[00:00:04]

[MUSIC] You are listening to tell me your story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. [MUSIC] Hello everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from HLS Human Resource Department. My pronouns are he, him, his. Today we are talking to Rhea Ranno from registrar's office, who will tell us about their life, how long they are in this position at HLS, and the work they do. Thank you for joining us Rhea, and please tell me your story.

[00:00:37]

Thank you so much, Edgar. I really appreciate it. I'm so excited to be here with you.

[00:00:42]

I am too.

[00:00:43]

I'm pumped. One might even see. [MUSIC]

[00:00:46]

Tell me what's your title at the Registrar's Office.

[00:00:49]

I am the Assistant Registrar of Enrollment Technology. It's just a long title.

[00:00:56]

Yes.

[00:00:57]

But it's a fun job.

[00:00:58]

What does it entail? What do you do?

[00:01:02]

Let's see, I do a lot of different things. I would say that from a technology point of view, I am the person who supports faculty assistance with seatGEN, which is something we use for creating named tags and place cards for students in classrooms. I also support them with course evaluations. I'm the course evaluation person.

[00:01:29]

Wow.

[00:01:29]

If you ever have questions about how that works, I'm a good resource for that. I also do a lot of the website stuff, so keeping our pages up-to-date, and making any changes there that might be necessary. Then on top of that, I'm one of the central reporting folks. For staff who perhaps, maybe they want a list of all LLM students from the specific country or something like that, they would connect with me and I'm the one who builds those reports alongside several other colleagues. Then I do other cool, one-off fun things. I'm the person who does biographical updates. If a student comes in and they have a new name or something like that, I'm the person who makes those changes. Everything else that might come up that relates to those bigger things. It's a lot of fun stuff.

[00:02:29]

A lot of activities there.

[00:02:31]

A lot of activities.

[00:02:33]

Different ways. Thank you for that information. But to get there, let's jump past all the way to the beginning.

[00:02:41]

Rewinding.

[00:02:41]

Yes. I have to ask you the question. Are you from New England area? Are you from a different place? Tell me about your childhood and your school, going to school and all of that.

[00:02:51]

I am from Boston.

[00:02:53]

You're from Boston?

[00:02:54]

Boston Proper.

[00:02:55]

Yeah.

[00:02:55]

Some people say like, I'm from Boston and then they're like, they can't or something, I'm like you're not from Boston, but I'm from Boston Proper, and I was born and raised in Jamaica Plain.

[00:03:05]

Jamaica Plain.

[00:03:06]

In a predominantly Latinx neighborhoods. We were one of maybe a handful of white families in that area. My culture growing up was deeply influenced by Latin's culture.

[00:03:16]

Very diverse.

[00:03:17]

And particular and very diverse place to grow up in. I love being a city kid. I feel like there's a resourcefulness that comes with growing up in a city that you may not get if you grew up elsewhere. But I do have a dream of moving out to the woods someday because the city gets a little loud sometimes, but born and raised in Boston.

[00:03:38]

Your family is from Boston too?

[00:03:40]

Yes. I have a complicated family history.

[00:03:45]

My God, wait. You are going to be the only one because of it. Let's talk about no, I am joking. [LAUGHTER] That's telling me about your complicated family history if you can.

[00:03:56]

I have spent a lot of my adult life building a chosen family. Because my family of origin, which is tough, both my parents really struggled with being parents. My mom is originally from Elizabeth, New Jersey. She grew up in just a working-class town, Elizabeth, New Jersey. Her family ethnically is Romani, so travelers from Eastern Europe by way of Lithuania and the Czech Republic, which is now known as the Czech Republic. Then my birth father is born and raised in Boston, has Scotch, Irish, and English history, he's like second or third-generation Bostonian. Yes, so they both, they met here in Boston when my mom moved here from New York. They just struggled to be present like some parents do. My birth father also struggled with substance abuse disorder, so he wasn't really in my life, and that kind of way. The person that I've really called the parent in my life is my little sister's father. He has known me since I was a year old. He's a mechanic also from Boston, also like third-generation Bostonian. He for all intense purposes, is like my dad though he adopted me and has shown me, taught me a lot of what I use in the world, which is hard work and making sure that you show up for your family and ensure that you just have a life that you're proud of. And so a lot of my morals and these things really come from my dad.

[00:05:50]

From your dad.

[00:05:51]

From my adopted dad. There's a little bit about them. I have a younger sister who I'd mentioned. Her name is Katie. She owns a small dog walking company or rather runs a small dog walking company in Charlestown. She's killing it all the time. [LAUGHTER] I'm obsessed with her. I always say that being a big sister is the hardest job I've ever had in my life. But it's also the most beautiful and rewarding. Really can't imagine a world where my little sister isn't my best friend, so we're super close.

[00:06:29]

That's nice. You're still in Jamaica Plain?

[00:06:33]

Yeah. We both grew up in Jamaica Plain, in Hyde Square. I now live in Allston/Brighton, Boston and my little sister lives in Roslindale, so we're all very close still in Boston.

[00:06:48]

That company is in Charlestown.

[00:06:50]

That company is in Charlestown. I have some ties to Charlestown just because I used to be a dog walker. I worked for that same company years and years ago as a dog walker, which was also one of my favorite jobs. I loved being a dog walker.

[00:07:03]

I wonder that might be really cool, your clients are awesome.

[00:07:07]

Yeah, my clients are awesome. They don't have much to say.

[00:07:11]

But they show so much love.

[00:07:13]

But they show so much. I think for me, working with animals, shortly I was in my early 20s. I had this rough upbringing and didn't quite know how to process all of that.

[00:07:29]

Did that happen throughout your going through school as well?

[00:07:32]

Yeah. Through school. I left home at 18 and never looked back, but throughout my childhood, my parents both struggled with raising me. There was stuff that happened in my family that was just hard to process. It's a hard turn as a young adult, trying to figure your way out in the world when you carry all this generational trauma and you're trying to make it.

[00:08:02]

That impact our day-to-day in your school, how you will react or how you would study and everything.

[00:08:07]

Yeah, everything. Working with animals is really wonderful because I would work with a lot of rescue dogs who had been through really horrible situations. Thankfully we're on the mend, but it takes a lot to earn the trust of a rescue dog. I remember how much joy I would feel if I was, I remember this one dog, his name was Toby, and he hated everyone. He would growl at me every time I came into his apartment and I had to lasso him because he wouldn't let me put my hands around his neck. I'm good at lassoing, that's a fun fact. I would lasso this dog to get him to go outside. Then I remember the first time I came into his house and he wagged his tail when he saw me, after all these months of growling at me, and this time he wagged his tail, was like one of the most beautiful, extraordinary experience in my life.

[00:09:00]

Out of nowhere or he started guiding you through?

[00:09:02]

He just got used to me and knew why he was coming. I was coming to just hang out with him. He knew that he'd get a treat at the end.

[00:09:11]

Yeah, and probably he started trusting you.

[00:09:13]

Yeah, he started trusting me, and I think that was something that was so valuable to me. I went to a really traditional high school in Boston called Boston Latin School. It was founded in 1635.

[00:09:27]

Wow.

[00:09:28]

Harvard was founded in 1636 from the Latin School Boys. So it was a place for all the Boston Latin School, at least that's what they tell you at Boston Latin School. It's probably not the actual reason why Harvard [OVERLAPPING]

[00:09:39]

So 1635?

[00:09:39]

Yeah, it's older than Harvard, yeah. It's older than Harvard. And it was extraordinarily rigorous in terms of academics. And it was tough to get support there. I wasn't really much of a student until later in my life when, again, when I didn't have all those factors at home, they're really difficult to study and be present. What I really found was I had connections to teachers. Teachers in my life would really show up and show out for me. They would recognize maybe there were some a little off about where I was coming from, but they knew that I was capable of doing cool things. So I'm still friends with my third grade teacher, Heidi Signes shout out to Heidi Signes if she ever gets to hear this. [LAUGHTER].

[00:10:28]

That's so wonderful.

[00:10:28]

Yeah. I had teachers in high school who just like really, regardless of what my academics were, just like knew that I could do cool things.

[00:10:37]

So those are the great ones.

[00:10:38]

Yeah, they're the great ones.

[00:10:40]

That can read students. They love what they do.

[00:10:42]

Yeah, and I think that that was such a gift to me. I mean, I'm a lifelong Boston public school students from kindergarten to high schooler I was in Boston Public Schools. The public school system culturally just gets a bad rep of just exactly what you're talking about, which is that there's just not enough time to give each child a unique experience. But it was those teachers that really inspired me to want to become a teacher myself. When I graduated high school, I went to Fitchburg State, which is about an hour from here in Central Mass, and went to school to become a high school English teacher because I loved writing, I loved reading. I loved working with young people. I still do. I love working with young people because they show you parts of yourself that you just, they humble you.

[00:11:38]

Exactly.

[00:11:39]

Young people will humble you. You know what I mean? Real fast. [LAUGHTER]

[00:11:42]

The honesty, you mean.

[00:11:42]

Yeah, exactly. Honesty. It's so funny because I'm a millennial, but I'm getting, as each year goes on, a new generation comes forth.

[00:11:51]

I'm glad, as a millennial, you are seeing how fast things go.

[00:11:55]

It's so fast. It's so fast. And so I wanted to do that. I wanted to work with young people and that was the dream. The dream was for me to go to school to become a teacher.

[00:12:04]

Did you have a good time in college? Was it a good experience or not?

[00:12:08]

What I've learned is that my journey has been one of patience. Because while everyone else around me, it seems, and I know this isn't true because there are plenty of people who had similar experiences to me. Had these really wonderful traditional experiences of having a family at home, who could support them and put them through college. I didn't have that. And so I went to school for a year at Fitchburg State and then ended up moving back home because my mother, who struggles with mental illness, couldn't take care of my little sister and I had a younger sister who was in high school at Charlestown High. And I had to come home and take care of her. And so that began this long journey. It would take me 13 years to get my bachelor's degree. And I came back home and I started working in an arts non-profit with young people in their communications department. And then that transforms into, I did a huge 180 where I started working in retail, and I worked at Olympia Sports selling shoes and like Celtics jerseys and sports equipment and I worked there for three years. I was an assistant manager there, and it was that time in my life where I started to realize I didn't have a normal childhood and I don't have a normal life compared to my peers. Because by the age of 20, I was working 50 hours a week in retail.

[00:13:43]

Fifty hours.

[00:13:44]

Fifty hours a week minimum. And then on my two days off, which were usually Tuesdays and Thursdays, I went to school, I went to Roxbury Community College and I took out a full-time course load. That's for back-to-back classes. And I would only break up those classes with a cigarette break. I'd have a cigarette between my classes. That was it. Then on top of that, I ended up having to start, I had to raise my younger sister, who was 17 and was coming out of a really horrible situation with my mom and I had to take her in. So I'm holding all of these things, and then of course I have a personal life. I was trying to date.

[00:14:19]

How old?

[00:14:19]

I was 20.

[00:14:20]

Twenty.

[00:14:20]

Twenty years old, and that's like what my life is like at 20.

[00:14:25]

Already.

[00:14:26]

My peers are like in dorms. You know what I mean? They've got meal plans.

[00:14:31]

Having fun, drinking, enjoying life.

[00:14:34]

We don't think the same way. And it was the beginning of my understanding of what resilience was. Now retrospectively in my mid-30s, I can look back at that and be like, oh, that's what taught me how to hustle. That's what taught me how to be driven. But at the time it was so heavy, so I have to do all those things.

[00:14:58]

And not everybody.

[00:14:59]

And not everybody.

[00:15:00]

Take that road that you took.

[00:15:01]

Yeah, exactly. And I have no regrets. I can't mention my little sister enough in this podcast, apparently. But my little sister has been both sibling and child to me in a lot of ways. And so for me, it was an opportunity to just live into that. Lean into caring for someone in a way you weren't expecting. So many of us can relate to just unexpectedly having to become a caretaker. And that's when I started realizing, oh, I really love caring for people. I love taking care of people. And so, my life, the trajectory of that, I became a dog walker, which I mentioned, and I did that for a couple of years. Loved it. But I wanted to finish my degree and I wanted to be able to get to the next stage of my life in that way. Unfortunately, even if I don't necessarily quite believe that you require a degree to do certain things, the world often does. And you need that piece of paper to get to certain stages in one's life. So I on a whim, started applying to jobs at Harvard. And this is something that I really loved when I first saw you on the launch party for this podcast. You were kind of talking about your life story and how you've been here for 20 years. I can't remember what your first job was here.

[00:16:22]

Landscape.

[00:16:22]

Landscaping. So you started off in landscaping and I started off as a part-time staff assistant at HUHS, which was a term position, it wasn't even a permanent position.

[00:16:34]

I was checking people in for their acupuncture appointments over at the center for wellness. From there, I ended up getting my first union job here, which was here at HLS, which was in the Donor Services Department. What that meant was not only did I have these really awesome benefits that I'd never had before. Because Harvard is just like great with their benefits, but I was also part of a union. I could finish my degree for 40 bucks a class. It was this I never in my wildest dreams would have thought that I could go to Harvard grown up in the city of Boston. Harvard was always the castle on the Charles. You're know what I mean. It's nice to take even go there, but it's so hard to get to that point, so I always think I started off at HUHS, made my way to HLS. Was here for about three years. Found my way over to the Division of Continuing ED, where I worked in enrollment services and student activities for several years. Really loved that work, and that eventually led me here to my assistant registrar position. I've been here at Harvard for eight years and I still there.

[00:17:45]

Eight years.

[00:17:46]

Eight years I graduated in May of 2021 with my undergraduate. I took me another five years when I got here to get that.

[00:17:52]

What was your degree?

[00:17:56]

It was my undergraduate, my Bachelor of Liberal Arts.

[00:17:58]

You got your bachelor there.

[00:17:59]

Yeah, my Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Humanities from Harvard Extension School. Which was bittersweet from because my mom had gotten her degree that way. My mom was class of 1993 at Harvard Extension School. She got that as a single mom who worked really hard to do that despite all these other things that complicated our relationship, so it was like carrying on that message.

[00:18:26]

Did you think about yourself or thought about more about her in that same situation like you're graduating the same price?

[00:18:34]

Yeah. It's been a long time since I've spoken to my mom, but I think as I've gotten older and these things happen, you start to soften a lot, especially our parents. We have to give them grace at some point. [LAUGHTER] At some point they have to pick up grace.

[00:18:53]

I look at your or I hear your story and there's so much of me there.

[00:18:59]

That's why I'm so excited to connect with you because I was seem like I was [OVERLAPPING].

[00:19:03]

What happens is I graduated in psychology because everyone to understand more than everything that cycle, I thought that I was going to be a therapist, which didn't happen, still have that thing in the background. But I think the relationships are necessary because you are going through the same story. I think the children inside of us connect.

[00:19:22]

Yeah, to get children. Yes.

[00:19:26]

That's what you aim for, that's what we are longing for, that a conversation. One thing learning about parents, and in I took longer, much older here in experience, that's why I'm saying that to you is in a younger age, we still look at them as parents. We cannot divide our parents and parents, and men or women, or whether they are humans

[00:19:54]

We are humans. Exactly.

[00:19:55]

Everything that they go, we just see them as parents and ask them why you're not there. We don't know what emotions drove them to different aspects.

[00:20:06]

Of course, yes.

[00:20:06]

Later on, we start analyzing and removing our anger a little bit, whatever you were missing and trying to look at them and say, I know where your fault is.

[00:20:16]

Yes, of course.

[00:20:18]

But we started looking at them and say, oh, you were weak to you or not. It's not that I thought that you were.

[00:20:24]

You're human.

[00:20:25]

Yes.

[00:20:26]

I think for me, that's been such a critical part of my recovery because I live with complex post-traumatic stress disorder from my childhood. Part of my recovery for that is is recognizing that humanity, recognizing that my parents, regardless of what I thought when I was 16, did the best that they could with the tools they were given. My parents were also survivors of generational trauma. My mom lived in poverty, we lived in subsidized housing. We went to food banks like these were things that were like our day-to-day life, so I know that the cards were stacked against my mother, the cards are stacked against my father. He was third-generation alcoholic. These are things that, of course, you're given this bundle. You know what I mean? You're giving this bundle of what you're taught is who you are, and then you just hold that. It's up to this generation, our generation. You and I just being, it stops here, how do I translate and transform that pain into something that I can give back to the world, that I can refer back to the world. Huge part of what I love my work in higher education, I actually have a different calling too. I have two callings and life, and this calling is that I'm actually in discernment for the Episcopal priesthood.

[00:21:51]

I know.

[00:21:52]

Yes, so I'm going to be a minister [LAUGHTER] someday, and so I'm working towards that.

[00:21:58]

That's wonderful.

[00:21:58]

My ministry most of the time focuses on survivors of trauma, so I worked directly with on Sunday mornings. At 7:30 in the morning, I'm working with on-house people in downtown Boston who are getting a meal, trying to make community, and just figuring out what all the factors that impact them day to day. I focus a lot on survivors of trauma and also the queer community, the LGBTQIA community, a lot of whom have been harmed by the church, especially the Christian church, and so being able to connect with them and being a queer person myself and [LAUGHTER] and reflecting that back to them. I'm a survivor of some of the trauma that some of these people have faced, and I'm also very proudly queer, and so being able to connect that with that calling is something right, going back to carrying about [LAUGHTER] people's spiritual health.

[00:22:57]

How long it took you to find to accept yourself as queer?

[00:23:04]

Man, I saw my mom is queer, so that was easy. My mom before gay marriage even existed, my mother had taken us to a gay wedding, and made sure we understood that no matter what happened, that she would support us. She's have a certain type of generation queer person. But I appreciated the love I felt when it came to that. But I remember even in middle school, eighth grade, I think I was I realized that I was probably not straight. [LAUGHTER] I didn't quite like picked up the gendered the stuff at 14. Fourteen was when I started coming out to a few friends and I came out to my parents. When I started high school, I remember even before I started at Lion, I went to what Claire's, which is just a earrings shop, and I found chunky rainbow earrings. I was like I'm going to buy these. My mom was are you sure? You want to [LAUGHTER] buy these rainbow hearings and start high school that way, and I was yes, I do. When I got to high school, I was like this new space where I was I'm just going to be who I am. I'm of a generation where that was moderately safe. That was not the people who came before me, the ancestors before me. Your answer should be for me to not have that kind of privilege.

[00:24:28]

Definitely not.

[00:24:28]

But I walked in there and I was I know who I am. [LAUGHTER] I know what I know what I'm not.

[00:24:38]

[OVERLAPPING] I know what I'm not and I never really experienced any bullying in high school because again, people knew that I knew who I was. I was very actively part of the Gay-Straight Alliance, which now is known as the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, which I like a lot better. Just knew who I was and by the time I was in my '20s, I started realizing now I can explore more. I can understand what my sexual orientation is or isn't and knowing that it's not just binary. It's not like A or B. [LAUGHTER] It's just like there's a spectrum both for sexual orientation and gender identity. My sexual orientation came to be quicker than my gender identity. I started presenting masculinity in the world as soon as I could safely, which was probably in my mid-twenties. It wasn't until my 30s that I realized that I was trans and I was non-binary and that I didn't identify as a woman or a man. I'm assigned female at birth, which is great. But I don't subscribes those structures. I don't move in the world as either of those things. I move in my world as me. As a non-binary person who doesn't fit these things. For me, my gender identity has been such a huge gift and that's only happened in the last two years. Two years.

[00:26:13]

Yes. It's like I think when people see queer folks and all the vitriol that we're experiencing right now, these horrible bills that are getting passed in other states, especially on policing the bodies of trans people. I know it's because they are so blown away that we can be free. They are so taken aback by the fact that I am free and that they haven't figured that out yet.

[00:26:42]

Yes.

[00:26:42]

They can also be free. But that's where this is all coming from. It comes out of fear.

[00:26:48]

Yes.

[00:26:48]

It comes out of fear for you to put these show up at all these different events and marginalized people, whether that's trans people or people of color and poor people that all comes out of fear of not wanting to engage with that culture and not wanting to engage with freedom. They don't want to learn about those things.

[00:27:11]

Internalized feelings.

[00:27:13]

Yes.

[00:27:14]

I think the biggest fear comes from those.

[00:27:17]

Sure.

[00:27:18]

Instead of embracing. I don't know how much a person feels they are going to lose in terms of either economic or social status, whatever they have that they prefer to try to suppress that person inside of them that could be happier, could be loving, could be… just to go and persecute and ostracize and judge and really harm someone for whatever reason that they see fit in their mind because of this, it is a sad thing. What do you think when you identified yourself as non-binary, a lot of people I believe we do not understand what non-binary concept is.

[00:28:08]

Yeah.

[00:28:08]

You already gave a little bit in terms of saying, I don't identify as a man. I don't identify as a woman and the question would be, what do you identify with?

[00:28:18]

Great questions. I think what I identify with is I always think I have such a combination of both masculine and feminine energy.

[00:28:28]

Yes.

[00:28:29]

It just like it feels soft in that way. It's not a hard and fast for me like when it comes to how I walk in this world. I think non-binary in general is really an umbrella term. It's not like a specific place on this spectrum. It means that even non-binary itself just doesn't even see. I prefer to when I describe myself. Non-binary is becoming more acceptable to say, but how I describe myself as gender expansive, where it's like non-binary quite literally means that there are two binaries, woman and man and I am neither of those things. That's what it means. I feel like that's such a limiting way to look at gender and what we can be in the world and how we can act in the world. I think it's also just like you mentioned so much of how we don't quite understand why these things come up, why people have such hesitance, so much resistance to people being free. It's like, well, if you've never known gut freedom, true, spiritual freedom. If you've never known that, why would you want that for somebody else? If you are living in a world that tells you a man is this way or like your job is this and you have to do A, B and C. I don't think you know freedom. If you see us being free, especially in the queer community,.

[00:30:03]

It bothers.

[00:30:03]

It bothers you.

[00:30:04]

How to dare you.

[00:30:04]

How dare you?

[00:30:05]

[LAUGHTER] I want you to be free too. Pass the thing, we all deserve to be free. It's like gender and those roles are cultural. They're not like these things I like so strict and being like ABC. As a performance, you get to be, you get to show up in the world in a very specific way or no way at all, there are multiple ways. That's why it's so important to do the work that you do in making sure that people of all backgrounds and all experiences have a seat at the table quite literally.

[00:30:43]

I think if they would understand that everybody soft and up a little bit in both sides of the spectrum, they would understand what a non-binary person is.

[00:30:52]

Right.

[00:30:53]

We all should be non-binary.

[00:30:56]

I love how you ended that. We all deserve to be soft with ourselves and with each other and with our community. I don't want to live in a world that is built on oppression. Unfortunately, this world is built on oppression. How do we get free and stay free in a world that doesn't want us to be free. There's definitely a long journey in terms of recognizing that I was non-binary, but one of the people who deeply influences and inspires me and how I think about being trans is a Alok Vaid-Menon who is a basically a queer genius, a Mixed Media Artist, the Speaker, a Stanford Educated Scholar, a Fashion Designer who also happens to be a trans feminine non-binary activist. They have lots of writing and performance pieces out in the world. But one that has truly rested on my heart recently has been their episode on the Man Enough podcast with Justin Baldoni and Jamey Heath. In that episode they spoke really beautifully about deconstructing gender and the need for all of us, cisgender and trans people alike to get free together. Anything I say from here on out about that experience [LAUGHTER] with being non-binary in that context, should really be attributed to Alok. Highly recommend their work. They have a wonderful book called The Beyond The Gender Binary that I really love, along with numerous other publications. I'm certain that in the future there'll be seen in the same light and the same queer canon as folks like Audrey Lord, Leslie Feinberg and James Baldwin's. Just an absolutely brilliant visionary. That's such a huge part of my journey into the priesthood seems like such a dichotomy of going to church every Sunday, having his life and also being queer, being non-binary like how do I sit in all of this and I how do I fit in the room? How do I have conversations with people who don't believe that I should exist literally? I see that not just in the church, but being a queer person at Harvard which is known to be very traditional, which is slowly but surely moves in the direction of liberation, moves in the direction of making sure that all people are celebrated and included. But it's still strange. They're still echoes of the oppression that builds Harvard, you know what I mean, of the systemic racism. We just went through this whole thing about the impact of slavery at Harvard. We see like literally the walls of the halls we walk. They echo with oppression. [OVERLAPPING] With that history and so how do we walk through that?

[00:34:09]

How we become better?

[00:34:10]

How do we learn to be better? How do we also know that you don't have to have all the answers?

[00:34:19]

You don't always have to say something. You could also just take a seat. I know that there's not always an opportunity for people to feel safe enough to talk about these things. You know what I mean and I think slowly but surely, especially with conversations like this or like the EIB committees that exist across the university. We're starting to create those spaces so with all that noise that's going on, the work we do, we all have one common thread, which was our students. Our students and our alumni.

[00:34:53]

That's why we come here.

[00:34:54]

We come here because we know, especially here at the Law School, we are literally supporting people who will become potentially Supreme Court justices, presidents like, civil rights lawyers, people who are going to be making real systematic changes in the world. It's our job to make sure that they're well-prepared and well supported.

[00:35:13]

Have the support that they need.

[00:35:15]

They want to see people like us who are in these offices, who reflects their identities back to them. Who say, hey, I'm free, you can be free too. We're mutually inspired by each other's calling it that way.

[00:35:30]

That's where I'm going to, if our idea of work with diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging is what you are going to move forward and developing better and better and better. Diversity already is in place and you can use to improve. But making everybody included and belonging to the place that they are. [OVERLAPPING] That can make a huge difference because it's not just the support that this is students need to move forward with their lives and become the stars or the big personalities that we expect them to be because of the education that this institution offers. At the same time, let's give them a background that says, I receive the same way that teachers for you made a difference in high school. We could as workers in this environment that you have, as staff of these institutions that support students and faculty at same time. Let us be that support too, that identity that they're going to look back and say those folks from the Registrar's Office, from Dean of Students Office. These or that department were very important.

[00:36:39]

They made an impact.

[00:36:39]

Exactly for me to be where I am now.

[00:36:41]

I think a lot often and how I approach my work too is in my face, which is the Episcopalian face. We talk a lot about how everyone is on the same level, like in terms of deacons, priests, bishops, they just have different jobs. Nobody is more important than the other person and they're all leaders. Nobody is more important. I think for us, when we sit at the table, regardless how many degrees someone has or how many articles they've written, we're all here with the same message and the same power to make an impact. I think for every day that we get to have students who walks through our doors and trust us enough to make that space for them to belong is a gift. That is a gift for us to do that work.

[00:37:31]

One last question that I have for you, because I have too.

[00:37:35]

I know we're running. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:38]

You talked about resilience and that's such an important piece of who you are depends on you're from US. You are from Boston, you are from Jamaica Plain. I am from a third world country. But the stories are very similar in different backgrounds, what you went through. I know that some people would take that as from a point of victim. I think we took in a different way. We strive for different goals. Can you see that whatever we went through and how hard was what you went through, built us or gave us structure to be who you are now and driving you to this point where you are going to help so many other people from a place of I know hardship, I know pain. I know how difficult parts of my life was and I can identify with you. Does that feel for you having a minister life coming towards you?

[00:38:49]

Yeah. I don't think there's any shame that should ever be applied to anyone who can't make it through. Just like my parents we acknowledge like they didn't have the right resources to do that. Or I never think that it's about personal resilience gets you to where you need to go. But what I do know is it took me a long time to say this, but I'm so grateful that my life was what it was. Because it opens your eyes to things you could have never imagined. You see things that other people don't. You're able to show up for what people in ways that not many people can. Anyone can train to be a therapist or have gone through it. That's the biggest piece of experience you can have. Even to this day, even if I talk about my life, it's only when I'm in community with someone who's had a life similar to mine that I really feel heard. I think with my hope for the future in terms of my life, in terms of my career trajectory and my vocation is that I continue to transform trauma and the love into community. That's such a gift for not just people that you interact with, who you are supporting, but it's a gift for yourself. We talked about our inner children. I get to tell my inner child, hey, we made it. We made it and we're thriving.

[00:40:30]

Another thing we're not saying here that to have this knowledge, to have this open heart to have this understanding. Everybody needs to go through what you did.

[00:40:42]

No, of course not.

[00:40:43]

But we come from a place that you went through all of that, you still have to find a place inside of us to understand why and what happened there and hoping that the future, everybody doesn't need to go through all of that. But if some of them go through, we're here. You will be there to give that support, to give that understanding, to give that love that's so important for this.

[00:41:10]

Love and compassion. Such a gift, I'm so glad I got to see you today.

[00:41:17]

Thank you very much.

[00:41:19]

Thank you.

[00:41:20]

We should be here for two hours.

[00:41:22]

Many more hours. [LAUGHTER].

[00:41:24]

Maybe you should do this as series.

[00:41:25]

I love it.

[00:41:26]

You come back for this conversation. But I am happy that at least we connect on this one.

[00:41:30]

Yes. Thank you so much.

[00:41:31]

I hope to see you around and chat with you. I will let you know when everything works out and do preside come out. But thank you very much.

[00:41:41]

Thank you.

[00:41:41]

I loved to get to know you.

[00:41:43]

Likewise.

[00:41:44]

I know that you're going to have that is good energy there, that I want to take advantage of as much as I can because good energy it's hard to find. But we'll get there. Again, thank you.

[00:41:56]

Thank you.

[00:41:57]

For everybody out there, I'll see you around. Bye bye. [MUSIC]