[MUSIC] You are listening to Tell Me Your Story where we connect to HLS's staff on a personal level.

Hello everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from HLS Human Resources department. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today you are talking to Susan Salvado from the Registrar's Office. Who will you tell us about her life, how long she is in this position at HLS, and the work she does. Thank you for join us, Susan, and please tell me your story.

Hi Edgar. Thank you for having me.

I was born in Sommerville. I've lived in Medford my entire life.

Nice.

I've been at Harvard for a very long time [LAUGHTER].

When you say a long time, how long is it?

Well, I was a Court Stenographer over at federal court in Boston for a few years.

Before you join Harvard?

Before I joined Harvard, and then when I came to Harvard, I worked in what now is ITS. When I started working it was called Word Processing Microcomputer Support, that was back in 1980.

Oh no, hold on [LAUGHTER]. That was amazing about talking to folks that are here for a while. I had the same reaction with Yvonne Smith because when Yvonne told me the name of HR department that time I was in what? Now you're telling me, just repeat that again. You said that we started where ITS is?

I started working in September of 1980 and the department that I started in, which current nicktitle is ITS. Information Technology Services at that time was called Word Processing Microcomputer Support. It was two departments under one umbrella. Media Services was also not part of IT at that time like computer support. Our offices, we had two offices in the basement of Langdell.

In the basement of Langdell.

In the basement of Langdell which is now faculty offices. I didn't cut it out the building many years ago. [OVERLAPPING]

Because I'm trying to figure out if you are talking to basement of Langdell. Always my reference is the South classroom and the North classroom, but that would be a first floor.

Langdell North and South were not there when I started working here.

Oh wow, Susan.

Langdell was gutted out when after I'd been working here for about 10 years. The frame of Langdell was the same as it was then, but the inside of Langdell was very different. [OVERLAPPING]

Which they recently renovated again and in the upper levels there indeed. But would it be aware I don't know if you know where the events office is sitting right now, is in the same area or was what the library and the special collections are now?

Where the library is right now. As you walk into the main [OVERLAPPING] basement? No, I don't know what's down in the basement, but if you are on the first floor with a door that goes outside to the field. That was a huge. That was a big open space that had a U-shaped desk.

Really? We're talking about when you go upstairs, you have the Story statue there and then you go to the, what we call the

[OVERLAPPING] The chapel doors to the library there, there's an elevator. Then there's double doors that lead into the library. I think it's called the reference area, but I'm not.

[OVERLAPPING] Yes, the reference desk.

Then there are stacks on either side that go through the things. That wasn't there.

Turnstile.

The turnstile, that entire area was opened up. There was a huge reception area with a huge U-shaped or almost an O-shaped desk where receptionists sat. It was primarily the main information desk for the law school. Anybody who called or came onto the law school would go through there.

That area was the what we call today ITS would sit in those areas as well?

No, ITS was in the basement. I'm saying ITS was in the basement [OVERLAPPING] down near where the faculty I don't even know who the faculties are, where they are now, but if you would go down to the basement of Langdell, there's a bathroom and a staff lounge. I think there's a faculty office here. Then you go into Griswold Hall, there's a corridor that you can take into Griswold.

That would be where the compass is?

You know where the compass is? But before you get to the overpass to go into Griswold, that hallway. Well, that hallway didn't exist.

There was all offices down there and the clinical office was Word Processing Microcomputer Support. The clinical services, the student lab, and they were all small rooms except for the computer lab, which was of pretty good size. We were down there. We were down there for many years and we outgrew the space.

That's really interesting to know.

We outgrew the space and then they moved when Hauser was built, they started building Hauser but I think it took four years because I don't remember.

You were there even before Hauser was built.

I was in there before Hauser, yeah, Hauser wasn't there.

Phenomenal. Pound Hall was there already?

Pound was there, yeah.

They had already the events of the Ropes and Gray.

Ropes and gray with Pound Hall. We still had Ropes and Gray. We still had the John Chipman room.

Yes, those rooms were [OVERLAPPING]

Those were all there, they hadn't walked off the wing yet. [LAUGHTER].

Wow. That's interesting. After you were in that position with what do you call it today, ITS, what next department?

Then in July 2000, I came to work in the Registrar's Office. When I first came to work in the Registrar's Office, I was the Associate Registrar of Technology, and I worked with IT. IT was much bigger now. When I left IT was when I first came and when I first started working there. There was four of us, there were four full-time people. When I left, it was probably up to 20. I don't know how many is in IT now. I have no idea.

Well, it follows the technology rating, because computer at that time would be those massive ones and not very easy to use.

When I started working here, there was no computers.

Everything was handwritten or?

[OVERLAPPING] Everything was done in the Word processing IT and faculty assistance. I would come down to my office and have us work on whatever the faculty members book was. We had standalone word processing stations. There was three of them.

How would that work?

It worked, the data went on made cards.

My goodness. Explain that, Susan, how you dealt with that? Just explain for people.

It's bizarre. It wasn't [LAUGHTER] the software that you use, basically, if you weren't really using a software well it was, but it isn't. It isn't like the software that you and I know today with the interfaces, but you would have to write out the code yourself. When you were, we use Iwrite.

Yes, so you were programming in a way?

We were basically were programming at the same time, [OVERLAPPING] but it was very basic.

I imagine. But it's still a lot of work there, if we had to write the entire code to process something that we are interested on.

I get for it underline. If you wanted parenthesis, if you wanted to indent, they were all codes you had to put in.

Now everything is embedded there [OVERLAPPING] you don't need to see the background, you just press a key and everything it's amazing.

But you have to remember though too, Edgar, that back then the size of the law school was so much smaller than it is now.

Much smaller I imagine.

I'm not even talking about the physical footprint of the law school.

Even the courses and everything.

Everything was smaller. Right now a section it goes around 78-82 students. A section back then was 144. [OVERLAPPING] There were four sections with 144 students.

You are talking here about the main classrooms in Austin Hall, the two main classes in Langdell North and South classroom, and then few classrooms in Pound Hall.

Pound 101 and Pound 102.

Louis had one or two small ones?

Pound 101 holds 114 and Pound 102 holds 130. They couldn't hold, at that time, they wouldn't have been able to hold. But remember, we only had four sections back then.

Exactly.

There were four sections with 144 students and now there is seven sections with 78-82. Then there's the eighth section that's transfer students.

You have the JD. I think JD is around 560.

Back then when I started, JDs were around 555, and now it varies from year to year, but now I think it's probably around 570, 575. [OVERLAPPING] Then there's a much more transfers now that we are [OVERLAPPING]

What about international students? You have that many or not?

I don't know. That's the Graduate Program [OVERLAPPING] that brings in the International students.

Already exist, do you remember or not?

[OVERLAPPING] Did they? Yeah, Graduate Program was there.

They were still there. They were there. Jeanne Tai wasn't the assistant dean [OVERLAPPING] of the program at the time, but they were there.

You started in 1980 with the ITS, I wouldn't dare to say the name of the department at that time that you just mentioned. [LAUGHTER] Then what year we started with the Registrar's Office.

July of 2000.

2000.

July of 2000.

From '80-2000, Sue worked with department that we call ITS.

ITS.

Really.

Yes.

Wow. So what's the change? What's appealed to you to go to the Registrar's Office and wherever the registrar's office was at the time?

The registrar's office was in Griswold.

In Griswold.

One of the things that persuaded me to go to Registrar's Office was that at the time Sue Robinson, was the Registrar’s. She was a wonderful person and they didn't have a student database, as you think of a student database or student information system like we have now. For a lot the records and whether it was curriculum, I work primarily on curriculum building with her. They didn't have anywhere to store that permanently and be able to edit it. Sue and I would work year round because even though the curriculum is only done once a year at the time of the year when you're working on it isn't expanded, it's from months.

I imagine.

Sue would come down and give me all this information. I'd put it into a database and then if she had changes, I'd manipulate the data in the database. I do all that work for her. I'd create the reports, I print them, and she take them back. I was already doing a lot of technical work for Sue and she decided that they really needed a technical person at the time. But she was actually retiring. I didn't go over. After she retired, then the new registrar came in and they were looking at student information systems. That's when I decided I would apply.

Because you already had the experience. [OVERLAPPING]

Because then I would be doing both technology and I would be learning more about the Registrar's Office itself, the curriculum, the scheduling.

In a way the Registrar’s at the time depend on the ITS for the technology. By end of year [OVERLAPPING] that wouldn't be helpful?

At that time the Registrar's Office depended very much for that type of task. Anything related to computers or records like that, I mean, not in a formal paper stuff. I'm talking about anything that was going to be electronic, then we did it for them. We did it for the whole school.

Now I wondered, all the exams and everything else would be of course, all in hand written. There was no other options.

Everything was hand written then.

Everything in packages probably for delivery.

Registration would have Ropes Gray setup, and they would literally be at the beginning of the year. Well, you get familiar with the beginning of the year when students come in, but at that time, there was nothing electronic. You'd literally have 1,500 students coming into Ropes Gray for registration. I'm talking about now course registration.

Yes.

That was done by hand. I dropped. It was done by hand.

Wow, can you imagine?

Ropes Gray was literally wall to wall people.

They're all together.

They're all together and you'd have tables set up for them to come and then tell them what classes do you want to drop it, write it down. We'd have a piece of paper, but what they wanted to add, what they wanted to drop then after we got the students, we'd go back to the office and would have to enter that into database, which is not a student basis system.

Exactly, I was thinking about it.

Everything had to be done manually, add drop had to be done manually.

How long it would take Susan to get grades and everything else comparing with today with the system and technology we have today? Do you think that is the same you had to have everything resolved or you have a longer time to provide a response in terms of a grade?

We did have longer time, but we didn't have that much of longer time.

We had to do a database that grades went in and we had a database administrator, and someone else would enter those grades and the database administrator would process the file then the grades would come up. But again grades didn't come on a computer. They were on piece of paper.

Wow. It's like the one that you see kids bringing holding there.

It was it was this big. It was two-by-four. Two inches by four by eight inches. Those notes to transcripts that you see today are not what transcripts looked like. Now everything was different.

I remember why I was working at DOS. Well, that was another change as well. It's a new technology. [OVERLAPPING]

Is that when we were in Pound?

No, here and I came in when it was already in WCC. But I remember that the course evaluations was all packages and then you have to give to the students, they were in a hand written in a way, and then bring back and have deselect an then enter the information inside of one of those softwares. Then later on everything was online. Now the students can respond to everything online, it's automatic response and easy to manipulate. But I remember the boxes and boxes of course evaluations that kept us really confidential, being sent back to the Harvard depository where most of confidential and material was, and if you need to say something you have to make a request for them to bring the box back to the campus.

Which we still have to do.

We still do?

Any given day we'll be sending a request to the archives to bring us back. We have hundreds of boxes over there.

It's true you have some.

From long, many years before I started working here, and we needed someone's records and they stored over there and give the number of the boxes. We might have four or five boxes come over and then we're done getting the alumni's information that we needed, then we'll send them back.

When we started the were in Griswold, because I remember when that was, where?

When I started in Registrar's Office I was in Griswold.

Yes. Because I remember when that I believe at that time 2001, 2002 I was in Landscape and I think I remember you. Your office would be the office below where the dean's office is right now.

My office was below the dean's office, yes.

When you inside of the Griswold, which we would say would from that side, get in inside of Areeda. Griswold, you enter from the opposite side because they're all connected.

I would go into Griswold through the aperture. It was actually an entrance way for Areeda Hall. [OVERLAPPING] You're right.

Then when you moved to Registrar's Office when the WCC was finished, when it was buit. [OVERLAPPING]

When did you start working in DOS?

DOS was 2014.

That's why you don't remember. We left. We were in Griswold then as suite was being renovated and they renovated suite while they renovated the suite we were up and the fifth floor of Griswold. We were up there, I think there's about a year, move back to the Registrar's Office. They renovated the office. It was beautiful.

Sorry to interrupt you. I'm still curious now because I remember seeing you, but the entire office of Registrar’s was where the First Year Legal Studies is now with Susannah Barton Tobin.

That's right.

Now, that makes sense.

That entire suite was the Registrar's Office.

The Registrar's was that entire floor.

The entire floor.

Perfect.

That side of it. That wing.

Yes. Because then I would say, how many people were when you were starting in that floor?

In the registrar's office we had more people than we do now.

Really?

Let me think.

Because I would say that right now it would have 10 people more or less, right?

They had 10 people and right now we have nine.

Nine, wow. I hope it's not the technology's fault, it was just because of a rearrangement of functions, and the way that you do, probably.

Actually we have no position when I think of that now. I had to remember we're just going to be.

Because some stuff moved from one way.

Just movement.

Then when you moved from Griswold?

From Griswold we moved next door to Dean of Students Office in Pounds. We were neighbors.

Oh my goodness, that's right.

It was so much fun. We used to be able to visit and Dean of Students they had a back door that opened up to our front door. [LAUGHTER] It was great. Suzanne Richardson was Dean of Students actually before Suzanne, I'm trying to remember. Oh my God, I can't remember the name. Was it Sarah? When I first came, Susanne Richardson was not the Dean of Students. I'm trying to remember.

At the time.

At the time.

I remember going up to the third floor because I was already in Facilities because it depends on what was requested or something that would end up going to Pound Hall to visit or to talk with the Dean of Students office for something. We would get off of the elevator and therw was a huge open space. There were students everywhere sitting in couches there. If you go on your left a little bit further, then you would have BSA. Yvonne used to sit with them in a huge space there just for BSAs. Then on the right where to go, the first stop would be the Dean of Students office.

Dean of Students office, which went all the way down. It was narrow. Did you know Ellen?

Yeah. Ellen was the one who brought me to DOS

Yeah. Suzanne was Dean of Students for most of the time that I worked up there with them. Then Ellen came.

Yeah.

We had a lot of fun. We used to be two deparment and we used to do a lot of things together.

Yes. I think it is a really good setup because you would have the Dean of Students and the Registrar’s, and that there's a lot of our communication because [OVERLAPPING]

There's a lot of communication between the two departments.

Yeah.

t was nice and we could just walk right across the hall.

Having fun there.

Yeah.

That didn't change your position with the time that you worked in Griswold for what you do nowadays?

Yeah. I'm now the Associate Registrar for Office Management and Operations.

What does that do?

In operations. The day-to-day managing of the officer and I do the room assignments. I received the requests for rooms from anyone, any academic requests.

I'm going to just making fun of you. Isn't that to you that block the entire campus? [LAUGHTER]

That's me. [LAUGHTER] I'm the person who blocks the entire campus during exams and touring, it's true. I feel bad that I have to do it.

I'm just laughing because I remember when, for example, if you had either when DOS or even Facilities, when you had to do some desert, you need a room for something that maybe you could do, and then you'll talk to Events and now you need to talk to Susan for us. She is figuring out all the places where the classes are going to be, where the cars are going to be. If it is available, the time that you need, she's going to let you use for that day, otherwise, you need to choose a different one. That always comes to my mind and say, oh, that's the Susan is the one holding the entire campus hostage.

It's true. I get a lot of people used to say that.

But people don't know is the reason that you do that is because you need to know how many students are going to be in each course, right?

Well, that's part of it. It depends if you're talking about for room assignments, we get we don't know yet. We don't know what the room's convenient rooms fluctuate so we have to wait, wait to appoint told me know that they're settling. But as far as when I have the entire campus on hold for during the exam period.

Yeah.

The other large classrooms are used for in-class exams but small rooms, which a lot of people don't know is the smaller rooms, seminar rooms, waiting for rooms, those are all used for what's called out-of-sequence sequence exams.

Yeah.

We'd never know from one term to the next how many students are going to need a room? We usually fill them all and it can literally happen at the last minute, it's not planned ahead. We may not think tomorrow we have two students taking it out of sequence accommodated, out of sequence exam isn't accommodated exam.

Yeah.

We may think we have in three for tomorrow and we'll end up having 12.

Yes.

We always had to have rooms available.

Yeah. The reason that I'm asking these questions is exactly that. What goes behind the scenes that people have no clue, and then, of course, Susan is holding the entire campus but doesn't know how much it goes into it, right?

Exactly.

For example, when you said that in the past, you would put a lot of the students in Ropes and Gray room, I think Diane also told me that story.

About the add drop. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

That was a nightmare.

Yeah, exactly. But [OVERLAPPING].

If you think about it now, it was funny, but I don't know how we got through it.

At the same time, it was just one big room and everything.

Big room setup all around the perimeter.

Yes.

Do you remember Ropes and Gray?

Yeah.

That was a good size, was a weird shaped room, but it was [OVERLAPPING].

And dark too.

I loved that. I actually loved that wing. I was sad when they took it down. All the students would come in and stand out in lines, and it would start out in a nice line going up, and back, and down, and then it ended up that it would be just one big room students.

Yeah.

But we know we got through it and the hours would be we work really long hours. We never had weekends. Weekends of July 4th, or Labor Day, Memorial Day, we never had those weekends off, we worked the entire weekend.

Wow. The entire time working.

The entire weekend, so three-day weekends, we always worked.

There you go, the difference is already there because of course because of the circumstances and lack of technology as well, you have to work harder and longer in order to make everything work right.

Make sure to double-check calculations, for example, for commencement, leading up to commencement.

Now with all the rooms that we have, that we have so many more, we have a different challenge that it is, what do you mean? The accommodations, right? One thing that I think is also good to mention, regardless of how much planning you do, and everything seems to be okay in place, and you have all this room divided, that you know where the professor, the students go and this and that, and then you also might have some of the accommodations planned ahead and you know where they are going to be and you feel like, okay, you are in good shape. But like you said, that is a lot of it happens in the last minute. Accommodations that you are not expecting as students got sick in the morning.

Well, that's what will happened. We'll get in the morning and well, DOS will call us and say Susan, we have three students who whatever the reason maybe, we need room speak, they can't take the exam in the room or there's a reason why.

Yeah.

And so then we set them up. We have to have their rooms available because the students have to take the exam either before the actual exam takes place, what's best for the student to take the exam at the same time as the other students in the class.

Yeah.

But whenever that's not possible, then that students will take it after the exam.

Yeah.

But yeah, we could come in in the morning and find out throughout the day, the day could be going on and then we find out all want.

Well, you sure have a student or something. The idea of some folks might feel like, oh, but it's true could have an event. Well, we have a big number of students having the exams. I remember I had joked with Megan Markov about how early should be on campus to put those signs that please be quiet exams going on, that kind of thing. If you allow an event to go in certain part of the building with all the exams going around, and if you have a noise, what's the point?

That's what I used to do when I was setting up the exam room assignments. What I would do is I would put all of the exams, of course, and I had to go buy enrollments and the enrollments had to be doubled.

Wow.

The room had to hold double the capacity of the class enrollment because students had to sit at every other seat. I would always, of course, WCC was always anyone class takes place, exam takes place in WCC,

Each class takes two rooms. Then we go into Austin, you go into Langdell,Pound. We will use some of the Pound rooms, but I tried to leave most of the rooms and Pound for events to use. We'll use some of Hauser, but I tried to lead to a few rooms for events.

Yeah. But distant from everything that's necessary to not bother the exams.

Thinking of something to give somewhere.

Yeah.

But WCC is completely tied up, Austin's tied up, Langell's tied up, sometimes I'll keep putting P102 as well.

One thing, curiosity on my end, do you think that with the pandemic and the changes that were necessary to make to accommodate chosen in terms of virtual exams, do you see a little change or not? If you don't know, you don't need to answer.

In as far as exam accommodations?

Not just accommodations, but exams in general. Do you think that there will be now that force that way because of the pandemic, we had to have two years exams all done virtually, right? It couldn't be done in person because there was no condition. Do you think that it will ease up in a way having more exams online instead of forcing everybody to be on campus or you'll still be half-half?

I'm probably not a good person to answer that question. I would be a Megan question. Megan's the exam administrator, but I can give my opinion, but I don t think it'll ease up.

No, it's going to return it.

With pre-COVID, every year the out sequence or accommodated exam which will going up exponentially. I don't see how that's going to stop because of COVID?

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

But I don't know. Because we haven't had an opportunity to test it yet.

Yes.

Because this terms exams are online. I don't know.

But my point was not much more in terms of the accommodation aspect of it, but mainly if you were able to give us so many exams virtually, maybe we still could give a good percentage of them virtually to make it easier in a way, we should say it's secure because they use software like Exam Four and everything is done in a very safe way.

Which they do use anyway.

Yeah. Yeah.

Even when in-class exams are all done in Exam For.

You mentioned one thing and I don't want you to forget this, Susan. You said that before you came to Harvard, you're working in a court ruling house, what was your job there?

I was the Court Stenographer. [MUSIC]

Our lovely conversation with Susan Salvado continues on the next episode. Make sure to tune in [MUSIC].