

CONSULTANT: Sandra Roberts  
AGE: 72  
RESIDENCE: Chapel Hill, NC  
OCCUPATION: Retired UNC administrator  
INTERVIEW DATE: August 6, 2016, approx. 9:00 am  
LOCATION: Carrboro Farmers Market, Carrboro, NC

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*We begin with the standard audio introduction (name, age, residence). I compliment Sandra on her unique eyeglasses, purple horn-rimmed spectacles.*

**So you kind of know what we're talking about here, and you said you're limited in what you remember. But just go back to that time and tell me, just in general, personally or in terms of the cultural landscape at the time. What stands out in your mind from then, 1999?**

Not much stands out in my mind actually. I think it was newsworthy, a news item at the time, and I think we were all sort of holding our breath, thinking what might happen to computers or what. And I don't think that I was terribly concerned, but of course you can't avoid it, you know? And I don't remember anything terribly significant about it.

**So did you take any preparations at all for the Y2K Bug?**

No. I didn't, that I recall. We might have unplugged our computer.

**Do you remember sort of what technology you were using back then?**

I was trying to just remember that, and it was probably pretty primitive, like you know, one of the old Apple computers with the screen in the middle. Something very, very simple, like that.

**No cell phone?**

I don't remember. My husband had a cell phone early on.

**That's about right when they came out.**

Right when they came out. But I don't believe we had one yet. So that wouldn't have been a concern. It was only computers.

**So what would you...you don't remember that particular night. What would you typically be doing on New Year's?**

Typically, we would...well, at that time, we would have probably...we used to go to the beach between Christmas and New Year's Day, and we may have been at Sunset Beach at that time.

**Were you still living in this area back then?**

Oh yes. We were living here. Not in the present house, but in another single-family dwelling. And we might have been at the beach, so it might have been kind of a distraction, as far as what was actually happening. But no big parties, no big family ritual or anything like that.

**And were you working back then?**

Yes.

**And what were you doing for a living?**

I was working at the University, as a director of the Visitor's Center, and director of the...I don't know if I was yet the director of the Speaker's Bureau, but I was two things.

**Interesting. And you're now retired?**

I'm retired, yes. I am.

**Do you think things are better or worse than they were then?**

In 1999...well that's an interesting question, and you know, with the current political situation, I would think that...

**To be determined?**

[laughs] Yeah. To be determined. I'm not sure. I think that, you know, there have been many advancements in many ways, but we're replaying some of the cultural and racist nationalism that I didn't think we would ever be replaying again, in 1999. I thought that, you know, we were sort of finished with having to deal with civil rights and women's rights and things. And suddenly, the circle has come back again.

**Unfortunately, it seems like it always does.**

Yes. Yes, it does. So I'm not sure whether we're better off. We're certainly at a different place, a sort of frightening place, right now. Might be more frightening than the Y2K bug.

**Really?**

Well, with what's going in our world and the, mainly nationalism and the resurgence of racism.

**That's well said. What do you think will be the topic on everyone's lips in 2100?**

*Earlier that morning, a woman had walked up to the table while I was asking this question in a previous interview (see Jennifer Ho). Sandra resembled this other woman, and I mistakenly mention that Sandra overheard this earlier discussion. I realize the mistake by the confused look on her face, and apologize. We joke about it.*

**So 2100, what do you think will be the topic everyone is talking about?**

I don't have the vision to really say, other than if we don't...probably space exploration.

**Interesting.**

Lots of, I would think, space travel. I would think depending on what we do environmentally, whether or not our civilization will still be here, or what it will be like, because we have to take care of our Earth, and of our water, and of our atmosphere. I don't know.

**Interesting that you mentioned space exploration. Back in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – which seems weird to say, “back in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” – whenever they were setting a story in the future, it was always the year 2000, or a date that starts with two.**

Yes.

**Do you remember thinking back as a kid and what that, the year 2000, would be like? How did reality meet your expectations?**

I don't know that I had any big expectations. I think when you're living in the present, it's very hard to project unless you're a science fiction novelist or something like that. It's rather hard to predict, but I don't really know. I hope there will be a lot of diseases that are no longer on the front page of our news story, and things. But there are so many things that have happened that no one could have predicted, that I think that the only way we can prepare is to educate ourselves and be ready for change and the surprises that we face. Zika. I had never heard of Zika until probably six months, a year ago, or something, I don't even know.

**Ebola.**

Ebola. And so no one could predict that, but what we do know is that we have to deal with issues and problems, and we have to be problem solvers. And we don't need to...we need to think in those terms, instead of some of the terms that seem to be on our mind more today.

**Well said.**

*I thank Sandra for her time and end the interview.*