathway for me caused me to feel safe.

De Danaan: Well, I'm not denying that. I'm just saying there were other things happening, too . . .

Mimms: Sure.

De Danaan: . . . which were a huge loss, for many reasons—theater and music and science, for example.

Koppelman: You know, one problem—and I've thought this for many years, because I grew up in the New York area, in a super-diverse community. And when I came out here, one of the first things that struck me was how white it is, how Christian it is, and how ignorant it is of the fact that that's the way it is. In the first month that I was here in 1983, I heard so many weird racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, what are called micro-aggressions now. So, not overt prejudice, but just this sort of ignorant, stupid remarks.

All: Yeah.

Koppelman: And now—I'm curious to know what you think of this—part of what Evergreen has tried to do is to engineer a social world, consciously engineer it. Whereas, where I grew up, it wasn't engineered consciously, it was historically engineered by fiat, and disaster, and hope, and people migrating, and people emigrating.

De Danaan: Very, very good point.

Koppelman: So, at least my school was a third black, a third Jewish, and then the other third was half Irish and half Italian. So, it was just a super-mixed place. And, you know, it was just the way you grew up.

All: Exactly.

Koppelman: And here, people just—at least in Olympia, and a lot of people who come to work here, I think, also, have been [unintelligible 00:32:38], at least more than the first year. Because a lot of those people were working-class people, who grew up without houses, and came from poor families, at least a good handful of the founding people. So, I don't know. Now, we're trying to engineer something, and so it's hard to know how to do it right.

De Danaan: That's a really good point. And, by the way, I've always thought there is this issue—and I remember one President that we interviewed where this really came out to me dramatically—that people who are staff, historically, as opposed to faculty, have come from the local community, because they're, what you call it, the government . . .

Koppelman: Classified status.

De Danaan: Classified, thank you. So their culture is different from the faculty culture.

Koppelman: That's right.

De Danaan: And we used to do a lot of things. We'd have softball games together, we went on boating trips, we did a lot of [crosstalk 00:33:44] faculty women and classified women.

Mimms: And the President participated. Remember when we went to Canada, and they sent [16 flowers? 00:33:52]? [laughter]

De Danaan: This was a conscious effort to break through some of that privilege that faculty had as opposed to classified [unintelligible 00:33:59]. But, classified have always gotten to vote, or meet with, or put in their say on who's getting hired in terms of directorships, in terms of, in terms of Presidents. And that has made a difference in terms of who gets hired, so that you continue to have a much more conservative, much more narrow perspective, in terms of how staff are hired.

Mimms: Interesting.

De Danaan: Now, I don't know if this is still the case, but I observed it many times. And one of the times was it was really totally overt. There was this brilliant woman who happened to be from New York, and happened to be Jewish, who had applied for the presidency. I saw what the staff members said and wrote about her.

Koppelman: How long ago was that?

De Danaan: Oh, god, I don't know. Probably . . . oh, geez, I don't know.

Koppelman: Was that in the '80s sometime?

De Danaan: It probably was in the '80s.

Koppelman: So, I think I know exactly who you're talking about. I can almost remember her name.

De Danaan: They said, "She's too Jewish."

Koppelman: I remember.

De Danaan: "She's too New York. Her skirts are too short." And that was—damn, that was the end of her. But that came from the staff side. So, how many times those kinds of like sense of [unintelligible 00:35:15].

Koppelman: It's there all the time, so this is also part of a question, where you all knew—right?—that here you were at Evergreen. You weren't shocked to discover these things. It's in the world.

De Danaan: Right.

Koppelman: It's at Evergreen. This is what we deal with. Nowadays, I think students are really shocked when they see and hear these things. And they have no tolerance. And I think it makes them feel very unsafe, and they have a different perspective about the ugly side of the human animal.

De Danaan: Yeah, because they've seen—they have a vision. They have bought into the vision that goes out into the public arena.

Mimms: If you're 18 years old, and black, living anywhere in the world, you have had Barack Obama and Michelle Obama as leaders for the last eight years. You were 10. You know nothing but an elegance. And you have had a Beyoncé who's wealthy, and Jay-Z who's wealthy, and you've seen that level of money, you're not going to try to compromise if the promises are so far that you can't believe they will happen.

See, we're not considered human. You've got to have a white person to say, "That's human. That's a mistake," or, "That's a good plus." But that's a human. That's me. That's me. I'm Maxine, I'm

Betsy, I'm Llyn. And unless that happens, forget it. What you have at Evergreen now is a structural separation. You're buildings. You have a building named after Les Purce, and a street after Charles McCann. You begin to look at that kind of thing and say, look how they treat each other.

Koppelman: And a rec center named after [Magda] Costantino.

Mimms: You look at that and you think [crosstalk – the drawer? 00:37:18].

Koppelman: And you think what? I wanted you to finish your thought.

Mimms: What was the point in being a President? All you have to be is just a name, and whoever hustles to get the most money. So, you talk about that behind the scenes, and you don't have any respect for the Director of So-and-So. You have a Purce, and a roundabout with McCann, that's not too cool.

Diffendal: But I also will say, kind of on the more local level of being 18, and just living in Tacoma and never choosing to live in Olympia because it is so white, that if the kids are coming down here are from Tacoma, their school life looks really different than their seminars look. What they've been doing at Mount Tahoma and Lincoln and all of these other schools every day—with other white people, with other diverse people, and Cambodians, etc., and having now some of these amazing teachers that they've got, and excellent programs that they've got—stepping from that into a pretty white seminar at Evergreen, taught by two white guys, or a white guy and a white woman, suddenly sitting there. I mean, our experience—and this is where I go back again about choosing faculty based on straight academic hoo-hah and not requiring—even MIT doesn't allow students in that don't have multicultural experience in their background before they're even allowed in the program. I have to say that if these students—and I go back to what your curriculum looks like, what your expectations are—if these kids have grown up in Tacoma High School and come to Olympia, it looks as weird to me as [unintelligible 00:38:58] does to me.

Mimms: But, you see, the brilliance of black and brown students, as you know when you're [lying? 00:39:04], this uprising had nothing to do with race, ostensibly. But you had a [Michael] Zimmerman—now, these are black students in my house talking about the analysis of what happened—you had a Zimmerman, who was fired by a George Bridges, a George Bridges who came from Whitman. Zimmerman hates George Bridges. All right? We're not even talking about truth or facts, we're just talking about gossip, and gossip can turn into whatever.

And Bret [Weinstein] is a friend of Zimmerman's. So it was those two guys wanting to get Bridges. And it just so happened, at this particular time, race came in. So, race became it. Bret took race blah blah blah.

Diffendal: Who? I don't even know who that is.

Koppelman: He's the guy, Weinstein, who [unintelligible 00:40:01].

Diffendal: Oh, that guy.

Koppelman: Okay, that's a good moment to take a pause.

End Part 2 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17

Begin Part 3 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17

Koppelman: All three of you are contributing just a ton. This is the kind of thing that's unusual, because most of these interviews, as you know—because I think you're the only one in this group that has done an interview—

De Danaan: That's right.

Koppelman: And it was about, and your experience, and you, you, you.

De Danaan: That's right. But this is what we've been doing all our lives, all of our adult lives.

Diffendal: This is what it is! This is who we are!

Koppelman: This is important, because part of what this interview is doing, I think, is it's illustrating something that you're saying about your Evergreen experience, which is it wasn't just individuals.

De Danaan: No, it was absolutely collaborative.

Mimms: Absolutely.

Koppelman: And I think that's true for a lot of people. But to have an interview where you can kind of see the values that you share coming out, and seeing you share them right here—40, 50 years later—it's really fascinating to see.

All: Right.

De Danaan: Really fascinating for me to see, too! [laughter]

Mimms: Fascinating, and you know they'd better get me, because I'm at the end of my rope. I'm 89, I'll be 90 in March, and you'd better get me while I can remember my name!

De Danaan: And I'm still younger than you are. I know, you used to tell me I'm catching up with you.

Mimms: But you never caught up with me.

De Danaan: Yeah.

Koppelman: Be careful what you say, because I might come back. [laughter] But what I'm really interested to hear from you is, because I think that you have a kind of collective wisdom—that's not just brain wisdom, it's heart wisdom—that's about experiencing things together, and living through them; getting mad at colleagues, and then making up.

All: Yes.

Koppelman: Conceding the need for white allies, who are not going to be perfect, but you know the way the world works, so you recognize it. And you keep using the word, Maxine, I think it's really interesting that you use the word "elegance," many times, to describe a kind of rising. What I hear in that word is a rising to the occasion for a purpose that you share.

Mimms: Yes.

Koppelman: And that's not usually what I think of when I think of elegance, but that's what I hear you saying. And I wonder what we can do now to be elegant in that way, to rise in that way . . .

Diffendal: That's very important.

Koppelman: . . . and have something shared. Because what I hear a lot—and it's not just from the students, it's from the faculty and staff, too—there's a lot of mistrust, and just a difficulty in seeing, well, what are we rising to together?

Mimms: It's entirely the mistake is it's entirely too white. And I'm not talking about going out and hiring people of color. I'm saying you have many people of color—students, very few faculty. We have to think of a creative way, not to dock them, but to utilize them in very meaningful apprenticeships or internships. We need to become the internship site for the world. We need to look at the German model, where the [unintelligible 00:03:17] vocational and liberal arts together. We need to see liberal arts and urban something, or race and pedagogy. I don't know what we can say, but we need to find an elegant piece of language, where the participation is at a [unintelligible 00:03:09] level. And always remember, with brown and black people, you're talking about ascension. It's always rising. It's always rising. It's always the lifting up.

We're at that point with 2017. What do you offer black and brown students? I saw a group of Hawaiian students yesterday—they performed, they'd been practicing—having taught two overweight African-American girls—16, they were twins—how to do the hula. Not one child laughed. They applauded. They did.

De Danaan: But, you know, I thought you were actually going to say that the faculty [were made to have? 00:04:24], and I thought, that's brilliant. But what you talked about the students perceiving is the lack of responsibility on the academic side. And you know what Chairman Mao did? Chairman Mao sent the intellectuals out to the farm. And I wonder if that couldn't be somehow modified.

Koppelman: There's some equivalence, but not exactly. [laughter]

De Danaan: Because that, to me, is like the brilliant idea, is to get that faculty to have experiences that are going to make a difference in how they perceive their students and the world. How can we do that?

Koppelman: That's a really good question.

Diffendal: This is about anthropological fieldwork. I just have to say, it's really—

De Danaan: Well, you and I had that.

Diffendal: But what I mean is if you don't have any experiences other than those very narrow academic, and whatever your non-ethnic whiteness brought you, or whatever, you can't even imagine it. You've got no place to get it. And I think that that idea of—

De Danaan: Yeah. What's the average age of the faculty now? Do we have a clue? Because I'd like to think about their lives as well.

Koppelman: Probably mid-forties. There are a lot of people with kids now, again. There's like another round of that.

De Danaan: And that makes a difference in terms of how much time—I mean, we were like—Merv thought we should all live on campus and be like a commune, or a coven, or a something. You can't do that when you have a family. But look at what was happening 40 years ago, when they were born? Think of it. What was happening 40 years ago?

Diffendal: We're about 2020, so that was 1980, late '70s.

Koppelman: The Vietnam War was ending, and then Watergate.

De Danaan: Increasingly suburbanization, increasingly more separate lives. There's got to be something in there, some way to think about working—

[Crosstalk 00:06:33].

Mimms: That's right. You're right.

De Danaan: Life experience, place in life, and how to somehow provide experiences that would feel different, would get them into a real different perception of themselves and of each other. I don't know the answer, but I think it's a good question.

Diffendal: The other thing I think about in students and faculty relations is, in those early days, because there weren't a lot of buildings built, faculty have had students in their homes a lot, and they would meet informally lots of different places. That informality, that—

Koppelman: You know, I tried to do that, and I tried to get this group to meet at my house this coming week, and they didn't want to do it.

Mimms: No, no, no! Nancy, stop this. No! They did want to do it.

Koppelman: Yeah, I know they did.

Mimms: They just didn't do it at that time. But you don't stop.

Koppelman: No, I know you don't stop. It just made me sad that they didn't want to.

[Crosstalk 00:07:35.]

Diffendal: I guess what I'm saying is how students may know faculty now—when it's more formal, and the programs are more structured, and they're more structured and all the rest of it—also can be off-putting, in the sense that it's very difficult. And then you get faculty that are sort of introverted by nature running seminars that nobody's teaching or talking about; no one's looking at their teaching, or knowing what they're teaching.

De Danaan: But they have to come to that understanding, not be told that you're an introvert, and you're this and you're that. How can you structure an experience? Remember, we talk about—we used to talk about—theory, experience, theory, experience.

Diffendal: Absolutely.

De Danaan: So how do you get the experience for the faculty that they are going to have these kinds of conversations with themselves and each other, and come to these realizations themselves, not because someone tells them that they're not doing it.

Koppelman: Well, it seems like you need a \$3 million faculty development grant.

De Danaan: Oh, yes! There you go!

Koppelman: You need to be able to create—I'm just fantasizing—

[Crosstalk 00:08:39.]

Koppelman: You need that, and you people to learn how to enjoy being challenged by others, and to enjoy being uncomfortable.

All: Yeah.

Koppelman: And I think that that's really not something that people are—

Mimms: Well, Evergreen did something without the \$3 million grant. There were many faculty meetings on the Tacoma campus.

Diffendal: Well, I've brought pictures.

Mimms: We served food. The faculty came up and [unintelligible 00:09:15] and they ate with the community.

Diffendal: And we were at [unintelligible 00:09:16] Grill. I'm just trying . . . visuals.

Mimms: The Board came up. We did it often. Often. You could go up to the Tacoma campus, or we would have all kinds of things just doesn't require money.

Koppelman: No, but it requires a will, and a desire, to connect.

Diffendal: It does.

Koppelman: And I'm trying to figure out how to try to cultivate that desire to connect when, I think, people are wondering what's—

Mimms: Well, you said they're younger.

Koppelman: Yeah, they are.

Mimms: And we have to look at that.

Diffendal: And they're busy with children.

Mimms: Why isn't once a month, or once a so-and-so, you would have a family day? School is closed down for families. Children are brought to the campus, or to a baseball game. Why can't Evergreen do what Boeing and all of the rest of them do? They have family days.

All: Yeah.

Mimms: Why can't you have family festivals once a quarter—a summer/spring festival, a winter festival. All of those things would be—and you put together a festival committee, and festival DTF, and you bring families in.

Koppelman: Here we get back to the elegance challenge, the challenge of the kind of elegance you're describing. You've got to be able to see beyond differences—all kinds of differences, including political differences. My own feeling is that the campus is very fractured by political differences, and by perceived differences.

De Danaan: I'm sure that's true.

Koppelman: The one percent where we disagree blows us apart. One of the saddest things about this whole Bret and Naima [Lowe] situation is I think that Bret and Naima would be marching in most of the same marches—I know both of them; I know Bret better than Naima—but the culture of the campus is very fractured.

Mimms: Yeah, but look at what we just said. We look at both of them. I've been in education a long time, and they were both neglected. They were both ignored as younger people.

Koppelman: Yeah, yeah.

Mimms: And what they asked for, and as a colleague, if LLyn said to me, "I didn't know anything about higher ed being isolated." These are my friends, but if LLyn said to me, "I'm having some challenges with my brother. Let's talk about it." And we would talk informally. I would find ways to find other people who had challenges with their brothers to [unintelligible 00:12:06] talk about brotherly hatred. You know, we would set it up. I wouldn't have to say, "LLyn, I'm getting some [others]." We'd just set it up, and we'd just [unintelligible 00:12:15].

De Danaan: [Unintelligible 00:12:16.] We had talks like this all the time. [laughter]

Mimms: And LLyn would get a chance to talk about her brother. And what you have to declare, when this occurs, is sacred space. The space has to be declared—

De Danaan: There's all kinds of problems with doing that kind of stuff. It does come down to the will and leadership, because there are many—you know, I have actually two cousins who work for Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, and she was describing some of the things they're doing with diversity at Procter & Gamble.

Mimms: Oh!

De Danaan: For crying out loud. The corporations are doing—

Koppelman: They're way ahead of us.

De Danaan: So, I mean, is it possible to look at some of these models? Get some people to come in and teach about how they're doing this in corporations where, of course, they don't all agree politically, of course they don't have—but they're finding ways to—you know, she was getting ready to go to a transgender . . . and they have, like once a month, they have an intentional diversity groups, and inviting other people in and they dialog. They're doing this at Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, for Chrissakes? I mean, it's like we've got to look a lot more broadly than this little universe.

Koppelman: That's very good advice.

De Danaan: Yeah, I think so. I just was blown away by my family.

Koppelman: Here's one other maybe one last question, because we've been at it for a while. I mean, I could go on for hours and hours.

Diffendal: We're used to doing this!

Koppelman: But one thing that I'm really interested to know—I think because one of the things that made me want to become an Evergreen faculty member myself was observing the kinds of bonds that I saw in the faculty teams that I learned from. And I thought, wow, this is the kind of bond I want to have with people, just to be learning from people who know things I don't know, and who are really curious, and who appreciate curiosity in students, and who care about the world and want to imagine a better world. All those things. What better life could I imagine for myself than to do that? I didn't know if I would be able to, but I just was knocked out, from the outside looking in, it just looked like such a rich life. And clearly, it's been that for you all.

All: Absolutely.

Koppelman: And I guess one thing that you could also give, I think, to people, in talking about that, is just, well, how has that—you've talked about it a lot, but how, in that you haven't talked about it, has that collaboration not just enriched your life, but how has it grown your life? In other words, I know all three of you have these orbits of people around you from your professional lives over the years. And so you've watched students graduate, and go on and retire themselves some of them, probably, by now. It's a very rich thing to have given that to others, but also to recognize that you didn't do it yourself, you depending on each other to do it.

All: That's true.

Koppelman: So maybe just a few words in response to that kind of image. Because, to me, that was a real [unintelligible 00:15:36].

Mimms: I still feel safe because LLyn is my neighbor.

De Danaan: We've been neighbors for 45 years.

Mimms: She blows the horn to let me know she's here. I leave on a certain light so she can tell—she has a key to my house. I still safe. So, not knowing that was going to happen, but the enriching experience of being with her at Evergreen—I'm going to use that—also makes for a rich neighbor. I don't even think about being alone, or lonely, or any of that. She's LLyn. All of my friends, they'll say, "LLyn's got a new car." They just know. I don't know who she is. I know she lives next door, and that's called a neighbor, and I guess that is—but whatever that is, it is. You know?

Betsy, I was her child's nana, which would be a very, very, very strange thing. And I remember Richard Alexander, being from Georgia, said, "Are you the mammy or the nana?" And I said, "Whatever you want to do, you bastard."

Koppelman: Whoa.

Mimms: It doesn't matter. See, none of this matters.

Koppelman: I know it doesn't, but still.

Mimms: See what I'm saying?

Koppelman: Yeah.

Mimms: And we became close friends.

Diffendal: Yeah, we still talk on the phone every day. Every day. So it's kind of—

Mimms: That's interesting.

Diffendal: Yeah. But I think the other thing I can say, having retired from working in that way all those years, is that I miss teaming. I find it really unusual to not always collaborate on things. And so I have sought out like an art group that we meet every—and I just need the synergy in the room with me to do what I think is fun work. And I find it . . . I don't know, I love teaming. And I don't have to be talking all the time, but I like of people who I know are thinking things that I care about, and that kind of feeling.

Mimms: And this is another thing for Evergreen that you all need to understand. The reason I have to keep saying this is because the artificiality of whiteness is so real. But you are not intrusive. You know what I mean? Whiteness is intrusive into your personal being yourselves. And you don't know what to do with it, you just strike out. But you're not intrusive, and I don't know whether that's a style [from Nancy? 00:18:37]. I don't know what it is.

Diffendal: I don't know what it is either, but as it's played out in life, I guess I would say that the fact that we collaborated, and that I realized that you get a lot more out of things by not just doing it on your own thing; that my comprehension of the human condition, and whatever one might call anthropology at this moment, or the fact that I traveled now all over the world since I've retired, every year, every minute. I've been to Uzbekistan, Russia, Egypt, this, that, and I am thrilled at the breadth that this experience has let me have in one lifetime.

And if I had been as [unintelligible 00:19:24] [Jerry Schulinbacher? 00:19:24], who taught psychology in the TCC Bridge program that we developed with Tacoma Community College, when he taught at the Evergreen Tacoma campus with me, it was so thrilling. We taught with a Chinese man who was teaching Chinese history, and Jerry was teaching psychology, and I was doing anthropology. And he said, "The idea that I have to go back." He said, "I realized that before I retire, I'm going to have to teach Psychology 101 by myself 47 more times." He said, "I don't think I can do that. I never, ever thought about that before. But until I had this experience, I don't think I can go back and just teach Psych 101 47 times alone in the classroom."

So, that kind of a feeling, which I don't think I would have had if I'd been teaching at—and I don't think I would have had a career in education in higher ed if I'd been teaching Anthropology 101. I would never have done it. A, I wouldn't have signed up for it. My mind isn't structured that I want to repeat myself a lot. And I don't think I could have ever possibly done it as a career.

Mimms: [Unintelligible 00:20:32].

Diffendal: Well, I like to get things started, or I like to explore new things. But the idea of teaching Anthro 101 over and over again, I don't think I could do that.

Koppelman: Maxine just said something really interesting about the two of you, I think. You said, "Whiteness can be intrusive, and it is intrusive psychologically, and in your soul it's intrusive," but that you are not intrusive. And you said something earlier, too, about being seen as a full human being.

Which is such a cliché, but it's not at all a cliché, it's a real thing. I think one of the things you're really putting your finger on is what a subtle, fragile thing it really is. It's a subtle, fragile thing, and it may be that you can't even describe the nature of it, just seeing someone else as a full human being who's different than you.

All: Yes!

Koppelman: Because it works both ways. I mean, it's you seeing them as well, beyond the intrusive, what would be intrusive otherwise. I wonder if you could say a word or two for people who do feel so intruded upon now by the otherness of others, partly out of fear and ignorance. I honestly don't think it's out of kind of garden-variety prejudice. It's out of something else.

De Danaan: Okay, now I'm . . . I'm still thinking about the question about collaboration.

Koppelman: I'm sorry.

De Danaan: That's okay. I'm just sort of saying to you.

Koppelman: We're sort of having five topics at once.

De Danaan: I'm just saying, same to you. Thank God you're my neighbor. Maxine knows that I, too, find whiteness intrusive.

Diffendal: I do, too, actually.

De Danaan: And I'm not ashamed to say this, but I'm delighted to say it. I have lost friends—white friends, white women friends—because I cannot bear it sometimes. Therefore, I am not a good person to try to figure out how you talk to those people, because I don't talk to them very well. I mean, something happened yesterday, and it's just . . . I think it's part of the reason why I live alone. It's part of the reason why I'm a little bit on the edge of a lot of dominant white life. I mean, I'm just not part of it.

And part of that is because, I mean, I have been a lesbian all my life, and the angle of approach—Monique [unintelligible 00:23:19] wrote about this years ago, the notion of angle of approach. When you're—well, bell hooks, the whole notion of having to be bilingual, having to move in and out of a culture. I mean, if everybody could understand that alone, the bell hooks idea of margin to center, it would help, because all of us who are not necessarily a part—whether we're visible or not—of the dominant culture, go through life every day with some kind of crap being put in our faces. And it's just easier to live down in the woods. [laughter]

I am absolutely honest about this. And some of my friends don't like me to talk this way, but it's really true. We see, we see the world from a different angle. And just, I have been in despair most of my life at some level. And certainly, in the last couple of years. So I don't know.

Koppelman: I wasn't just talking about the white people. I was talking about the students, too.

De Danaan: I know. The students, too.

Koppelman: How can they—because they can't afford to live in the woods.

De Danaan: No, I know! I don't recommend it, by the way.

Koppelman: So, for them to be able to—because now, you look back, and you can see, yes, there have been changes in the world, but we’re nowhere near where we need to be.

De Danaan: No!

Koppelman: And when these students are your age, my age, they’re going to be saying a similar thing.

Mimms: Nancy—

De Danaan: They are going to be powerful, and they’re going to be leaders.

Koppelman: You were powerful, and you were leaders. So, things are going to change, but idealists are always going to envision a better world.

De Danaan: Yeah. And I still get out there. I’m into all kinds of groups, and leadership things, and boards, and everything.

Koppelman: So their kids are going to envision a better world.

De Danaan: But it does physical things to you. It does physical things. So what would I say to them? I’d say take care of your health. Watch your blood pressure. Stuff like that. Really practical how-to-stay-healthy in a world where you’re going to be embattled no matter what.

Koppelman: How do you figure out who to trust?

De Danaan: Oh, god.

Diffendal: I always think, Maxine, what you said when Mark Levinsky came to the Tacoma campus. And then I also think about when those African-American students were quote “rioting,” or whatever it was, at Sealth High School all those years before. The idea that this person knows something that you need to know, and that it is not going to help you with your idealism, and learning how to manage the world, if you shut down and turn off that person, who has got something—the secret, if you would—the secrets that you need to know in order to be able to become the next African-American President.

I think about this as a parallel with Mary Hillaire and the Registrar’s office and Admissions, you know, the only thing that I could really offer there was an understanding of how the system worked, and a pile of arguments that white people would have to listen to because they were logical, about ways that we could do this, and get more students in. And when, finally, I was teaching in Native American Studies—

Koppelman: More students in general, or more Native American students?

Diffendal: More Native students, who didn’t have a 3.5 average coming in from these schools where they were. And you said about Mark Levinsky teaching logic, that there’s something that he knows about people’s thinking.

Mimms: I have an obligation. You must remember, when you’re black, and you’ve been privileged—I’, a privileged black person—my obligation is to never give power to whiteness. I went to college. Tuition was paid by my parents. They struggled to get that, so I can never have that arrogance of the privilege. I have to always be there looking at the language. It is about language.

I'll give you an example. When the Trump thing was won, and the women marched the next day, white women and black women, Julianne Malveaux called me and she said, "Girl, I feel like a fool going out here in a pussy hat." And I said, "You don't need to put on a pussy hat. Black people have known about pussies for a long time. What you need to do is make sure you have a seminar, in terms of social justice and economic justice, because that's [unintelligible 00:28:28]."

De Danaan: That's right.

Mimms: Now, what Julianne did—okay, here we had demonized this white woman, Hillary Clinton, who is nothing—black people can't caught up in that—demonized. Because if you demonize Hillary, you're going to raise up Trump. You see what I'm saying? Because our society is either/or. So, you listen carefully to, what role can you play?

Hillary Clinton's demonization in the black female community—we have, in the United States of America right now—15 young, black females running for mayors of their city. Fifteen. Now, that's not because of Trump, or because of Hillary. That's because we had to take the language, and understand, what did this mean for us? Did it mean we're going to spend time analyzing Hillary? Because what Hillary did, Hillary gave—way back in the bushes with black children, and got them [water? 00:29:39]—Hillary's time, whatever it was, served us well. She will always be applauded. We didn't have to demonize her; neither did we have to spend any time justifying whatever it is.

Now, what white America has to understand is, due to its neglect—Donald Trump did not win that election just because. There was a pathway created for him over the years. There was a hatred of Obama. So, the black, young people have to understand, it's like I don't use Black Lives Matter. I use Black Matter Lives. There's a whole different—Black Lives Matter is a subset of Black Matter Lives. You see what I'm saying?

All: Yes.

Mimms: So, once you have that, you're alert. Never think outside of the box unless you know what's inside the box. [laughter]

All: That's exactly right.

Mimms: A lot of people will be thinking outside the box. Well, you know, it's tricky.

Diffendal: And I think the idea about, do you bother to learn what's inside the box.

Mimms: That's what I'm saying when I talk about safety. I'm saying, if you're with LLyn and Betsy, and people that will be your supporters, and into clearing the pathway for you and help you with [unintelligible 00:31:12], they're teaching you what's inside the box, and you listen very carefully, and you're alert, so you can get outside the box.

All: Yeah!

Koppelman: That's what I'm trying to help these students understand is what's inside the box.

Mimms: You don't know what to do, Nancy, because you don't have the support from George. You've got weak males.

Koppelman: I know.

De Danaan: She's going to get support. And I want you to know how trivial this is that I have this job to do this afternoon. Marilyn and Sally are driving to Portland to have dinner with somebody. I am in charge of Francine [recording stopped].

End Part 3 of 3 of Diffendal, De Danaan, Mimms on 7-27-17