Retrospectives with Judith Heumann

ADA 30 – NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US – A CELEBRATION WITH JUDITH HEUMANN

Transcript

Katelynn Schultz: On the screen now is a panel introduction image. This image is a dark blue screen with light blue and bright red designs on top. In the top left corner is the KU logo, which is in dark blue surrounded by a light blue blob-like design. Handwritten cursive is written in large print in the middle of the image. The text reads, "Welcome from the disability rights community." Pictured on the screen is Dot Nary. Dot is a white woman with large, round, plastic glasses and dark reddish-brown shoulder-length straightened hair. She is wearing a light gray sweater and is wearing pink lipstick.

Dot Nary: Hello. It's an honor to be part of this introduction. I first met Judy about 35 years ago when I was working for a Center for Independent Living in upstate New York. I had recently transitioned to using a wheelchair. And I was very frustrated with the inaccessible environments and with the attitudes that I was encountering. It was different. Judy came to speak at our state conference. And hearing from a person who refused to accept environmental and attitudinal barriers and who took risks to make change was revelatory for me. I learned that if I was to do my part to change the world for myself and others, I had to become an advocate. Sometime after that, I came across a videotape-- yep, we used videotapes in those days-- of Judy's testimony in 1988 to a joint session of Congress to support passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Judy related excerpts from her discrimination diary, a diary that we all kept sending to our elected representatives to educate them about the need for civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. Judy's testimony was so articulate and so compelling that I've used it many times in classes in guest lectures on disability policy and the disability rights movement. More recently, Judy and I met when I recruited her to speak to the disability section of the American Public Health Association in 2018, where she received our section's advocacy award. Thanks, Judy, for your years of advocacy, for being a role model, and reaching out to the next generation of disability advocates. We welcome you to Kansas, virtually.

Julia Connellis: Hi, my name is Julia Connellis, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy. A description of myself is, I am a 43-year-old woman who is Puerto Rican. And I have tight curly brown hair, black earrings. I'm wearing a multicolored shirt and jeans. I would like to share with you the impact you have made on my life. As a person who is Puerto Rican and from Queens, New York, as you might be able to guess, I get a little bit passionate about things. And when I was younger and giving testimony at the legislature, I would get really emotional about things. I was passionate, but I would get emotional. And tears would come to my eyes a lot of the times. And I have seen videos of you, Judy, where you are giving testimony and sharing about the lives with people with disabilities. And you, as well, get very passionate and emotional at times. I get to hear it in your voice. And I just want to thank you for giving me the permission, in a way, and being an example for me to allow me to be as passionate and as emotional, but still keeping yourself together and dignified and being able to still get the message across. So, I just want to thank you for your passion and emotion during all of your advocacy.

Katelynn Schultz: Pictured on the screen is John Watson. John is a white man with short dark brown hair, thin plastic rectangular glasses, and blue and silver braces. John is wearing a blue KU basketball sweater with a white t-shirt underneath.

John Watson: Hi Judy. My name is John Watson. I'm a journalism instructor and mass communications scholar in the fourth year of my PhD program here at KU. I study disability media representation, and I'm also a fellow proud wheelchair rider who plays wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis. Welcome to KU. Over the summer, I was moved by the story of your clear vision and unrelenting drive to progress the rights of people with disabilities in the documentary Crip Camp. I'm also a loyal subscriber to your YouTube channel. I just want to say that your words and the work of the disability rights movement not only help provide me with access to my own education, but also helped broaden my understanding of the importance of my work as an educator and as a researcher going forward. I just wanted to thank you. And again, welcome.

Kathy Lobb: Good afternoon. My name is Kathy Lobb. I'm a human. I'm a self-advocate that works for the Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas. I am wearing a purple sweater and gray pants. I have worked in the community now for 20 years. I also came from an institution. I lived in that institution from 1969 until 1976. Then I went to group home, which was through Cottonwood Incorporated. And now, I own my own place. I have been really lucky on having-- I did work in a shelter workshop. I got my first community job at McDonald's on 6th Street. Back then, I worked for several agencies through the years. And I was lucky enough to grab on to this job that I have now, which I've been at for 20-some years to be able to advocate for people's rights with disabilities and being able to show other people how they can advocate for themselves and be able to show them how to live their lives. Thank you for everything. I just want to let you know, thank you once again.

Katelynn Schultz: Pictured on the screen is Marie Parker Strahan. Marie is a white woman with her silvery gray hair pulled back into a bun. She is wearing large square metal glasses and silver hoop earrings with a silver necklace. She is also wearing a patterned white and black striped shirt and has on a full face of makeup, including eye makeup and red lipstick.

Marie Parker Strahan: Hello, everyone. My name is Marie Strahan. I'm an attorney by trade. And I spent most of my career in the federal government in Washington, D.C. I worked on programs for people with disabilities in the Clinton and Obama administrations. I'm here to tell you a little bit about my amazing colleague, mentor, and friend, Judy Heumann. I knew of her when he and Judy were building the World Institute on disability in California. So, who is this Judy Heumann, really? At her core, Judy is a positive and passionate advocate for disability rights. She is a wonderful mentor and teacher and a highly skilled political activist. She is entirely clear in her vision of what we are striving for in the disability rights movement-- full inclusion, full access, and equality for people with disabilities in all facets of life. Judy is an international leader in the disability rights movement. She communicates her message with incredible passion and with warmth. She is the love of the disability community around the world that is obvious in all of her work. She is always and immediately accessible to other disability advocates and a great listener, always greeting you with a warm and welcoming smile. Judy is well known around the world as a disability rights leader who uses her knowledge and her political savvy to push us all forward in this movement. She has been a beacon of hope and an inspiration to activism for countless advocates and activists here in America and around the world-- and to me-- for over 30 years, for me. In a word, she is indefatigable. The disability community is so proud of her activism. We are proud of her advocacy and her many national and international accomplishments. Way, way too many to mention here. But I do want to take a moment to mention a couple of recent projects, a Netflix film and a publication of her autobiography. Both of which I think are brilliant. Of course, I may be a little biased. She will be talking about both of them with us. The Netflix film is called Crip Camp-- A Disability Revolution. It is wonderful. Her autobiography is called Being Human-- An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist. Excuse me. Also, wonderful. So, I'm going to end this by saying, dear Judy, I want to extend a virtual welcome to the greatest little town in the entire middle west, Lawrence, Kansas. We and I cannot wait for you to visit us in person someday. Someday soon, hopefully. And I want to wish you a very warm welcome to the University of Kansas for our two-day celebration of the 30th anniversary of the ADA and the National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Judy, we are all so very happy to have you with us. Thank you for coming.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Catherine Johnson: Welcome, everyone. We are so excited to have you join us this morning as University of Kansas celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in conjunction with the National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebration. I'm Catherine Johnson. I'm the Director of the ADA Resource Center for Equity and Accessibility And it's really my pleasure to have all of you join us today for the very first session of our two day celebration to honor the ADA. My pronouns are she, her, and hers. I am about 5'7". I'm a white woman with freckles, and I have kind of curly brown reddish hair. I'm wearing a brown suit with a blue shirt underneath with a blue necklace. So welcome again. I want to start with telling you, we have over 1,000 people joining us for this two-day celebration, which is very exciting. We are happy to have not only Judith Heumann join us for this celebration, but a whole host of very exciting panelists and moderators that will come over the next couple of days. We have folks joining us from 20 different states in the Midwest, the East and West Coasts, the Southwest, the South. And we also have a whole host of our international friends that have joined us for this morning. If you're interested in having a question answered by Judy during this session or any of the sessions, you can send us an email to accesibility@KU.edu or use the web form that's on our ADA event web page. We have captioning for this event. If you are not finding it on the livestream, you just need to refresh your browser. We also have two ASL interpreters for today. They'll be trading off every 20 minutes or so. So right now, we have Alana Calhoun. Welcome, Alana. And we also have Kim Bates that's providing interpretation for us today. So, before we get to our conversation, Judy and Mike Wehmeyer, about your book and Crip Camp, there's a few thanks that I have to give. There are too many people that have been involved in this celebration to give thanks individually. But I do want to take a moment to thank everyone on the planning committee for their hard work in putting this together. This has been an event that's been planned for approximately a year. And so, they've worked really hard to bring this to us. We have 62 very active co-sponsors for this event. Our goal in our office was to have at least 60. The idea was, we'd have one co-sponsor for each of the 30 years of the ADA that's already passed and one co-sponsor for every year for the next 30. Well, we exceeded our goal. Which, Judy has taught us to always exceed our goals. So, I'm happy to say we have 62 co-sponsors. I'd like to particularly thank a couple of co-sponsors this morning. Media Production Studios for their help in creating that amazing welcoming message that we just experienced. I can think of no better way to welcome Judy to our campus than to have representatives from the disability rights community share words of how your work has mattered in their lives. I'd also like to thank the ARC of Douglas County, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, Self Advocates of Kansas, for helping us find people to both do the welcoming message and some questions that will be coming in different sessions. Lastly, we would be nowhere without our co-sponsor of Zoom, who has helped us navigate some accessibility issues and making sure that we're being as inclusive and setting the best standard we can for accessibility in our two day celebration. We have two different individual co-sponsors that helped us with the book for Judy and making sure that everyone who wants Judy's book can access it. That's the Raven Bookstore and the Kansas Union Bookstore. So, Judy, welcome from all of us here. We're so happy to have you here virtually. We hope someday that you can come back and be in person. But we're excited to start the celebration with you today.

Judith Heumann: I really want to thank you, Catherine, because those comments are great. Very nice to see people I haven't seen for a while and to meet some new people. So, thank you all for all the work you've done.

Catherine: Thank you, Judy. Moderating our conversation this morning is Michael Wehmeyer. Michael is the chair of our special ed department here at the University of Kansas, plus the director of the Beach Center for Endowment, plus a whole host of other very, very impressive titles and responsibilities. Mike, if you could take a moment and just say hello to the folks.

Michael Wehmeyer: Sure. Hello, all. My name is Michael Wehmeyer. I'm an older white man with short gray hair, a gray goatee, and rectangular gray glasses. So, I'm going with the gray. I'm sitting here in my office at the University of Kansas in the School of Education and Human Sciences, with bookcases filled with textbooks behind me. And I'm wearing a white patterned shirt with a blue blazer. And my pronouns are he, him, and his. And I got to know Judy first, I think, when she was in the US Department of Education. But of course, I knew of her well before that. So, it's an honor for me. And it was wonderful to see some of the people I know and admire in the video introduction. So, I look forward to learning a lot in the time we have.

Catherine: Thanks, Mike. So, we're going to start this morning, Judy, with your autobiography, which you shared with me yesterday. Was just announced by Publisher Weekly to be one of the best books of 2020. And you also have been nominated for most compelling living subject in the documentary Crip Camp. And we'll get to Crip Camp in a little bit. But congratulations on both of those honors. That's tremendous for you and your already very impressive career to have some additional honors.

Judith: Thank you.

Catherine: Judy, when I read your book, I was struck by how you describe your childhood growing up in your neighborhood in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. You described a very happy childhood. You're involved in all the community activities with your friends. You have a core group in the neighborhood that you hang out with and do lots of fun activities with. You have a supportive family. Everything seems to be going just smashing for you. And then you have an experience at around age six that really altered your sense of identity and sense of self perception. I'm wondering if you could share with us a reading that describes that experience that you had at age six.

Judith: Sure. And I am a 72-- soon to be 73-year-old-- white woman. And I'm currently wearing a pair of glasses that are teal and purple that I got in Mexico. And I have brown hair which is medium short. I'm wearing earrings-- multicolored earrings-- and a hot pink sweater. My backdrop is the Brooklyn Bridge. And it says Brooklyn, lest anyone forget. I live in Washington, D.C. now, but my roots are in Brooklyn. And I was actually about eight years old when this incident happened. So, I'm going to read, as Catherine was saying. I think it was a beautiful sunny day, but it might have been cloudy. I really don't remember. What I do remember was being caught up in my conversation with Arlene as she pushed me in my wheelchair, talking about what we were going to buy at the candy store or what we wanted to do later that day. We were pleased to be walking around the corner to buy sweets in front of Dr. Nagler’s brick house, which I knew Dr. Nagler's house because I'd been there with my mother for her doctor's appointments. We paused across the street. Arlene turned me around to lower my wheelchair off the curb, pushed me across the street. And then once we reached the other side, she put her foot on the metal bar on the back of my chair, tipped me and the chair back and lifted my chair onto the sidewalk. As we did this, a few kids came towards us from the opposite direction. They were walking slowly down the sidewalk. As they passed, Arlene shifted my wheelchair to the side to make room for them. We didn't know them and didn't pay much attention, engrossed as we were in our conversation. So, I was surprised when one of the kids turned suddenly to look at me. He stood in front of me, staring down at me in my wheelchair. "Are you sick?" he asked me loudly. I stared at him, not understanding. "What?" "Are you sick?" he repeated insistently. His voice boomed. I shook my head, trying to clear the words away. I was still confused but couldn't speak. "Are you sick?" he asked, slowing the words down as if I were a toddler. The world went silent as the words reverberated in my head. I couldn't hear anything except those words. Are you sick? Sick, sick, sick. I shrank down, frozen with confusion, wanting to cover myself up with something, anything, to hide from that question. The boy's insistent eyes on me. "Are you sick?" he asked insistently, almost shouting. Suddenly, I became aware of Dr. Nagler's house behind me, and my face turned a cringingly deep red. Does he think I'm going to the doctor? But he's not my doctor, I thought fiercely. I fought back tears. I couldn't-- wouldn't-- cry in front of everyone. I wasn't sick. It made no sense. I knew I wasn't. But then, why was he asking me that? I became uncertain of myself. Was I sick? I saw myself through his eyes, and the light around me shifted. Shadows emerged from the corners of my mind. Previously submerged words, thoughts, and half-heard conversations tumbled into the glare of the spotlight. In a blinding flash, everything in my life made a perverse kind of sense. I couldn't go to this school. I couldn't go to that school. I couldn't do this. I couldn't do that. I couldn't walk up the steps. I couldn't open doors. I couldn't even go across the street. I was different. But I'd always known that. It wasn't that. It was the world and how it saw me. The world thought I was sick. Sick people stayed home in bed. They didn't go out to play or go to school. They weren't expected to go outside, to be a part of things, to be a part of the world. I wasn't expected to be a part of the world. Abruptly, I knew this to be true as if the knowledge had already existed for years throughout my entire body. I felt nauseatingly humiliated at the idea that everyone else had known this but me. Had they kept it from me? The embarrassment settled in as a cold ball deep in my stomach, where I could feel it spreading into my limbs. Was it sunny or cloudy? I don't know. I remember Arlene was pushing me. We were going into the store to buy candy, and we were chatting. And I was a butterfly becoming a caterpillar.

Catherine: Thank you, Judy. That seems like a very profound negative experience that had a profound impact on your life and your self-image. Could you share the long-lasting impact of that experience on your life with us?

Judith: Yes. I think that example was one that I think is relevant from a number of perspectives. I had polio when I was 18 months old. And I later-- when I was in Sweden a number of years later-- was talking with a woman who was a psychologist and was doing research on disabled children. And it appears as though, through her research, that many disabled kids around the ages of 8 and 9 begin to start identifying as having a disability. So this story, I think, very much fit in line with when other disabled people were really, for various reasons, not only beginning to recognize that we had a disability. I think the bigger issue was that we were beginning to-- sorry. We were beginning to realize that other people saw us different, and they saw us differently in a negative way. And I think that was something which you know was another experience that added to the previous and future experiences that would happen. One of the reasons I give a lot of information in the book about various experiences is really to legitimize that this is not unique to me, but these experiences continue over the course of our lives. And again, while this story is focusing on me as a disabled person, anyone can be thinking about an aspect of their life where their diversity may also have an impact that is not always positive. But also, being able to kind of begin to see that it was important for me to look at myself in the totality of who I am and was at that time. And I think that's why as we go through the book and the film, I think you see the cumulative effect of these kinds of actions which I and many others decided that we were going to turn into something which would help create a better world and use the negative experiences to legitimize the types of discrimination we were facing in order to come out the other end.

Catherine: And I would say, Judy, you and the other advocates that worked with you certainly have done that very well. The other sort of big takeaway that I have from your autobiography is that you are a very persistent person. I believe I share some of that in the work that I do. You do not take no for an answer. You seem to have always been at a point in history where you have the right skills and the right connections and the right sort of no, we're not going to take no, to move forward the issues of disability inclusion.

Judith: I want to say that, I think, because I'm such a networker and I always feel compelled to be doing things with other people, I think that's really what you see in my life and many others, is this ability to identify other people who have a similar long-term objective. And then we can figure out what role we each play. Because that's something which I think is also very important. There's so many things I'm looking at. The creation of a movement and working on changing society, you need various perspectives and skill sets to really allow this to move forward.

Catherine: Could you talk a little bit about where this skill came from, where this perseverance that you have to not give up, to find a way forward, who modeled that for you?

Judith: Brooklyn.

Judith and Catherine: Laughter from Judy and Catherine

Judith: I always talk about Brooklyn, because I think if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere. That's a great song. It's not just true for-- obviously, there's other places. But I think it was real true for me. And But in all seriousness, my parents obviously played a very important role in my life. I'm Jewish. And my parents were German Jewish refugees. And my mother was 12 when she was sent out of Germany to live with relatives that she never heard of, let alone knew, and expected that her parents would get out of Germany. And in the end, they died in concentration camps. And the same thing for my father. So, I think in order to be able to get through their experiences-- my father was a marine and also fought in the Second World War. You know, they had an incredible amount of resilience. And while they never expected to have a child with a disability--typically, that's true for families-- they had to learn. And that's what I really get to see from when I was young. Many stories. My mother fighting to get me into school. But then a little story that I remember, I was going to a rehab center in Manhattan. And they wanted you to spend the weekends there. And I was like 4. And I remember my parents saying there was no reason for me to stay there over the weekend. I was four years old. My dad would pick me up after work and bring me there by 7:00 AM on Monday. And that little story which might have meant nothing to anybody was another example for me of how you think these things through and make decisions which are appropriate for that person and the time.

Catherine: Thank you, Judy. I have one more question for you regarding your early life. And then I'm going to allow Mike to ask you a couple of questions. So, you describe in your book the impact of the Holocaust on your parents. And I think it also had a very direct impact on your early life and your ongoing life. And there is a passage in your book that, if you would honor us with reading that, I think it would be very helpful for all of us to understand that in a little bit more depth.

Judith: Thank you. It's in the prologue. In the beginning. I never wished I didn't have a disability. I'm fairly certain my parents didn't either. I never asked them. But if I had, I don't think they would have said that our lives would have been better if I hadn't had a disability. They accepted it and moved forward. That was who they were. That was their way. They deliberately decided not to tell me what the doctor had advised when I recovered from polio and it became clear I was never going to walk again. It wasn't until I was in my 30s that I discovered what he had suggested. "I recommend that you place her in an institution," he said. It wasn't personal. It didn't have anything to do with any family being German immigrants, nor was it ill intended. I'm sure he sincerely believed that the very best thing for these young parents to do would be to have their two-year-old child raised in an institution. In many ways, institutionalization was the status quo in 1949. Parents weren't necessarily even encouraged to visit their institutionalized children. Kids with disabilities were considered a hardship, economically and socially. They brought stigma to the family. People thought that when someone in your family had a disability, it was because someone had done something wrong. I don't

[AUDIO OUT]

Catherine: Judy, we lost sound. Just one second.

Judith: Yeah. I got it. Thank you. Do you remember where I was? I don't know how my parents responded to the doctor because my family didn't talk a lot about things like this. But I'm sure my parents would have found the idea of putting me in an institution very disturbing. Both my mother and father had been made orphans by the Holocaust. As teenagers, they'd been sent to the United States. It was a time when Hitler was coming into power, when things were getting bad enough that people worried about the safety of their children but didn't think it was going to get as bad as it did. My father came to live with an uncle in Brooklyn at 14. And he was lucky that his three brothers followed very soon after. My mother was an only child and was sent alone to live in Chicago with someone she didn't know at all. The story was that a distant relative came from the States to visit my mother's family in Germany and brought news of the worsening situation. The information convinced my grandparents to send my mother, their only child, away to live with this distant relative. I have often imagined what it must have been like for my mother. You're 12 years old, and one day someone you don't know, someone you've never met before, comes to visit your family. And two weeks later, you're suddenly gone from Germany forever, living alone in Chicago with unfamiliar people. My mother always thought that her family would be together again, even during the war, when she was working to save money to bring her parents over. Only later did she learn that they'd been killed. If I'd been born just 10 years earlier and became disabled in Germany, it's almost certain that the German doctor would also have advised that I be institutionalized. The difference is that instead of growing up being fed by nurses in a small room with white walls and a roommate, I would have been taken to a special clinic. At the special clinic, I would have been killed. Before Auschwitz and Dachau, there were institutions where disabled children were eliminated. Hitler's pilot project for what would ultimately become mass genocide started with disabled children. Doctors encouraged the parents to hand their children over to specially designated pediatric clinics where they were either intentionally starved or given a lethal injection. When the program expanded to include older children, the doctors experimented with gassing. 5,000 children were murdered in these institutions. The Nazis considered people with disabilities a genetic and financial burden on society, life unworthy to live. So, when an authority figure in their new country, a doctor, said to my parents, we'll take your child out of your home and raise her, they never would have agreed to it. They came from a country where families got separated from children and sent away. Others, taken from their families by the authorities and never returned. All of this, a campaign of systemic dehumanization. Their daughter, disabled or not, wasn't going anywhere.

Catherine: Thank you, Judy. And thank you for your parents and your grandparents for allowing us to have you as our advocate on disability inclusion issues. I agree with your sense that this was a really important factor in your early childhood, that you knew could have been put in an institution as many folks were during that era. And we would have lost you as our advocate. So, I'm grateful that that did not happen. Mike, I'd like to turn over to your questions now.

Michael: Yeah. Judy, I think, "not going anywhere" really became your motto for the rest of your life, in a way. You know, you had to tell people; I'm not going anywhere until you change. All your life. And I suspect you have to continue to do that.

Judith: I actually enjoy doing that.

Michael: Mike laughs.

Michael: And you're good at it. And that's particularly important in school. As you relay it in your book, you had to do that and your parents had to do that time and time again with your battles in school, with schools, both as a student and then later as a teacher. High school graduation is an important milestone in the life of almost every young person, particularly in a case like you experienced, Judy, if the school don't really want you there. Could you read the section of your book where you relay your experience on graduation day. And I just want to note for those out there listening, this is in a chapter that's brilliantly titled "Insubordinate."

Judith: So-- Thank you. Let me also say that at this point in my life, I was young and embarrassed by things that happened. And different than the comment that I just made that I like to take on these challenges, I think, for me, as I got older, it became easier for me to do it. But you'll see in this story, I would not say that I felt that way. Sorry, excuse me. Sorry, excuse me. My father and I slowly wound our way through the hall. My mother, brothers, aunt and uncle and cousins peeled off to find seats. From my chair, I couldn't see much, but my father targeted the left side of the room. As we drew closer, the crowd thinned out, and I spotted this stairs on the stage. Right away, I saw the problem. There was no ramp. "Dad, there's no ramp," I said, trying not to get anxious. "Hmm, maybe there's one around the back," my father said non-committedly, refusing to get worked up. Pushing me to the bottom of the stairs, he turned to a security guard. "Excuse me, sir. Is there a ramp to access the stage? My daughter's receiving an award, and she's supposed to sit on the stage." Waiting for the man to answer, my heart pounded. Please, please, please let there be a ramp. I did not want to get carried onto the stage in front of this huge crowd, nor did I want to let my father bump and lug my wheelchair up the stairs. Looking at me, the guard shook his head.” No, sir, no. Sorry, no ramp." Just there, my heart sank. My father's sighed a very quiet sigh. Decisively, he pulled my wheelchair to the side of the stairs, turned my chair around, and started to mount the stairs, fighting a sense of embarrassment, not wanting to see how many people might be witnessing my awkward entry onto the stage. I took a breath and looked straight ahead. Which is why I didn't notice the principal until he called out to my father. "Sir. Mr. Heumann. Wait a minute. Just leave Judy down here in the front row. She doesn't need to be onstage." "What?" my father said, paused halfway up the stairs, disbelieving. "It's no problem. I'm happy to bring her up." "No, no. It's not necessary," the principal shook his head. My father looked confused and unhappy. I felt my face grow hot. I wanted to disappear. "Look," my father said to the principal. "It's very easy. I'll just pull her up the stage. It will take two minutes." The principal looked at my father. "No," he said firmly. "Judy does not need to be on the stage. Put her in the front row." It was obvious. The principal did not want me on the stage. I felt nauseated. "Dad, let's go home," I said. "I don't want to stay." Tears came to my eyes. My father squared his shoulders and seemed to grow in height. He became the ex-Marine who had fought at Iwo Jima and won a Purple Heart. "I'm going to take Judy up the stairs and put her on the stage," he told the principal, enunciating every word slowly, with a deathly calm, "so she can receive her award on the stage with all the other kids." I froze and looked at the principal. What would he say? For a long moment the principal didn't speak. Finally, he conceded. "Take her up," he said. I couldn't stop my tears. I was utterly humiliated. "Dad," I said, "I want to go home. Take me home." "No, Judy," my father was stern. "You're not going home. You're going to stay here. You're going to sit on the stage and receive your award. You worked hard. It's your award and you deserve it." He climbed the rest of the steps to the stage and pushed me to the spot on the stage. I took a deep breath, trying to compose myself. He was right. This was my award. And even though not one part of me felt like it, I knew I belonged here. I straightened my hair band and wiped my eyes. As my father stood next to me, the principal walked over to us. "Put her here," he said, motioning to an empty spot behind the rest of the students on the stage. He might be acquiescing to my father, but he wanted me in the back. He did not want me to be seen. My father was not happy. He clenched his jaw, and his mouth had tightened. But he wheeled me to the back of the stage where the principal had indicated. I fought back tears. "Good luck honey. We'll be watching." Kissing the top of my head, he left. I looked out at the masses in the audience. I would not cry in front of all of these people. "I belong here," I repeated to tell myself silently. When the principal called my name and started to walk to the back of the stage, I was slowly pushing my wheelchair toward the front of the stage, but only made a little ways forward before he intercepted me and handed me my award. I looked him directly in the eyes. "Thank you," I said. But of course, no one heard me.

Michael: Judy, when you're here in the future, when we can welcome you in person, you will be only 30 miles from the Brown versus Board of Education historic National Historic site. And when you walk into that compelling building and that story, the first thing you see on the left is a plaque with that memorable line from the Supreme Court, "Separate education facilities are inherently unequal." You experienced exclusion and segregation. And I wondered if you could talk a little bit about how those experiences fueled your advocacy and your desire for change. Because for some people, those experiences can result in other outcomes.

Judith: I mean, I would say that, obviously, I was young. There was no strategic planning involved with any of this. I really appreciate your mentioning Brown versus Board of Education because that was 1954, right? So, I was very young. And obviously, really, didn't know anything about it at that time. But it certainly was something that I was learning about over the next 10, 15 years. And Brown versus Board of Education didn't speak about issues of education for disabled children per se. But it certainly was speaking about the experience that many of us in New York City were having. We were in-- if you had a physical disability and you were unable to walk up and down stairs, you went to classes HC 21-- Health Conservation 21 class. And they were racially integrated classes. Which in and of itself, I think, was interesting. And inferior education. Over time-- and I think Crip Camp is part of this journey-- the ability to be with other disabled people talking about what our concerns were, what we wanted our futures to be, what the barriers were that we were experiencing, we were able to get support from each other to legitimize that we all felt that what was going on was wrong. And while you know our parents definitely were very supportive, we also were feeling the necessity to begin to assume our own role as we got older. And so, I think that was very important that we not only were maturing in that way, but we were beginning to kind of play with that. You know What did we need to do to make it happen? And I believe that's really what continues to happen today, is that we talk about disabled people as being resilient and problem solvers. And where that's not true for everyone-- nothing's ever true for everyone-- I think it is very fair to say that the disability community, like other diverse communities, has people within it who want things to be different. And I also think the expansion of movements in the United States--people of color movements, womens' movement, aging movements-- all these movements really have had an impact on disabled people. And one of the-- I think-- the important changes that has slowly been going on since the 70s-- and increasing-- is the ability to work with other movements that are also facing discrimination based on race or sexual orientation or religion or ethnicity, and how we're working more effectively together. And I think one of the other big issues is that our movement itself is becoming a more diverse movement. And by that, I mean not only racially, but cross-disability. In the beginning, we were not working with people who had intellectual disabilities or mental health disabilities. And now that's changing. Yeah. And I want to say that I think one of the barriers that still exists today is the professional associations that really do not see the value of disabled people-- cross-disability-- coming together. And, I think, in many direct and indirect ways, really thwart it.

Michael: Catherine?

Catherine: Thank you, Judy and Mike. I think this might be an excellent time to share a question from Haines Eason. We'll just take a few minutes to load the question.

Katelynn Schultz: Pictured on the screen is Haines Eason. Haines is a white man wearing a blue polo. He has brown hair that is parted to the side and is cut short on the sides and is longer on the top. He is in front of a virtual background image of the KU campus.

Haines Eason: Hello. I'm Haines Eason, Communications Coordinator in the Office of the Provost. Thank you for attending ADA 30, Nothing About Us Without Us, a celebration with Judith Heumann. I'm honored to be here with you. Personally, this event and anniversary mean a great deal to me, because I only recently acknowledged my disability status, and did so at such a pivotal time. I am humbled by people like Judy, Lex, Keri, Wesley, and all our panelists and moderators, because they so bravely are who they are and bring so many up with them. I hope I am able to be as strong as I learn my way into my full self. My question is for Judy. Judy, what advice do you have for would-be activists whose lives are full with-- in my case-- family and career who want to forward the cause of disability rights in this loud and distracted time? Thank you.

Judith: Thank you for the question. You know, I think it's important that you and others identify the changes that you want to make in your life and to look at whether or not this is something that is unique to you. Is there a barrier that's unique to you that you feel you can help address and be done with it and go back to doing your everyday life activities? Or do you feel that the issue that you're facing the particular barrier, and also how you may be viewing the barrier as discrimination? So, to the extent that people begin to see issues as not just one of a kind, I can do it myself. It'll help me individually on this particular issue. But if you believe that some of the problems that we're facing are due to discrimination and systemic discrimination, then I believe that can really help motivate you and other people. And I think it's very important to realize that we-- as I think I said earlier-- we all play different roles. And so, some people are more verbally expressive, like me. Other people you know feel more competent in writing or getting things written. People have different skill sets. So, the ability to bring people together and work collaboratively, develop plans and help move them forward, I think that's ultimately what's important. And you know, you kind of test the waters, like putting your toe in the water. you know Do you want to go in? Does it feel safe enough? If you hate the water, you're not going to go in. But you still may want to be an environmentalist dealing with the pollution in the water. So, you may not go into the water. I saw this great movie called-- what is it-- Octopus the Teacher? I think it's called Octopus the Teacher. Or The Teacher Octopus. But anyway, this guy goes in the water. And he's learning. Yeah, My Octopus Teacher. You all have to see it. It's on Netflix. But at any rate, I think, really, don't beat yourself up. Really, move forward. See what you feel good about and how you know working together may really not only benefit you, but many other people.

Catherine: So, Judy, I have a question for you. You talk at great length in your book about importance of networks and connections. And you had an opportunity to have some really important early connections in your lawsuit against the New York School Board of Education. And moving forward, could you reflect and give us some guidance on how we as advocates make those connections in those networks, and how your advocacy might have been different without those early experiences?

Judith: So, I've mentioned to Catherine that this particular experience, I had applied to be a teacher in the New York school system. I had to take a written exam, an oral exam, and a medical exam, each of them given in inaccessible buildings because there were no laws at that time. And I passed the-- sorry. I passed the written, I passed the oral, and I failed the medical. And I just forgot the question. Tell me again the question. Sorry. –

Catherine: --the importance of those early connections and how--

Judith: Yeah--

[INAUDIBLE]--[INAUDIBLE]

Judith: Yeah. So, I really didn't consciously look for connections. Things just happened. And because I am an extrovert, sometimes it makes my husband crazy because I'm always talking to people. I'm listening to people. I'm asking them more questions. And that's how I've made a lot of friends and done a lot of different things. So, it happened to be that there was a disabled student on my campus. He was a wheelchair user and a journalism major. And he was doing something with the New York Times. And he was able to get a reporter to write a piece about my being denied my license. And then, the next day, unbeknownst to me, the New York Times wrote an editorial. Not an op-ed, an editorial. Something like Heumann versus the Board of Education. Came out very strongly saying there was a shortage of teachers. How could they turn down someone who was qualified because I used a wheelchair? And then I got a call that same day from a lawyer-- who was a civil rights lawyer-- wanting to talk to me about what happened, to put in a book that he was writing. And I had been thinking about whether I wanted to sue the Board of Ed. I had no idea how I was going to do that. Because I didn't know any lawyers. My family were very middle class. And so, at the end of my interview with Roy Lucas I said to him, would you be willing to represent me? And he said yes. And the next day, a customer went into my father's butcher store who was a lawyer and said that he would also represent me for free. So that's how I got my two lawyers. And the judge that we had was the first African American woman judge on the federal bench. We obviously had nothing to do with that either. And so, I think you know it's sometimes luck. Clearly, the judge was luck. It could have been completely different if we had a different judge. But she had been involved in civil rights lawsuits, so she understood. Her name was Constance Baker Motley. I'm not even sure if she might have been involved with the Brown versus Board of Ed case. But nonetheless, I also allowed things to move forward. So, when this gentleman called me to interview me for a book, I didn't have to say to him, would you represent me? But I was beginning to look for opportunities because I saw the interest from others and my friends and myself. So, I think it's kind of keep your mind open. Allow yourself to do things that you maybe didn't think about and be uncomfortable. Because I think it's fair to say a lot of the things that I've been involved with my whole life and continue to be are not always comfortable because you're exploring. And it may work, it may not work. But you know you're taking a risk. And in the end, win or lose, you tried.

Catherine: So as one last quote that I just have to read for you, because I read it gleefully as an attorney at the P and A before coming to the University of Kansas. I represented many individuals with disabilities in a range of different kinds of lawsuits. And when I read what the judge Constance Baker Motley said at, I think, one of a pre-hearing type of conference when she said to the room, I fully intend on keeping this case. Then she informs the New York City Board of Education to basically figure out how to resolve this problem. So, did you know at that time, Judy, that you had won? And were you gleeful?

Judith: I think we were cautiously optimistic. OK. Because she basically said that she was-- I guess she was rotating. I don't even know today what that exactly means. But she was rotating. But she was not letting that case go. So, it was really up to them. Now, I did get a medical review. I did get my license. I did teach. But we also were asking for-- what's the right word-- damages, basically. Which we were not able to get, because they said there was no harm. I think today, that might be different because we would be able to argue what the harm was. Because clearly, there was harm. I mean, good things did happen. But the action of what happened did cause harm. So, but it was an amazing experience. And at the time, you know, Constance Baker Motley was not known then as she became known later.

Catherine: Thank you, Judy. I think we'd like to turn now and talk about Crip Camp for a little bit.

Michael: So, Judy, we obviously could spend the rest of the day with stuff that you have in the book. And we could spend another day with stuff that is in Crip Camp. You know, I watched it this summer in the midst of the lockdown here in Kansas. You talk about relationships being important. Camp Jened was really all about relationships. And for me it was emotional to see Steve Hoffman again and to get a brief glimpse of our mutual friend Michael Ward and to see the faces of people that I'd read about. There's something about film that just makes it come alive in the ways that print can't. So, if you would just talk a little bit. A lot of people didn't know this story before Crip Camp aired. It's getting great visibility. Why don't people know more about this? How can we corporately get that message out so that what is past is prologue is important to moving forward?

Judith: I mean, I think that the story of disabled people is still not known by many people, as you said. And I think there are a variety of reasons. One of them is that people feel uncomfortable with disabled people. Disabled people feel uncomfortable with themselves. The stigma that we face as disabled people is very significant and can be more significant depending on your family and the community and whether or not your disability is a part of how people perceive you. And not in a negative way, but as a part of who you are. And our movement is very new. I mean, really, you can see, over hundreds of years, a little bit of things happening here and there. But our movement-- because it is such a diverse movement when you know we're not-- most of us-- born with our disabilities. And as such, typically, there are not necessarily any other people in the family who has a disability. Disability can be very overwhelming if the systems around you are failing. If you're really forced to look at certain aspects of one's disability-- needing therapy of numbers of different types, of maybe having a progressive disability, of not knowing anything about durable medical equipment, accessibility of technology, mental health issues, intellectual disability, whatever. So, I think those are all barriers that have resulted in our story being told in ways that we don't want them told. So, in many ways, the stories that people are learning about are raising money, science, curing disability, telethons, the absence of appropriate representation of disabled people in children's books, in adult books, in documentaries, in films, on television, whatever form you're using-- streaming, Netflix, blue flicks, whatever it may be. So, I think-- and I believe also-- that one of the problems is film makers themselves haven't looked at these stories because they don't necessarily know people who have disabilities. Or for the other forms of media that are produced, people don't think of well, why is it wrong to have a non-disabled person play a disabled person? Which, of course, doesn't happen anymore, really, for Black people being played by white people, Latinos by non-Latinos. On and on. But in the area of disability, it's still-- people don't really understand it the same way. I would also say that here we are at KU. And I believe that the educational system itself is not doing what it needs to do to enable both disabled individuals to be able to learn and create community in a way that I think could be very valuable. And disability is not taught, either, as a Disability Studies major. But I'm very much of the belief that disability needs not just the Disability Studies major but needs to be studied across the board. And from a cultural perspective, from an academic perspective, depending on what the courses are that you're taking. Which means that the faculty need to understand these issues or need to be open to learning about them. But elementary schools and high school, likewise, are doing very little as far as really helping people learn about discrimination. So, I remember when I was teaching in New York in 1971. We were already teaching about Black Studies. There were curricula that every teacher got. And the one month-- and I don't like these month things-- but for one month we were told that we were to teach. And this was in '71, '72. I've never seen that in disability, as a rule. So, people don't know this story because they don't know to ask for it, look for it. They maybe don't want to see it. But the wealth of disabled people on campuses and in the community, who can contribute is not taken advantage of. And I don't want to blame just others. Because I think it's really also a necessity on the part of us as disabled people. I think Kansans have done some very good work with Centers for Independent Living and other organizations. I think these groups, as a rule, are underfunded, are dealing with a lot of work to be able to support people in their communities. And that's another whole area of equity.

Michael: I learned something a long time ago that stuck with me. It's that the difference between segregation and congregation is choice. And there were a lot of segregated camps for children with disability that didn't have an empowering effect. But Camp Jened it was different. It was a place where you congregated to be in community with people you cared about that you'd learn from, and that you were empowered by. Could you talk about that experience on your life?

Judith: Sure. I would also say that one of the-- I went to another camp called Camp Oakers and both of these camps had kids with all types of disability. Camp Jened even at one point had a few deaf campers-- which was completely unheard of-- and a few blind campers. Which, again, was unheard of. And so, you know we were only with disabled kids. The staff was basically not disabled. A little bit of disabled people as the camp got older. But I think it was both of the camps were run by younger, non-disabled individuals who weren't bringing us together for the purposes of organizing and learning. But they also were not thwarting it. And so, the atmosphere was such. And really, '60s and '70s was a different time in the United States overall. And I think that was very beneficial, that we really were able to come together, be creative, and just continue to grow from it. You know, it's an interesting issue around being forced to be together and being able to come together on our own. Now, clearly, it would be wrong to say that we naturally came together in these segregated camps, because we didn't. We went to these segregated camps because I couldn't go to the camps my brothers went to because they weren't accessible, or they weren't willing to make themselves accessible. They didn't want students with disabilities in their camp. But we were able because, I think, of the leadership of the camps, to get very similar experiences from being in camp. And then many of the people who came out of the camp really had gained greater strength. And whether or not they played big roles in the disability community, I think, as a rule, they were seen as influencers in their community.

Michael: Yeah. Well that leads us back to Catherine. One of the important stories told in Crip Camp is that of the sit-in and the 504 legislation. So, Catherine?

Catherine: Thanks, Mike. So, Judy, we would not do justice to this conversation if we didn't talk at least a little bit about your role in having the 504 regulations signed. So, let's go back to the mid-late '70s. And talk with us a little bit about why it was the decision of the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities to protest to force the signature on 504 rehab and regulations, and why that was so important to the group that time in US history.

Judith: I think there are many things that were going on. So, the law had been signed, but it had not just been signed. So, our demonstrations really started in 1972, in New York, when Nixon vetoed the bill the first time. And those demonstrations, from the best of my knowledge, were unique for the time. There had been demonstrations in 1936 against Roosevelt by disabled individuals when one of his major pieces of legislation in employment did not include disabled people. But outside of that, there really hadn't been public displays. And when the Rehab Act was vetoed, and a group of about 50 of us-- again, cross-disability-- and at this time also included people who had been organizers to fight to close down a place called Willowbrook State School for the Mentally Retarded. That's what it was called. We don't use that word anymore, but that's what it was called. So, you can see at that point, it was an interesting cross coalition that really had not happened before. And we then worked with many other organizations. And ultimately, the law got signed in '73. But no one knew how to implement the law. It was a 42-word law which didn't define disability, didn't discuss discrimination. Couldn't do it, couldn't discriminate. But what did that mean? So, there had been, from '73, a lot of work which was being done by people in the Office of Civil Rights in health education and welfare. We'd been involved, disabled people had been involved. ACCD-- American Coalition of Citizens with Disability-- was formed in 1975 because people were beginning to become concerned that these regulations were going to drag on. And so, when ACCD was started, it was a cross-disability national coalition. I believe the first of its kind in the country. Unfortunately, it only lasted seven years. But one of the major purposes of coming together was to get the 504 regulations signed. We did four years of active work. They'd been sent out for comment. There was a set that was ready-- of regulations-- that were ready to be signed. And President Ford had said he refused to sign. So, many of us worked on Carter's campaign. And Carter had said he would get them signed. In February of '77, we had a board meeting for ACCD. And Frank Bowe was the executive director and Eunice Fiorito the president were stating and they were very concerned that Califano-- who was the secretary-- was not going to do what we wanted. I actually introduced the motion that we set a date. And if the regulations weren't signed, that we work on getting them signed. That's how that came about. And then we organized around the country. And the Berkeley, San Francisco Bay Area demonstrations really were the most effective because we had the strongest group at that point in time. And the reason we were able to get the regulations signed was the accumulation of knowledge and advocacy and a recognition that we needed to intervene. If we didn't, these regulations that we felt already had been watered down-- obviously, because it was a national process that included hospital associations, universities, public schools, on and on. All who were clamoring, no, no, no. They couldn't do it. And we were clamoring, yes, yes, yes. We need to do it. And that's how it came about.

Catherine: So, the longest sit-in at the time was 24 days.

Judith: No, ever.

[INAUDIBLE]

Judith: Ever. Ever. It's the longest sit-in-- peaceful sit-in-- in a federal building in the history of the US.

Catherine: So, very impressive, Judy and the advocates that had to do with that. 150 people in the building in San Francisco. And hundreds of people around the country. We have a couple of questions I want to make sure we have time to share with you. But I want to take a moment to tell you what an honor it is to talk with you about 504. I know we haven't talked about IDEA, but you were involved in that also. And as an ex special-ed attorney, I used both of those laws all the time to keep kids with disabilities in school. It was, much to my surprise, a frequent call that I would get from parents saying, this school will not allow my child to come to class because they're telling me he or she is uneducable. So, something happened in the '70's right It's still happening. But because of your advocacy and the folks that worked with you, I was able to use those laws to get those kids back in school that day. All I had to do is make a call, and things happened that didn't happen for you and the group of advocates that grew up with you. So, thank you, from me and from all the clients that I have the honor of representing.

Judith: And I really always, always want to say that there are thousands of people working on this. And I think one of the issues that I want to just raise quickly is, we need to ensure that people understand the laws that are in place. Because too many people do not know they exist or do not know what they enable us to do. And even if people do, they don't necessarily have the support of the advocates-- who don't have to be lawyers always-- and lawyers when necessary. So, I think you know the government-- federal government-- for many years was providing funding to do regional trainings for parents who had kids with disabilities for adults to learn about ADA, et cetera. And I really hope that the next administration will be able to look at the importance of this happening. And recognizing you know that our movement now is much more cognizant of the absence of certain groups of people-- people of color, Indigenous populations, et cetera. And so there really is a need to ramp up the training that we're doing so people really do understand their rights and you get the support they need. I hope you're all going to vote on Tuesday if you haven't already voted.

Catherine: told many people have already voted

[INAUDIBLE]

Judith: But I could-- Good.

Catherine: the saying I used to share with people that the law is just words on paper. If you don't know it exists, you cannot use it to benefit you and create change. So, let's turn back to Mike, though, and share another question.

Michael: So, Judy, you brought up this issue of not only cross disability but intersectionality as being so important probably forever, but certainly at this point in time. I want to turn now to a question from a friend-- and a friend of young people with disabilities in Kansas-- Julia Connellis.

Julia Connellis: Hi, my name is Julia Connellis. And I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy. A description of myself is that I'm a 43-year-old woman who is Puerto Rican, and I have tight curly brown hair. I'm wearing a multi-colored shirt and jeans. As a proud woman with multiple disabilities, I have seen firsthand how society, including the disability community, has built a disability hierarchy of sorts. As a result of hierarchies, you often see assumptions, judgments, and discrimination. I have found it challenging and discouraging at times to manage the intersect of my multiple disabilities in various environments. Through your life journeys, can you tell me what work has been done on the intersection of having multiple disabilities? And can you also give me some tips on how I can help deconstruct the disability hierarchy?

Judith: Thank you very much. I think the issue of deconstructing the disability hierarchy is beginning to happen by people like yourself or in jobs now that didn't even exist when you were younger. I was talking to Keri Gray [last night, who's going to be one of the speakers. I see on a regular basis, for example, the benefit of IDEA, of 504, of the ADA in the number of disabled individuals who are attending community colleges and universities from diverse backgrounds. I believe it was either the class of 2020 or 2019, 59% of the disabled students who graduated across the country were people of color. And I think that's really a very important figure. What it also means is that we as disabled people have to want to work in the disability community. And not everybody does. And they shouldn't have to. The pay for many of the jobs in the disability organizing community is really bad. If people can get a job in corporate, they may want to do that. They're going to get paid more money. And as I've been saying, discussing how many people have not identified. So, I think you know we're really needing to continue to organize, continue to have small groups that are meeting and talking with each other. And I think people have had similar experiences. And by that, I mean people of color. And you're seeing a lot of this happening with various disabilities coming together to be able to talk about both their experiences as disabled individuals as well as the additional areas of discrimination that they're facing because of both their race and different forms of disabilities. On the issue of working with people who have multiple disabilities, again, I think this is really important that we talk about this more, that we're looking at it more deeply. And I do think the question is, where are we convening? So, for example, on university campuses, is there a disability rights organization run by disabled people on campus? Is that organization addressing very relevant questions like you're discussing? If it isn't happening, where is it happening? We need to create space for people to have these discussions. We need to be looking at jobs that are opening up that people are interested in applying for. It's not an overnight fix. Because the reality is, when you look at the number of disabled people in the US-- 61 million-- there is not that much money that's going into supporting groups like Centers is for Independent Living. I think $80, $100 million out of a budget of trillions of dollars, it's nothing. So, I believe that we need to come together more. We need to be-- within our community-- continuing to work on change, which is happening. Maybe not fast enough, but I think it is happening. And it's going to continue to happen more rapidly. But we need to use our voices collectively to demand that we're getting more money to support organizations that are focused on advocacy and community inclusion. Because if we can fight together for more money, we can ensure that more people are getting jobs, that people are getting jobs they're being paid an appropriate wage, and that we're able to reach out to larger circles of people to be able to help them move forward also.

Michael: Thank you, Judy. I think we're going to move back to Catherine for one more question and some wrap-up.

Catherine: Thank you, Mike. At this point, I'd like to share Megan Belaire's question.

Megan Belaire: Hi.

[AUDIO OUT]

Megan Belaire: Megan Belaire I'm a graduate academic advisor with the College Office of Graduate Affairs working at the University of Kansas. I am a white woman in her 20s with medium-length brown curly hair wearing a gray v-neck shirt with Jayhawks on it. And I am sitting in front of a KU-branded background that shows a picture of the KU campus behind me. My question today is, Judy, what, in your mind, does a society that prioritizes disability justice look like? What would the features of a society like that be?

Judith: Well, it would be a society where we were all being treated equally. Not just disabled people. Where issues of racial diversity and discrimination, religious, sexual orientation, on and on. Where Right now, we're in a period of time which, from my perspective, is the most divisive we've ever lived in. And I believe that not only are we fighting for disability justice, but we're really fighting to begin, again,to have discussions about what do we value as a society and what do we, as a society, believe needs to change. I think we're needing to alter many of the things that we've done in the past, because we've also not really looked at the forms of discrimination that people have faced, that people continue to face, because we have failed to acknowledge the weaknesses and disparities in our system. people think about it as a left-wing conspiracy of wanting to get police off the streets. Personally, I don't think that's what's being discussed. I think what we're really looking at is the role of police, which is appropriate, and the community can agree on. But taking responsibility away from the police, who are not prepared to deal with it, nor should they. We need to look at what's going on in Philadelphia right now with this 27-year-old Black bipolar man who was having an issue with-- mental health issue, and had a knife-- whose mother called to get mental health help where the police were brought in and did not use any appropriate techniques to assist this man in stepping down from what they perceived he might be doing. The fact that he was killed, I think, really speaks to both the issue of racism and ableism. And I think, also--you know, this year for me, George Floyd, his murder, the number of other people who have been blatantly murdered, that it's really difficult for anyone to say that you can legitimize what happened. So, I think it is essential that when we're looking at justice-- disability justice and justice overall-- that we really need to have discussions that we haven't had yet. And that those discussions really need to result in change. And it has to be happening at the most local level. So, for me, you know it's looking at our city councils, our county boards of supervisors, our state governments, our school boards, our boards for universities. It's the federal government. It's across the board. But we have to be able to be building trust. We have to be able to come together and ask this question of ourselves, what do we want our society to look like? And what do we need to do to make that happen? And then we have to commit ourselves to doing very hard work that none of us have really successfully done, quite frankly, in most parts of the world. Because, you know, the United States is such a diverse country. And that diversity really necessitates really getting to know people better and not being racist, homophobic, on and on, exhibiting those behaviors which we have done since the beginning of our country. And for me, universities need to play a role where people can be brought together, learn about the history, and learn about what it is we need to be committing to do. So that, for me, is what I want to see.

Catherine: Thank you Judy. So, in closing our first session for day one of our two-day celebration, I want to leave us with Judy's final words from her autobiography. I view this as her charge to all of us here at KU and everyone else who's joined us today for this virtual celebration. She says, remember that when we unite, progress happens. We have power. We are changing things. For we are our own leaders of inclusiveness and community of love, equity, and justice. Judy, it's been an honor sharing this time with you today. I look forward to the remainder of our two-day celebration with you. Mike, thank you so much for helping with this conversation. And in closing, one last reminder that if you have not registered for the other live sessions, please go to our event website and do that. Judy, Mike, thank you so much. It's been a real pleasure. We'll see you again soon. Thank you, everyone else, for joining us today. This has been phenomenal, have a 1,000 people join us for this conversation. Way exceeded expectations I had for this when we started planning this about a year and 1/2 ago. So, thank you, everyone, for making time in your schedule to have this amazing conversation with Judith Heumann, a real powerhouse of an advocate for disability inclusion. Thank you, Judy.

Judith: And thank you, Catherine and everybody at KU, for your leadership on putting this together. And hopefully, other universities around the country will also hold these types of learn-ins so that the voices of leaders in the disability community and people on campuses and in the community can really be brought together in a more unified way. Thank you.

Catherine: Thank you.