

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

AN INTERVIEW WITH
SANDRA M. PETWAY

for the

SCARLET AND BLACK PROJECT

in collaboration with the

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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VENICE, FLORIDA

MAY 24, 2022

TRANSCRIPT BY

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and

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Deborah Gray White: So my name is Deborah White, Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of History at Rutgers University, and I am here in Venice, Florida, interviewing Sandra M. Petway. And we are doing this interview for the Scarlet and Black project, which is connected with the Rutgers Oral History Archives.

Also with us today is Charlene Griffin-Jordan. She is sitting in on the interview.

So, Sandee. And I'm going to call you Sandee since I've known you, Sandee, for quite some time. Could you just tell us your name, where you were born, your date of birth, and all of your vital statistics?

Sandra Petway: Oh, yes, I'd be happy to. My name is Sandra M. Petway. But everybody that knows me calls me Sandee.

DGW: Okay.

SP: And I was born in Plainfield, New Jersey. However, I was raised in Vineland, New Jersey. And I had an excellent childhood. And I think there's something else you wanted me to... My year of birth, or...

DGW: Yeah, your date of birth.

SP: Oh, January 6. And for all you that don't know, January 6, it's the epiphany. And that's when the three wise men brought gifts to the baby Jesus. And it's really highly celebrated in Latino countries. January 6, 1950. And I'm happy to say I'm in good health except for this accident that I had, I have a severed spinal cord at C5 and C6 vertebrae, other than that, as Deborah said, my vital statistics on my lab work is excellent. I'm 72. I was born in 1950.

DGW: Okay, thanks. Can you give us a little bit of background as to where you grew up? And something, anything you want to say about your parents? You know, tell me where you grew up. And then also a little bit about your mom and pop.

SP: Oh, yeah, I grew up in Vineland, New Jersey, which is Cumberland County. And my father had 11 brothers and sisters. So I had a lot of cousins. One second, we just want

to check the microphone. I want to make sure it's recording. Because I don't see anything moving.

DGW: It's moving. I can see it.

SP: Okay. And my mother really was and still is my rock. And everything that I have accomplished in life is because of my parents, primarily my mother. She was a pit bull on one end, but she also was sweet as a kitten on the other. And she was an activist in Vineland. She was an officer of the NAACP. [Editor's Note: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a national civil rights organization, founded in 1909, with many local branches throughout the state of New Jersey.]

She headed up the choir in the church. My father counted all the money in the church. So we were church rats when we were kids. And we went to Sunday school. And we couldn't... we were so happy when Sunday school was over. Because we went to the local candy store where they sold penny candy back in the day, which they don't do now. We had a great, great, great, great upbringing because, they say, it takes a family. It certainly did because not only were you reprimanded at your aunt's house, but when you got home you also were reprimanded.

DGW: Did your parents grow up in New Jersey?

SP: My mother grew up in Atlantic City, my father grew up in Vineland.

DGW: Okay, so they were both New Jerseyites.

SP: Yes, they were. Just one second, I have to push this chair back.

[break in interview]

Okay. Now getting back to where my parents grew up. My father grew up in Vineland. My grandmother always had a lot of grandkids in her house. It's like I was telling Deborah and Charlene, I had a lot of cousins because all my aunts and uncles had plenty of kids. And we had a very, very wonderful childhood. All we did was play. And when you do something wrong, you get punished. It's as simple as that. So discipline and

respect were key and wholesome elements of my childhood. Not only that, integrity was big. It was all about honesty. And that I'm grateful for.

DGW: Okay. How about your parents? What did they do for a living?

SP: My father started out... Well, first of all, he was in World War II. He was over there in the South Pacific. When he come home, he had jungle rot. [Editor's Note: Jungle rot is a term that refers to any of the various skin infections contracted in tropical environments. The term was widely used by U.S. soldiers serving in the Pacific during World War II.]

And in Vineland, he started out working for the city of Vineland. He was part of the time putting cinders in the street when it snowed; that was in the wintertime. I don't know if you folks remember, but back in the day, when it snowed, they would put cinders out. Unlike they do now they put salt and stuff out. But he did that; and in the summertime and spring when the grass was long, he used to cut the lawns in the cemetery.

DGW: Oh.

SP: Yeah, so he worked for the city of Vineland. And my mom, he helped put her... actually, he paid for her college education at Glassboro State—at the time, now it's called Rowan University. So she went to college, and she became an elementary school teacher. And she was my second-grade teacher. And that's a whole 'nother story. I'm not gonna take you down that road. But she also was the second grade teacher for all of my cousins. So none of us could get away with murder at school. And then later, she became a school principal. And then, in fact, they named the school after my mother down in Vineland, it's called Petway, or excuse me, Pauline J. Petway Elementary School [Editor's Note: The Pauline J. Petway Elementary School is located at 1115 S. Lincoln Ave., Vineland, NJ].

And unfortunately, my father got ill at an early age. He was in his 60s. And then mom—oh, she taught for 25 years—and then she retired to take care of him. And then she passed away. But I told you, she was an activist. She was the one that brought all the churches together in Vineland. The Caucasian folks and, at the time, they were called Negroes. And then of course, we moved to Black folks. And now we're African Americans. But she brought us all together, even Hispanic pastors. And very active in the PTA, of course.

And we also used to go Christmas caroling. She headed that up with all the churches. So everybody in Vineland, New Jersey, knew who Pauline Petway was.

DGW: So you went to high school there as well?

SP: Yes, I went to Vineland Senior High.

DGW: And was it an integrated atmosphere in school?

SP: It was, but it was predominantly Caucasian.

DGW: All right, so when you went to college, where did you do your undergraduate work?

SP: Trenton State College, which is now the College of New Jersey.

DGW: And you majored in...?

SP: I majored in health and physical education, and I minored in psychology, and I did that because I knew I was going to be a coach. And if any of you are coaches, you know how important it is to understand people's behavior. What makes them tick and how you can communicate with them. Because communication is not only talking, but I'll be honest with you, I think is predominantly listening.

DGW: You're right. I would agree. So tell me this. You knew you were going to be a coach. Is that because you had seen other Black women in coaching? I mean, did you have somebody who said you could be a coach? I mean, where did you even get that into your head that "I can be a coach"? Did you see other Black women?

SP: No. At that time when I was 17... I went to college when I was 17. I was young, I never went to kindergarten. Of course, my mother told the school principal I didn't need to go to kindergarten. But the school principal also went to Glassboro State with my mother. His name was Charles Schorndorf. And they were good friends so...

Excuse me while we turn this off...

[break in interview]

SP: Anyway, oh, you asked me who... the person that inspired me to be a coach. I have to say my father. Because I used to be a very good athlete; when I was a little girl I used to run track. And I don't know if you remember, but Wilma Rudolph, she was a Black woman star. She went to Tennessee State University. She was a Tigerbelle. She went to the Olympics. And she beat the sprinters from all the countries. And my father coached me in track. And I wanted to coach track. That was my inspiration. [Editor's Note: [Wilma Rudolph](#) (1940-1994) was an Olympic champion and international track and field icon. She won the bronze medal with her relay team in the 4x100-meter race at the 1956 summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. She then won gold in three events (100- and 200-meter sprints, and 4x100-meter relay) at the 1960 summer Olympics in Rome, Italy, becoming the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympiad.]

DGW: Okay, that's really interesting. So did you run track in high school?

SP: No, we didn't have a girls track team.

DGW: How about in college?

SP: Yes, as a matter of fact, myself and my college roommate, Estelle Sey. We asked the men's swim coach if he would help us start a girls track team at Trenton State College, and he said yes. And then Estelle, who we call Cookie, we went and we recruited other girls for the Trenton State team. And we became a track team. So we were the ones that started the girls track team at Trenton State College. And yes, we ran and we ran and we ran.

DGW: Okay, so what took you to Rutgers?

SP: After I graduated from Trenton State College, the women's gymnastic coach at Trenton State College and I had a good relationship. And that's because I stunk in gymnastics. And she always used to tease me. Her husband, Ken Cooper, and excuse me, her name is Mildred Cooper.

DGW: Is she Black or white?

SP: No, she's a white lady. And they wrote books, so if you go online, Ken Cooper, Mildred Cooper, you'll see books on gymnastics. [Editor's Note: Dr. [Kenneth H. Cooper](#) is known for coining the term “aerobics” to describe aerobic exercise aimed at improving cardiovascular health. He is the author of the best-selling book *Aerobics* (New York: M. Evans, 1968). Mildred Cooper and Kenneth H. Cooper co-authored *Aerobics for Women* (New York: M. Evans, 1972).]

But anyway, she told me he had an opening for a physical education teacher at Abington Junior High, in Abington, Pennsylvania. And when I graduated from college, myself and Cookie, we lived in New Jersey right near Mount Laurel. So it's easy to get over to Pennsylvania. And I interviewed with him, and he hired me, that's how it all started. And then there was a graduate student who got over to Rutgers. I don't remember how she got over there, but that's when Rutgers College had went co-ed. They had just gone co-ed, and I only taught at Abington for one year. And then Doris, I don't remember her last name, but she called me and asked me if I wanted to come to Rutgers to work because they were going co-ed. And I said yes! And I went over there. I was only 22 years old. That's how I got to Rutgers. [Editor's Note: Rutgers College went coeducational in 1972 when it began admitting women for undergraduate study. Other schools that were part of Rutgers University already admitted women prior to 1972: Douglass College was a women's school, Livingston College was coeducational since its inception in 1969, and various graduate and professional schools at the university also admitted women.]

DGW: Okay, and for how long did you coach—I'm gonna get into the experience—but for how long did you coach at Rutgers?

SP: Well, first of all, they didn't even have a women's track team.

DGW: So what are you going to be coaching?

SP: Well, when I went over there to Rutgers, I was an instructor.

DGW: Okay.

SP: And I was an instructor for Health and Physical Education majors. I taught the methodology courses. I had to teach health and physical education.

DGW: And had you done that before?

SP: No. I did not do it before, but I learned how to do it. And then my office was right there on College Avenue. And it happened to be, and this is coincidental, it happened to be in the track coach office with the men's head track coach and the assistant men's track coach.

DGW: Now, hold on. This is in the College Avenue Gym where the gym is now? [Editor's Note: The College Avenue Gym is located at 130 College Avenue in New Brunswick.]

SP: That's correct. I was right in the heart of everything. I saw the Student Center, I saw all the buses. At that time they had *Targum*, it was outside. Now, you have to go inside Student Center to get it. It was outside like in a red-looking mailbox. [Editor's Note: *The Daily Targum* is the official student newspaper of Rutgers University–New Brunswick.]

And everyday I saw this little short lady jogging down College Avenue. She had a real long braid, so... I'm pretty [curious], I always want to know what's going on. So I went outside. I started jogging right next to her. And I said, "Hi, I see you jogging everyday. I'm Sandee Petway." I said, "Who are you?" She said, "I'm Phyllis Zatlin Boring. I'm a Spanish professor." And I said, "Well, you know, I'd like to get a track team started here for the women." And she said, "Well, you know what? I'll discuss this with my dean." I cannot remember what his name was, but she did. And he called Fred Gruninger, who was the athletic director at the time and told him, and then Fred agreed, and we started as an AAU club first.

DGW: And what is AAU?

SP: Amateur Athletic Union. And we had to prove ourselves. Well, I started recruiting by putting signs around all the campuses. And a lot of my runners were from Douglass, Cook, Rutgers College, and Livingston. They came, they came, like that movie says...

DGW: If you build it...

SP: If you build it, they will come. And they came, and we had a great team. Then, Fred saw how good we were. And we became an intercollegiate official women's track crew, excuse me, women's cross-country track and field sport.

DGW: Cross-Country, huh?

SP: Yeah.

DGW: I thought they said Black people are really only good at short distances.

SP: Well, that's for people that don't watch the Kenyans run.

DGW: [Laughter] So tell me about the racial makeup of the track and field team that you built?

SP: I would say—because that's when a lot of Black men and women during the early '70s came into Rutgers, so the floodgates were open—so I would say 50/50... 50/50 because when the Black women—when the word around the campuses came out that I was a Black woman—they really came to support me.

DGW: That's interesting.

SP: Yeah. And I stay in touch with Karen Ishmael. She went to Douglass, we call her K.K. [Editor's Note: Karen “K.K.” Ishmael was Sandra Petway’s assistant coach in her first few seasons.]

Rhonda Fason... AKA, they're both AKA. That's for you, AKA people.

DGW: You're speaking about Alpha Kappa Alpha.

SP: Yes, ma'am.

DGW: And just so that our audience knows that we're dealing with the first Black sorority in the United States, the AKA.

SP: I didn't have any Delta people on the team. [Laughter] Oh, boy, I'm teasing.
[Editor's Note: "Delta" refers to the members of Delta Sigma Theta, a historically African American sorority.]

But... Denise Peynado, I recruited her from Brooklyn, she went to Thomas Jefferson High School. Hazel Lucas, one of my superstars, Montclair [NJ]. Uh, Vanessa Hughley, Nutley [NJ]. They were just some of the Black women I remember.

DGW: Okay.

SP: But then for the white women, I stay in touch with Bev Hummer. In fact, she called me the other day. I had Louise Jackstones, Jennifer Judd, Cindy Bush, so it was 50/50, Deborah.

DGW: Okay. All right. So was there... it sounds like you had the full support of the athletic department and of the university in building this track and field team.

SP: I did.

[break in interview]

SP: I had support, but it was somewhat begrudgingly, because the people were somewhat... especially the men's track coach, he was doubtful whether or not I could coach. And also in that...

DGW: Well, how did they express it? There was some doubt as to whether or not you could coach? Do they...?

SP: It was body language.

DGW: Okay.

SP: It was, it was Les Wallack, he wasn't really friendly toward me. And I shared an office with him. But he had a Black assistant Bob Williams, who let me know the personality of Les Wallack. Bob Williams eventually left and went to Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts, to become the head track and field coach. And Fred Gruninger, he was—again the body language—he was somewhat doubtful. And the business manager, Otto Hill. When I used to go in to discuss my budget with him you know, when I told him the things that I needed. He would laugh and, "You really need this? You really need that?" It was not a positive attitude, somewhat belittling.

DGW: So tell me, Title IX really changed the face of women athletics on campuses.

[Editor's Note: Title IX refers to the federal civil rights law, adopted in 1972, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or education program that receives funding from the federal government.]

SP: Absolutely.

DGW: Did you see... How was that manifested on Rutgers campus?

SP: Well, I can tell you about the women's side of things. And I can talk about the intercollegiate side, because Title IX not only had an effect on intercollegiates, but had an effect on academics as well. It was equality should be... it was to be equality across the board. Many people just think it was sports, but it was education and sports. And on the sports side, immediately the locker rooms became equal to the men's. Because when we first started out the locker room was like a... oh, it was terrible! I can't even describe it. But Title IX—we painted, they painted the whole room. The lockers were all painted the way I wanted 'em. They put red carpet down there. And I had the lockers, there were different colors. We were in different rooms now. One room was yellow, one room was green, the other was blue, the other was red. So I told the team you know you pick what what color locker room you want to be in. And we had much better equipment, much better uniforms.

DGW: So what were they like [before], when you say better equipment... Did you get hand me downs from the guys or you just had to make do or...?

SP: Well, from the very beginning, we didn't have the real nice uniforms. We had... they were like gym shorts and t-shirts, but [with] Title IX, we were able to get uniforms and better, lighter spikes. So it was quite a change. And then the other sports, they were able to get uniforms and the locker rooms and... Oh, and each, individual sport, was able to have a trainer, just like the men's teams had a trainer. And they traveled with us.

DGW: Oh, wow.

SP: Yeah.

DGW: It's good. It's wonderful. So you arrived at Rutgers? You said around 1974, was it?

SP: I arrived at Rutgers '73.

DGW: '73.

SP: Yeah.

DGW: Um, what was the racial atmosphere like on campus? Do you remember?

SP: There was a lot of...how can I explain it? Demonstrations. The Black students wanted change. So I was right there on College Avenue. So, their voices, I mean, you knew that they wanted change because they started groups. There were no riots on campus. It was a joining together of minds and strategies so that they could get some things that they wanted. They never had Black organizations before. But with the onset of the EOF students, they—not the EOF, but the Black students—they were able to go to different deans and voice their opinions. Yes, that I do remember. [Editor's Note: Established in 1968, the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) provides financial assistance and support services to college students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Black student activists successfully pushed the university to create an EOF program through a series of organized protest actions in 1969. By the early 1970s, the EOF program facilitated a considerable increase in African American enrollments at Rutgers.]

DGW: So would you say that over time, say... How long were you at Rutgers?

SP: I left in 1981. I left to go corporate with Johnson and Johnson. Because the wide world headquarters is right there in New Brunswick. And I needed to make more money. This is another thing. This was Fred Gruninger became angry with me. He thought I wasn't happy with the position I had, or grateful, I should say. But I needed more money. So I went to work with corporate. One of my tennis friends—I used to play tennis—Betty Long, she worked in human resources. She was a manager, and she hired me to come into her corporate world. In fact, we're still friends today.

DGW: I know Betty.

SP: Yeah, now she plays golf.

DGW: [Laughter]

SP: She doesn't [play] tennis anymore.

DGW: Left her knees out on the tennis court.

SP: That's right.

DGW: Did you get the sense that... Well, how many other coaches were there, by the way? You were a coach; first of all, you built a team and in many ways, then, that meant that you had to... you almost created your own position there. But were there other female coaches?

SP: Yes. Judy Vogt, who was a graduate student at Trenton State College, she was there when I was there as an undergrad. And again, Doris, the lady that I told you, that told me to come over because they were going coed, she came over. She was hired as a softball coach, but she also... Excuse me, that's wrong. She came over, and she also was an instructor. And then she went to battle for a women's softball team, Judy Vogt. [Editor's Note: Judith Davidson Vogt was the head women's softball coach at Rutgers in the 1970s.]

Let's see. Eventually, Theresa Grentz, the women's basketball coach. I believe she came a year after me. And at that time, they were just hiring coaches. In fact, she took the women's basketball team to the national championship, and they were the AIAW champions.

[Editor's Note: Founded in 1971, the [Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women \(AIAW\)](#) governed women's athletics and administered national championships during the rapid growth of collegiate women's sports following the enactment of Title IX. In 1982, AIAW ceased operations as most women's championships were integrated into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). [Theresa Grentz](#) was hired at Rutgers in 1976, becoming the first full-time women's basketball coach in the nation. She coached at Rutgers from 1976 to 1995 and was inducted into the Rutgers Athletics Hall of Fame in 2001.]

Frank Elm, he was a women's swim coach. But remember, he was a men's swim coach, so he was readily accepted. There was no problem with him and the women's swim team. [Editor's Note: [Frank Elm](#) (1929-2021) coached swimming at Rutgers for 31 years and was the head of the U.S. Olympic team in 1980. He was inducted into the Rutgers Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998.]

DGW: Do you think that there was a sense... I remember on the campus where I was, there seem to be a sense of resentment that Title IX was—well, I left before Title IX was actually instituted—but there seemed to be a sense that women's sports were really just not as important as men's sports. Did you get that sense?

SP: Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, there was always a sense that women were not equal to men, even on jobs, the pay was unequal. So in terms of the sports, certainly, yeah. "What are you doing?" You know, "they're not gonna do anything."

DGW: So did you get a sense that the men, or did you know that the men, the male coaches, were making more money than the female coaches?

SP: I knew that for a fact. That was not a secret.

DGW: How was it manifested?

SP: Now, well, I told you, I left because I needed more money. And the women, the other female coaches, didn't particularly like it. As a matter of fact, of course, basketball, Theresa Grentz made more money than gymnastics, or softball, or... Well, Frank Elm was men's coach, so his salary didn't change. In fact, that went higher, because now he had the female athletes. Yeah, so...

DGW: What do you mean, explain that? It went higher because they had the female...

SP: Yeah, I mean on the team.

DGW: Oh, so he had two teams to coach.

SP: Right. Exactly. Exactly. So, here's the other thing. I came in as an instructor. And when I became intercollegiate, Fred Gruninger did not hire me. Matt Bolger, the men's baseball coach, hired me. And maybe that was some resentment when Fred came back and saw that I happen to be a Black woman, that may have had a lot to do with it. He was on vacation, and Matt Bolger who was very, very, very accepting, he wanted me there. Yeah, I forgot to tell you about that part. [Editor's Note: [Matthew J. Bolger](#) coached baseball at Rutgers from 1961 to 1983. He was inducted into the Rutgers Athletics Hall of Fame in 2001.]

DGW: So African American women, some people say we have a "hard row to hoe," because we go one way and we are discriminated against because of our race, and you look another way we are discriminated against because of our sex. Shirley Chisholm once said that she felt that she had a harder time because of her sex than because of her race. If you had to say, could you, you know, which one? If either one was the more troublesome part or, you know, was it race or was it gender that gave you the most issues?

SP: That's the million dollar question. Because when I walk into a room, they see me as a Black woman. So there's the answer to your question. She's Black and she's a woman. It's equal, in my opinion.

DGW: That's what many, many people have said, you can't split yourself into two people. Because when you walk in, you are not one or the other, you're both. So, that's

totally understandable. As far as sport and women are concerned, what do you think sport does for women, Black or white, and particularly Black women, maybe?

SP: My feeling being an athlete and coaching women, sport makes them mentally resilient. It gives them the courage to defend themselves. It gives them the courage to be or, actually, to know the difference between assertiveness and aggression. And they learn when to use both. It gives them the encouragement to accept when they're wrong and not make excuses. And it gives them the encouragement to set goals. They have a plan of exactly what they want to do. That's my experience with coaching them.

DGW: Do you have a particular coaching philosophy?

SP: I do, and that philosophy is strive to do your very best in the sport. You want to continuously improve your skills. And the only way you're going to do that is to practice the correct way. And keep the end in mind. You want to win.

DGW: Yeah, my coach used to always say practice the way you play. You hit out balls in practice, you're going to hit out balls when you play. So always, always play, you know, always practice and play the same way. Do you have any advice for African American women that you would give them in particular as opposed to white women? I know that's not an easy question but...

SP: My advice for both, for a Black woman and a white woman is begin with the end in mind: you want to win. However, for the Black woman my advice is always remember, you've got to represent.

DGW: Represent what? Who?

SP: Black Americans.

DGW: So, that the Black female athlete not only has to carry her own weight, she has to carry the weight of the race?

SP: I wouldn't say weight. I would say respect. That's what I would say. You don't want to be disrespected. You want to be respected. You want your race to be respected. That's what I would say.

DGW: So you didn't, I mean, you did not stay at Rutgers that long. Well, I guess, what was that, about eight years? Do you have any lasting feelings about your time at Rutgers?

SP: Oh, I have good, good feelings. Every year we went to the National Championships. And the way we did that, when I recruited I always went to the Meet of Champions. And for those you that don't know what that is, it's a track meet that they have in New Jersey. In the New Jersey school system, they have four groups; group 1, 2, 3, 4, based on population of the school. So I would go to the meet, because the meet is the Meet of Champions. So it's the champions for every event, from group 1, same thing for 2 and so forth, and so on. And then I would recruit, try to recruit them to Rutgers. And my method of doing that, I would call the guidance counselor, see how their grades were academically to see if they could be accepted to Rutgers. Then I would call the mother of the household, because the mother makes all the decisions when it comes to the children. And I was able to recruit Debbie Deutsch, a champion in New Jersey, everybody knows. [Editor's Note: [Debbie Deutsch](#) was inducted into the Rutgers Athletics Hall of Fame in 1995.] Julie Smithers, Hazel Lucas, Vanessa Hughley, Nancy Seeger—she was a long-distance champion, in the 5,000 and the 10,000—and other champions. So every year, we were guaranteed to go to the national AIAW championships. Those are great lasting memories. But a sad memory, on that note, when we were out in Eugene, Oregon, at Haywood Field, our women's 4x440 relay team on paper had the fastest time in the United States, it was 3:39.3. Everybody thought Rutgers was going to win that event. But in the semifinals, my anchor leg got walked down by University of Texas El Paso, and we never made it to the finals. And the team just cried like babies. That was really I would say the only bad memory.

DGW: Okay. Well, I noticed that your garage has gotten, you know, all kinds of Scarlet Knight memorabilia. In fact, I'm going to take a picture of it before I leave. I see you're in your scarlet and black today as we sit and do this interview. So it clearly had, it sounds like it had a really positive impact on your life and on your career and as far as your memories are concerned.

SP: Absolutely. Yeah, I breathe scarlet, I breathe, or I bleed red. And it was really fun to coach at Rutgers. Not only that, but it was just great to, you know, watch the men's teams and women's teams get better. Because everybody knows we have really great athletes in the state of New Jersey, but a lot of them go away because they want to get away from home. They want to go to bigger universities, like Michigan, Michigan State, University of Florida. But we were able to keep some.

DGW: So I understand that you're going to be initiated or inducted into the Rutgers Hall of Fame in the fall. Can you... do you have any thoughts on why your legacy has not been recognized up until this time?

SP: To be honest with you, I think it's because they never kept records of the women's sports or the women coaches like they should have. And Pat Hobbs, the athletic director now, is doing a great job pulling those, digging for those records. As a matter of fact, Bev Hummer, one of my track athletes, called me the other day and told me she got this email from one of the associate athletic directors at Rutgers. They're sending out invitations to all the women that were involved with AIAW when it first was launched to a luncheon. And they're gonna gather more information.

DGW: And that's for the fall?

SP: No, they're doing that in June.

DGW: Oh, coming up.

SP: Yep, they're all invited to Rutgers for a luncheon. They could pick from two dates. So that's one of the ways Pat Hobbs is getting information. Records that were never, you know, never taken. You didn't know the history of the women's sports and who was who.

DGW: Are they going to be doing this for the men as well or just for the women? Because...

SP: This is a women's initiative, AIAW women.

DGW: That's great.

SP: That's fabulous.

DGW: That's really wonderful.

SP: Yeah.

DGW: So do you have any lasting or any final words? Or do you have any final things that you'd like to say that you want to put on record for posterity. 'Cause remember, this is going to be transcribed, it's going to be written down, and it will be there for... you know, websites do come and go, but this is going to be in the archive at Rutgers. So any final words? Is there something I should have asked you that I didn't?

SP: I think you're an excellent interviewer. I can't think of any other questions you could have asked me. But I would like to say, I appreciate the opportunity to interview with you. I appreciate all your efforts at Rutgers University. And I am grateful that I was able to have the experience of being the first Black coach, not only female coach...

DGW: But coach...

SP: But [the first Black] head coach at Rutgers University. That's what I have to say. I thank God for that opportunity.

DGW: I interviewed Mike Fischer, who was, you know, a star football player and I got a feeling from him, as I am getting from you, that the sports teams brought Blacks and whites together in a way that perhaps other parts of the university did not. He had very positive feelings about both, the players on the team and his colleagues, he has very good memories. And I'm wondering if you're feeling the same way that is, there's something about sport that does unite people in ways that other kinds of things don't?

SP: Absolutely. My team was very close. They were all sisters. And like I told you, some of them I'm still in touch with. That's how closely knit we were then and are now. There's something about sports that makes you one. You're the team and you do anything for the team. When you're in college, you socialize together. And your attitude is we're going to beat the other teams. So absolutely, it makes you a union of one.

DGW: Well, on that note...Yes?

Charlene Griffin-Jordan: Yeah, I do have one question, Sandee. I know you always told us that you were the track coach of the women's track team in the early 70s. But did you realize that you were the first Black coach? When did you realize that?

DGW: Thank you, Charlene.

SP: I realized that I was the first Black coach after being at Rutgers when I saw who the other coaches were. [Laughter] That's when I realized it. And then...

DGW: So, there wasn't a consciousness that, oh, I'm the only Black person here, so, you know, I got to do this and this and that? Did you have the feeling that you were representing?

SP: Well, I'm sorry, let me back up. That's incorrect what I said. Because Bob Williams was there, the assistant men's track coach, but I realized that I was the first Black head coach, when I saw the other head coaches. That's what I meant to say Charlene.

DGW: Did you have that feeling that you had to represent? Earlier you said that...

SP: Oh, yes, there was another Black assistant coach, Ted Cottrell! And for all of you who don't know Ted, and some of you do, he was an assistant football coach under Frank Burns. And Ted went on to be the defensive coordinator of the Buffalo Bills. And, yes, I felt as though I had to represent. Going back to my mother, Pauline Petway. She was the first Black teacher in Vineland, New Jersey. And I felt as though I had to be the first something like my mom. Yes, I had to represent.

DGW: Okay.

SP: And also, that school that's named after her. That's the only school that has a Black person's name in Vineland, New Jersey.

DGW: Is your mother still alive today?

SP: No, she passed away. Oh boy, she's been gone for 25 years.

DGW: Oh, wow.

SP: Yeah. But she's still here in spirit. But physically she's gone. And so is my father. His nickname was Bucky. He was a funny guy, boy. And those two were inseparable. Inseparable, like Nat King Cole's daughter sings. Or was it Nat that sang it? It was Natalie.

DGW: Natalie.

SP: Natalie Cole.

DGW: Right, right.

SP: Yes.

DGW: Okay.

SP: But again, Deborah, everything you've done for the university. You put that whole program of history, women's studies, Black history. You put Rutgers on the map for that. That will go down in the chronicles.

DGW: I hope so. I hope so. Okay, so we're going to end the interview with Sandee Petway. May 24, Venice, Florida.