

Susann Davis Interview Summary

Interviewee: Susann Davis

Interviewers: Laura Puaca and Olivia Brubaker

Interview Date: March 8, 2024

Location: Tribble Library, Newport News, Virginia

Length: 1 audio file, MP3 format, 47:22 minutes

THE INTERVIEWEE: Susann Davis was born in Grove Hill, Alabama in 1950. She lived there until she and her family moved to Newport News, Virginia, when she was seven. She attended Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and Huntington Middle School in Newport News. She later attended Phenix High School in Hampton, Virginia, where she graduated in 1968. Following high school graduation, she entered the Air Force and later attended Hampton Institute (now University) and spent much of her career as a nurse. She is the niece of Madam Annie Belle Daniels (1917-2017), who owned the Madam Annie Daniels Salon and Madam Annie Daniels School of Beauty Culture in Newport News. Daniels was also very involved in local politics and efforts to ensure voting rights.

THE INTERVIEWERS: Laura Puaca is Professor of History and founding director of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project at Christopher Newport University. Olivia Brubaker is a senior History Major, with minors in Literature, Leadership, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is currently completing a senior seminar paper on Black beauty culturalists in Hampton Roads.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: This interview covered both Davis' own experience growing up in Hampton Roads as well as her memories of her aunt, Madam Annie Belle Daniels. Davis discussed the racial landscape of the area and what it was like attending segregated schools in Newport News and Hampton. Davis also shared information and memories related to her aunt. Davis described Daniels as a well-known community leader. Through her salon and beauty school, she provided economic opportunities to Black women seeking to make a living in the field while also espousing the importance of hard work, education, appearance, and personal upkeep. Daniels was also well-connected politically and worked closely with such influential figures as the Newport News mayor, Joe Frank, the surgeon, C. Waldo Scott, and Hampton University President, William Harvey. She organized fashion shows to raise money for Democratic candidates and held the first fundraiser for now Congressman Bobby Scott when he first entered politics. She was also heavily involved in the local chapter of the NAACP and the

voting rights movement. A renowned cook, she often sold soup and lunches to raise money for people to pay poll taxes to vote.

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START OF INTERVIEW

Laura Puaca: This is Laura Puaca and Olivia Brubaker. Today is Friday, March the eighth 2024. We are interviewing Ms. Susann Davis. This interview is being carried out as part of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project at Christopher Newport University. Good afternoon, Ms. Davis. We are taking what we call a life history approach. And we'd like to begin our interview with a few questions about your childhood. Where and when were you born?

Susann Davis: I was born in 1950 in a place called Grove Hill, Alabama. That's near Mobile, Alabama.

LP: And did you grow up there?

SD: We left Alabama when I was probably about seven years old.

LP: Why did your family move from Alabama to Virginia?

SD: For greater opportunities. My mother was a barber. And she just needed more opportunity for herself, for her business.

LP: And so they moved directly to Newport News or did they end up in a different part of Virginia first?

SD: I think we moved to Newport News directly.

LP: And so you said your mother was a barber?

SD: Yes.

LP: And what about your father or any other relatives?

SD: My father was a farmer and raised hogs in Alabama and he remained in Alabama for a long time. He came to Virginia briefly but did not like it here and returned to Alabama so they were not together the last part of our lives.

LP: Okay. We'd also like to learn a little bit more about what it was like to live and grow up in a segregated society. What were race relations like in Newport News when you were growing up?

SD: You know, I never thought about that then. And all I remember was that there was a kind of a understanding of your place. And there was our place and there were other people's places.

LP: Did you ever notice or experience discrimination and something like a public facility? Stores, restaurants, movie theaters?

SD: Maybe a kind of cold hostility but nothing overt.

LP: Where did you attend school?

SD: I Went to elementary school in Newport News to Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and I went to Huntington Middle School. And then I went to Phenix High School.

LP: So these would have been all-Black schools.

SD: Yes.

LP: Is that correct?

SD: Yes.

LP: Can you share a little bit with us about what it was like to attend segregated schools? Did you ever notice, sort of, any differences, you know, in conditions, for example, with the White schools or any other things that might have stuck out to you at the time?

SD: Later. Then, when I was growing up, I did not. That was not discussed in my home. Later, as an adult, I realized some things that—. One thing that—it may sound strange—but I always felt a kind of shame that I didn't look like Shirley Temple. Where exactly that came from, I'm not sure because I never examined any of those things as a child, only as an adult, retrospectively, so. I never had a friend or was associated with anyone White until I went to the Air Force in 1968-69.

LP: So when you were younger, what were some of your favorite subjects to study?

SD: History, literature, English: love words.

LP: Do you remember any teachers who are particularly influential either at Thomas Jefferson or Huntington Middle, or even Phenix?

SD: I don't really.

LP: That's okay. When did you graduate from Phenix?

SD: In 1968.

LP: 1968. And so just the last question that I wanted to ask before we circle back to your family history has to do with school desegregation. And so, school desegregation in Hampton wasn't fully implemented until after you had graduated. Do you remember—do you have any recollection, though—about what that process was like, there?

SD: I do not.

LP: Okay. And then finally, we understand that school desegregation in Hampton involved a renaming of Phenix to Pembroke. Is that correct?

SD: Mmm.

LP: Do you remember learning about that decision? Or do you have feelings or–

SD: I did learn about it, and I just wondered why that was necessary.

LP: Mm-hmm. What do you think, in your opinion, what do you think it meant for the history of the school and the community?

SD: Well it was kind of a loss. School was very important, you know, the friends. That was the thing. You know, the people you knew and saw regularly, and you're “this is our school,” that kind of thing. You know, so to kind of lose that [was hard.]

LP: And so now we'd like to–unless you have any other things you'd like to share on that front–we'd like to turn now to sort of hearing more about your family, and especially your aunt, Annie Daniels. So Olivia had some questions that she prepared.

Olivia Brubaker: So most of the information that I've been able to find so far on your aunt relates to her professional life. So I wanted to ask some questions about her personal life to start with.

SD: Okay.

OB: Like, what was her upbringing like?

SD: My grandfather and grandmother–for my aunt, her parents–were farmers. Her father, whose name was Jack Gwin and he worked on the railroad, as I remember. They lived kind of on a mountain. They grew all their food that they had as children. They had quite a few children. And my grandmother stayed at home. And she was illiterate. She didn't have much education. And that was the environment that my aunt grew up in. They farmed and, of course, the children were expected to do all the chores and that kind of thing. And as teenagers, my aunt was the maid for a sheriff in Alabama and his wife.

LP: So just to clarify, so your grandparents, were your aunt's parents?

SD: Yes.

LP: Okay. And then she is your aunt because she was the sister–

SD: Of my mother.

LP: Of your mother?

SD: Yes, yes. I think it was 13 of them. There's one left.

LP: Oh wow.

OB: What did her family life look like? Did she ever get married or have children?

SD: She did marry. She never had any children. She had two foster sons that she fostered for years. One of them is now deceased, and one lives in Hampton. Matter of fact, I reached out to him to let him know I was going to be doing this and if he wanted to have any input.

OB: Was she a religious person?

SD: Very much, so very much. She went to church always. And she–. That [meant] a lot to her. Her faith was what kept her going a lot of the times. She, my aunt–. Education was very important to her. Progressing herself was important to her. So she actually ran away from Alabama. One of my uncles took her and my mother away and brought them here, from the sheriff's: the maid and the cook. My mother was a cook, my aunt was a maid, as teenagers.

LP: Wow. in Newport News, what church did she belong to?

SD: Shiloh Baptist Church then another church. So many. Shiloh for years. And then some other churches. I'm not sure of all the names but she was always involved in church.

OB: When she moved to Newport News, like why Newport News? Like did she have family here?

SD: My uncle, who was a longshoreman. Reuben Pugh—my great-uncle, actually—brought them here to Newport News. Several of her sisters, my mother and herself. And that's where he lived, in Newport News.

OB: Okay, so he already lived here and—

SD: Yes.

OB: Okay.

SD: Yes.

LP: How do you spell Reuben Pugh?

SD: R-e-u-b-e-n- P-u-g-h.

OB: So we understand that after moving to Newport News, Madam Daniels entered the beauty industry. What inspired her to pursue that path?

SD: One of her aunts, one of her mother's sisters, taught her how to do hair. I believe her name, they called her—. Aunt Sissy, was her name. And that's all I know about her. These were ancient people with names like Rodolpha and Ledesta, and that kind of thing. These are just names to me. I did not know them. But I know that she inspired my aunt.

OB: And I was also wondering, like, what is your understanding of why she decided to go into business for herself, to say, “Okay, I actually want to open my own salon”?

SD: Because she wanted to be the person in charge of her own destiny, of her own life. And she wanted to help other women do the same thing. And especially other Black women.

OB: Do you know exactly when she started her own beauty shop?

SD: When she first did? You know what, that information is probably available in some of this, but I don't know exactly. And some of this information, I'm sure it is when she first—. I graduated from school in 1968 so it was probably in the 1950s.

OB: Okay.

LP: So she moved here though, in 1945?

SD: Sounds about right, yeah. So it was not long. She was doing hair as soon as she moved here, but she probably didn't have a business for some time after that.

LP: So she moved here, she started doing hair for other people.

SD: Yes, in someone else's location. And her first shop, I think, she opened in 1958 or 1959.

OB: Do you know what the process of opening that school or her own business looked like?

SD: I don't.

OB: Do you have any memories associated with the beauty school? Were you ever there?

SD: Oh yeah, I found a picture of her doing my hair. And I had forgotten all about that. That was for some article she did. And, of course, she used to do our hair when I was a girl. And, as a 10th or 11th grader, she was determined to make me wear Shirley Temple curls when I lived in the era where young Black women wore bobs or wore their hair straight. But she insisted on giving me these Shirley Temple curls. But that was—. I was an adult in this picture. But yes, she did my hair. It was just myself and my brother.

LP: What do you remember about the shop?

SD: It was always buzzing with people because my aunt was a great cook and she was always cooking. Her husband, Charlie Daniels, had some kind of illness, some kind of crippling illness, where he was at home. And I remember I used to always have to take lunch to him, which was fried chicken and iced tea. And I would walk from the shop to their home on 28th Street and 800 Block to take him his lunch or something like that. So it was always something going on in there. She was—. They had a poll tax in Virginia once for Black people to vote. She used to sell soup to raise money. She raised money for the NAACP and different things. So she was always selling something or doing something, trying to keep her business going. So there were always people there.

OB: We'd also like to learn more about your aunt's involvement in the local community. So do you know what were some organizations that she was a part of locally?

SD: I know she was a part of the local NAACP, and she was a part of a sorority called the Continentals. And another group that was involved with teenage girls, later in her life. And I can't—. I don't remember the name of that organization, but it's still active now with high school girls that I know. [It is called Girls, Inc.]

OB: And what role or roles did she play in these organizations? Was she's just a member or?

SD: Sometimes she was secretary, or sometimes different—. Probably in the local chapter of the NAACP, she might have had some leadership role or fundraising type of role, but I'm not sure. My aunt was not a family kind of person. She was like a business woman. She was always at her business from seven o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night. She did not have any children of her own. And these two foster sons, she got later in her life. But she was not—. I saw her when I went to the shop or their sister—my mother,

her sister, who was Luverta, another sister named Susie, who was a beautician in her shop as well. We didn't have family gatherings. My aunt was always busy doing her business or doing the things that were important to her, which was politics and socializing with people that she considered to be the elite people in the city or the people who could influence others. Those are the people that she was involved with.

LP: Are there any particular folks?

SD: The mayor, Joe Frank, Waldo Scott, who was the Congressman's father, some of the physicians in the area. Different people like that: the president of Hampton. He's not the president now but for years. I can't even think of his name now. Yes.

LP: Dr. [William] Harvey?

SD: Yes. Dr. Harvey, yes. These were the people that she was friendly with and wanted to be friendly with.

OB: So these people that she wanted to be friendly with, were they White or Black? Or both?

SD: Both, yeah.

OB: How would you describe your aunt's local involvement in the community? Like, in which ways did she attempt to give back? I know you mentioned a little bit with the voting and the poll taxes.

SD: Mm-hmm. She wanted her business to be a place where—. They had something that was like a program in the junior high schools where people could learn trades. So there were students, I forget what they called it then. But students came to school, like juniors or sophomores, to learn beauty culture. And that was a part of their technical training so that they could have a career when they graduated. They allowed that as a part of their

schoolwork, you know, that they will learn these techniques. I think some of them even went like to the shipyard or different places and learned trades. So that was important to her that they be trained and they have some type of way that they can make a living, if they chose to, that depended on them working hard, not someone else controlling whether they could be promoted or how much money they can make, that they could determine their own future. And many of them had businesses later. And is that what you asked me? Did I answer your question?

OB: Yes. Yeah.

SD: Or did I go down the rabbit hole?

OB: A little bit of both.

SD: [laughter] Oh, well remind me, remind me, so I can stay on.

LP: Just let me interject before we circle back, so these would have been students who are at like Huntington or Carver?.

SD: Yes, yes. Yes.

OB: Do you recall how community members received your aunt?

SD: Well, my aunt could be difficult, especially if she thought that you were lazy or if she thought you were not representing the community correctly. Like, you know, some young ladies coming out with their bedroom shoes on or hair rollers. She could be very harsh in a way, you know. But most people [thought,] “Well, you know how Madam is,” you know. Some of her people's attitude about her. Like I said, my aunt's motto was, “Why should I listen to you? And you don't have anything?” And she would tell you that. So she was not interested in you if you weren't able, if you didn't need her help. [She was interested in you if you] showed your obvious appreciation to Madam or you were

someone who can help her get ahead. That was just her. I went to all her affairs. She had fashion shows every year that was like the Sepia Fashion Shows of Black models for *Ebony*. And I never sat at her table or near her, none of the family who came. She always sold us tickets or we always were responsible to give contributions, but she always sat with the important people [laughter]. So, that was her.

OB: How did the White community receive her? Do you know?

SD: She was very respected by a lot of them. Like I said, she was a wonderful cook. She used to sell fruitcakes every year. Matter of fact, she copyrighted her recipe. And people would buy thousands of dollars of fruitcakes. She started cooking them like in October until February. And most of the people that purchased them were White people because they were expensive. But they loved her food. People would come by her house, lots of White people, to get food. She was a great cook, and they were friends. She considered these her friends. And it wasn't until late in her life—. As I say, I knew her as a young [woman], when I was thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. But later on in her life, when she began to, I guess, realize maybe her own mortality and that none of her family were around her—that it was just other people that weren't family—then it became more important for her to develop relationships with her family. But Aunt Susie, her sister Susie, they went to the same church and you would never have known they were sisters. My aunt Susie worked in her beauty shop that was next door. And I mean it was difficult, later, for her to establish family relationships because they had never meant that to her till later. So I became more involved with her later when she wanted to be involved in her family's life.

LP: Can I just interject? So you're talking about your aunt, and you said her sister also did—. Her sister Susie also did hair.

SD: Yeah, yeah.

LP: Just to clarify, did her sister Susie work in your aunt's shop or did she have her own?

SD: No, she worked in my aunt's shop.

LP: She worked in your aunt's shop.

SD: They were independent contractors.

LP: Okay.

SD: Like these beauticians, they paid to have a booth. They paid a fee but they were their own [bosses.]. That's how that worked. You know, there were a certain number of chairs, and each one of them had their own customer list and their own [clientele.] So it wasn't that they worked for my aunt, as opposed to that was the building. Her shop was the building they worked in.

LP: So your aunt owned the building, and then they—

SD: The business. Yes.

LP: And then they paid something.

SD: Yes, to have a chair and access to the other supplies that they [needed]: the dryers and all that kind of thing.

LP: How many people worked at your aunt's shop?

SD: She probably had eight to ten chairs. And then, next, she bought the building next door to her building. In her shop, there were students that acted as this was their training. They went to class and then they had a period of where they had to do a certain number of hours before they could get their certification. But in the beauty shop next door, there were probably maybe six or seven, eight chairs there of beauticians that were licensed, that worked in that shop.

LP: So she had the beauty shop.

SD: That was the school. She had the beauty school, and then the beauty shop.

LP: Ok. So they were--.. Were they in close proximity?

SD: Next door.

LP: Oh, next door to each other. How long did she run the beauty school?

SD: 50 years.

LP: 50 years, wow. I was just wondering, you had started to share this story previously, when we were just sort of chatting informally about how she raised the money to get the loan for her shop.

SD: Yes.

LP: I don't think we've talked about it in this setting yet.

SD: Yeah, that thing she talks about in here [her autobiography] is that she took \$10 in change from her drink machine [Coca-Cola vending machine]. And went to the bank and got a small business loan. That was what she had to put down. She was a great one to--. And then like I said, she always knew the people at the bank or she made it her business to develop relationships with people who could help her get ahead. So someone at the bank where she got her first loan, she got a small business loan. And that's when she--. She had one beauty shop. And that's when she built her school and started that and got it accredited. She sat on the accreditation board for the National Beauty Association for many years, where she went around and examined shops so they could be accredited ,so they could get their accreditation. So yeah, she did.

LP: I just have one more question about the school. So typically, when students attended the beauty school, were these--. I know you had mentioned previously, sometimes she

would have certain people in the school, in the shop, who were sort of like middle school or high school students.

SD: Mm-hmm. And there was some type of something she received for having these students and for training the students. And I know her other students got grants and educational loans.

LP: And so other students would be students who like graduated high school—

SD: Yes

LP: And then went to her beauty school and then learn the profession.

SD: Yes. But you didn't have to be a high school graduate to go to the school.

LP: They would have been about in their teens or—

SD: Yes. Yeah. About 10th, 11th grade that way, because it was a two year program like that. So I'm sure they had to be at least maybe 10th graders.

LP: Thank you.

OB: Let's see. Could you talk a little bit more about voting rights?

SD: [laughter]

OB: And what your aunt did.

SD: There was—and honestly I don't understand exactly how all this worked—but I know it was something called a poll tax in Virginia for Black persons to vote. And I think there was some type of testing that they had. Well, my aunt, she was always selling dinners or pies, or she raised money, you know, in many different kinds of [ways.] She delivered medications for the local pharmacy on the corner, Smith's pharmacy, at night when she finished her work. She [do] anything. And somehow I think these people were supposed to get their own money to pay their poll tax because she said that they will go over and

they [the election officials] would say, “Did Madam Daniels send you over here with this money?” And they would say, “No.” [laughter] But however much that was, she raised money by selling soup, and selling lunches, to get the money to give these individuals to vote.

OB: Some of this stuff seems to have translated into politics. I know that we read some articles that talked about how she held fundraisers for local politicians.

SD: She did.

OB: Did you attend any of these?

SD: Some of them I did, yes. And she always—. She was a staunch Democrat. And she would have—. This was her fashion show. She contributed this money to—. Whatever she raised when she had these events—she had fashion shows, she had dinners, she had things where she honored different people in the communities—and she would contribute that money to the Democratic Party. Or she would have the candidates who were running for office come and talk to the people who came to the dinners about voting and what they were going to do for the community and why they should be elected and that kind of thing. She started Robert Scott or Bobby Scott. She had his first fundraiser when he entered politics, and they were good friends for many years. But that's how she did. She gave part of it to that. And then it was to this—. I wish I could remember this sorority that is the girls. [Girls, Inc.] It wasn't the Girls Club. But she gave a part of it to the Boys and Girls Club, to different organizations in the city that helped kids or helped educate or that kind of thing.

OB: Are these events well attended?

SD: Oh, yeah, yeah. She did not allow non-attendance. Like if you were her friend, you know, if you were her associate, or you were in her circle, you received a booklet of tickets that she expected you to sell.

OB: Oh. [laughter]

SD: Oh, yeah, so it was kinda—. Like I said, she had a very—. I don't want to paint her in a wrong light. But I don't want to paint her like she was Mother Teresa, 'cause she was not, you know. But she was determined. She was single-minded. And she felt like you should care. And if you didn't care, she wasn't involved with you. But if you were her friend, she always plied you with all kinds of food and desserts. And, you know, so when she called on you, then she expected you to respond. [laughter] You know what I mean?

OB: Yeah, yeah,

SD: That friend that is there, but when they have Girl Scout cookies or whatever, they expect you to buy cookies. You know, it's just understood. Whether you eat them or not, that irrelevant to her. [laughter] Just to support the event, that was her

LP: And the people [listened—

SD: And they did. You either loved her—. Even the people who—because she was very dark complexion and she always wore this white or silver wig—and, you know, they were like, “Madam Daniels, she [complaining sounds]--.” You know, like that. [laughter] But then they will still be there and had bought their tickets that were about \$50, you know, each.

LP: Whoa.

SD: Yeah. So you always wanted you to be there, you know?

LP: That's so interesting.

SD: She was very interesting.

OB: Finally, we'd like to learn a little bit more about who your aunt was as a person. So what were some of her core values?

SD: Hard work. Her appearance. What people thought of her mattered a great deal to her. And I think, secretly, she always felt that she had to work harder. That was important that she-. And it was important-. Like I said, this will be very important for her. She lived for people to know who she was and that she had been a contributing human being. That meant everything to her. Yeah.

OB: So you said her looks mattered to her? Like how would you describe her looks and her mannerisms? Like what was her speech like? How did she walk?

SD: She called herself "Glamour." She was always dressed. She was shapely, attractive. She didn't like obese people. You know, she could be very-. If your hair was-. I'm trying to say it, like this right here? [points to her hair] She would be on me constantly, "Why are you wearing your hair like that?" You people who want their hair to be not "nappy." That was my aunt, you know. Blackness was not a-. You should not want to "look Black." Does that make sense to you guys? You know what I mean?

OB: Yeah.

SD: Yeah. Yeah. That was not a look of success as it is now, as it has become. For her, that was embarrassing. And that wouldn't get you into the places where you wanted to go.

OB: What challenges did she face as she tried? Or you know, as she rose to success?

SD: One of the things was my aunt wasn't formally educated. She had what people call "mother wit." You know, she knew people. People would write for her. Or do the things [needed]-like when she had to get grants or get her schools accredited. I think she

regretted not being formally educated. That was one of the things. And being a female, being a Black female. With her [personality], she was seen as not assertive, but aggressive. And because she was very outgoing, you know, she had an expectation of you, whether you embraced that expectation or not. She expected certain things of you. And some people didn't appreciate that. They felt it was offensive to them because she could be abrasive in her [responses]—if she felt like you weren't living up to what she expected. And she had standards. So it was difficult for her at times to make, especially make, connections with her family because some of them felt that she thought she was better than they were. Her own personal expectations for herself, her own limits: she felt limited by her lack of education and the fact that she was female and a dark-skinned female.

LP: Did those insecurities, or what it sounds like you're describing as insecurities, ever factor into the work that did or the lessons that she shared with others at the beauty school?

SD: She always made it—. Well, many of the young women that were—during that time they were on welfare—they had children that went to school. And there was a time where you had to work to get benefits. The state required that. She could be cruel to them and talk down to them. But she—this was just the way she was. This was her understanding of the world. And the value of a person, just because they're a person, that wouldn't be relatable to her. You had to do something or be someone to have value. But that was her perspective. That was a world that she lived in. It was, you know, scratch your way ahead, leave behind those who don't want to get ahead. That was the way of her world, you know. And I don't think she ever saw herself to be as such a marvelous person as she

was, you know, to do the things that she did with the amount of, with the challenges, that she had. I don't ever think she personally appreciated that. Yeah.

OB: The final question that I have about your aunt relates to her legacy. Would you say that there was anything in particular that your aunt wished would be remembered about her?

SD: She always wanted her school to continue, and for people to continually have the ability to create their own destiny. That was important to her. Yeah.

OB: And then, is there anything particular that you wish your aunt would be remembered for?

SD: Yeah, her community, her help for her community, the work that she did among her community, and her determination to drag people along, even if they went kicking and screaming, you know. Yeah.

LP: I have two other questions before we wrap up with the last question. And so, "Madam," right?

SD: Madam, everyone called her "Madam." Yes.

LP: So that's not an uncommon term for a beautician.

SD: Beautician. That's right.

LP: Was it something though, that she just sort of adopted herself? Or, you know?

SD: No, she adopted it herself.

LP: Okay. And in terms of the timespan of the school, and the shop or the salon, how long did it—? When did they close?

SD: She sold her shop probably in late '90s. So she had been at the location where her school was fifty years and in another location, about ten or twelve years. She sold her

shop to a local person who was retiring from Boston or Chicago. I remember her name was Gail [Price] because she was from this area, but that person died. And I think she was a widow and she didn't have any children. Because the last one—. I sold my Aunt Susie's home recently. I asked the realtor to check that property, Madam Daniels School of Beauty Culture, because she sold that as a—just like Colonel Sanders sold that name and everything. She sold Madam Daniels School of Beauty Culture, the name. No one else could use that name. And she sold that as part of the package for her school. The person who had bought it was deceased. But it was just like in limbo there. So we don't know what will happen to it. Her family is not associated with anymore. And I think this lady that retired as an educator from wherever she was from, opened the school and she expected my aunt to help her. Well, this was—. My aunt developed Alzheimer's late in her life. And my aunt, probably, was partially affected by the dementia then. But Gail would not do what my aunt told her to do [laughter] Gail, I think, expected my aunt to introduce her to the people who she had been associated with that had made her shop continue. But Gail had a different type of personality from my aunt, you know, and that didn't work well. So my aunt used to go there and go in the building. Even when they closed on the building, my aunt did not give her the keys. So her lawyer Joe Frank said, “Madam, you cannot go in that building. That's not your building anymore.” Because for a while, Gail was still living in the area, you know, that she was from. She hadn't completely come here. So that was difficult for my aunt, too. But she got to the place where she just was falling frequently and could not function, though she was totally physically fit. Just completely, her mind, just the condition—. So it's there now and there's no one there. And I don't know what'll happen to it, which was sad. That would break my aunt's heart

because that was important to her. She gave all her energy or her resources, all of everything to be remembered in her communities, having done something to benefit.

OB: Is there anything else that you'd like to add or that we might have missed?

SD: Anything you think I should add? [laughter]

LP: We came with a pretty long list of questions.

SD: Well, I hope I answered them. Like I said, I don't want to misrepresent her, but she would be very proud to be remembered. And she worked very hard. She helped a great deal of people. A lot of people took advantage of her because of what she didn't know about business, and finances, and the business world: investing and those kinds of things. But somehow she continued. Nothing stopped her. If she went here and there was [an obstacle], she would go around: over, under. She was a formidable individual. [laughter]

LP: Well, we will officially thank you again for participating in this interview. So we can wrap up there. Thank you again.

END OF INTERVIEW

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