

Filipino American Farmworker Oral History Project

Oral History Interview
With
Cynthia Bonta

June 5, 2017
Alameda, California

By Linda Nguyet Nguyen
Welga Project, Filipino American Archive and Repository
UC Davis Asian American Studies Department

Interview with Cynthia Bonta, Monday, June 5, 2017; 11:42 AM [00:31:11]/ [00:31:47]
[0:00-10:00] – 10-minute interval

NGUYEN: Okay. Okay. So today is Monday, June 5th, 2017 and it is 11:43 AM. This is the Welga Project—and my name is Linda Nguyen. I am with Cynthia Bonta. Hello.

BONTA: Hello. Hi.

NGUYEN: How are you?

BONTA: Fine, thank you. Thanks for coming over. We're in Alameda.

NGUYEN: I know—.

BONTA: Interviewing.

NGUYEN: Yeah, I'm excited. Let's start off asking the question. Where and when were you born?

BONTA: I was born October 9, 1937. That dates me [inaudible]—and I was born in Las Bonos Laguna in the Philippines.

NGUYEN: Where were your parents born?

BONTA: My parents were also pure Filipinos. One was—they were mostly. Both of them were born in the Manila area.

NGUYEN: When did you get into—wait sorry, let me back up. How were you involved with the farmworker, Cynthia?

BONTA: Yes. In 1965, I came to the U.S. as an ecumenical scholar, that means that the counselor of churches had given me a full ride to attend [a] master's program in Berkeley. So I was enrolled in the Pacific School of Religion where I belong in a Social Justice Committee and the Social Justice Committee had different projects. Some were interested in the Farm Worker Movement. There was the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-war Movement. So I got really of course interested in the Farm Worker Movement in the Central Valley because it involved a lot of Filipinos.

NGUYEN: Were you part of the migrant farmworker circuit of Central California?

BONTA: You know we should establish from the start that I am not a farmworker. I am a volunteer with the Farmworker Movement during the 70s mostly, with the boycott, and with working in the headquarters of Caesar Chavez which was located in La Paz, you know close to Bakersfield. So I got involved in the Farm Worker Movement through the national counselor of churches. My grand ministry they called it the "migrant ministry" then. Then when the Farm Worker Grape strike occurred it became more of a farm worker ministry. So we volunteer with

working with Caesar Chavez's United Farm Workers through this sponsorship of the national counselor of churches. So that—so my involvement with the Farm Worker Movement in the 70s would be mostly as a volunteer.

NGUYEN: Did you do anything—any fruit picking as a volunteer?

BONTA: Mostly the work of the volunteer was with the boycott or with the strikes that was occurring all the—well, by the time I came, the 1965 Delano strikes had already started. So that started in 1965 and ended in 1970. By the time I came to join Caesar Chavez and the Farm Worker United Farm Worker America was already in '71 but they—so the strikes were over, but they were into boycotts. So we started with the boycott. And, of course, I, by talking to the farm workers, especially Filipinos ones, I knew that as a farm worker you would either be hired to pick grapes or to pick lettuces or when it isn't lettuce and grape season you could walk—you could travel up and down California to pick fruits and it could be peaches, or walnuts, or apples, I think any other—any kind of fruit, really. Cherries. And when that wasn't much when there were not much to do there, they would also go up to Alaska and work in the salmon canneries in Alaska. So I was not really involved directly but I heard about it.

NGUYEN: Okay. I—You recall—I recall that you said you were involved in labor activism. What was—was what you told me earlier was your first experiences in activism?

BONTA: Yes. Definitely. Well I started to say that in 1965, I would I learned a lot about the farm worker movement and since I was still in school, it was only during Christmas time that we would go over to Delano and volunteer at the Filipino farm where a lot of the strikers were that was in 1965. So we would serve meals or we would help in the kitchen or we would also wrap Christmas presents during Christmas time for the children of the farm workers. But when I came back in '71 to actually work for the national counselor of churches with specific assignment in the boycott of the Farm Worker Movement or at the headquarters of the Farm Worker Movement—I was really much involved in either going from one supermarket to the other or even co-ops, you know, to be tabling in front, passing out flyers, getting signatures, but to actually promote the boycott, we didn't want them to buy grapes, we didn't want them to buy lettuce. So that was the work of the boycott and when I finally got into the headquarter of Caesar Chavez, my husband was the who was much more involved in setting up the health clinics for the union. So he started in Delano and then he moved from one city to the other—up and down the Imperial Valley. I helped out since I was pregnant and I was taking care of my young children who my oldest was only 2 and a half when we started. I also helped out with the childcare for the volunteers. They call—they set up a little child care place they're called Casa de Nana and that is where my children grew up and they really loved going. Because there was a one volunteer who designed a very fun child care area, you know, with tire swings and climbing structures and it was really fun for the kids and there were a lot of children of the volunteers because they were families that volunteered with children. So I supposed that would be what you would call my labor activism which was to work in the boycott.

NGUYEN: And were you part—were you part of any the Union?

BONTA: I wasn't a union member but I worked with the union of United Farmworker of America so of course so. The agricultural worker—wait, the United Farm Worker organizing committee became a union. And then the United Farmworker—they were a union together during the grape strike. And then in 1976, I think it was, the United farm worker of America became formerly a union under NFWA/AWOC, so I was not a union member, but I worked and supported the united farm worker of America of course, since I worked for them.

NGUYEN: And what was it like in the Delano grape strikes? Do you recall any other—

BONTA: You know, the Delano grape strikes started in 1965. And in September, I arrived in the United States for the first time in July—in...yes, July/ August of 1975, so I however went to school in Berkeley. So the first time I ever went to Delano was during Christmas time which was December. So the Delano grape strike was on of course. And as I have mentioned, we would be at the Filipino hiring hall where most of the strikers were fed and where their meetings were and I heard Larry Itliong of course, and his booming voice of course, talking in Ilocano talking to the strikers and getting organized and you know shouting out orders [laughter]. So I think that I wasn't really in the actions of the grape strikes where the police and the strikers would meet and where there could—where it has been documented that there were some people who got hurt. No, I wasn't really in the mist of that.

NGUYEN: Do you recall any other significant occurrences while boycotting? Other than what you told me—[chuckle]. Yeah...

BONTA: Um, what would you consider significant occurrences? [thinking]

NGUYEN: Hmm.

BONTA: You know, we were assigned to different supermarkets to promote people to you know to promote the boycotts so that people won't buy grapes or lettuces, but there were also a lot of meetings to get to know what is happening in the different city throughout the country because the boycott was really nationwide and in some cities, there were confrontations with the police. But I myself have not been in direct experiences with that.

LINDA: Thank you. What were the interactions between the strikers and the growers?

BONTA: Well I think it has been very well documented the Delano grape strikes. There were a lot of confrontations between grape strikers and police but I was never directly involved? Oh...

NGUYEN: What about between the strikers and the police?

BONTA: I'm sure there is. I wasn't really involved in it. I wasn't an eye witness to it, but I know that that happened?

NGUYEN: Do you recall working with any of the Manongs?

BONTA: You know Philip Vera Cruz became Vice President of the United Farm Worker of America and he is Armando. And he was he came to the Delano area and joined the strikes 3 days into the strike. We got to be really close friends because when he became member of the board of the United Farm Worker of America, he was one of the Vice President with Delores Huerta. He—they would meet in La Paz and so they would be housed in what we referred was the hospital which was really converted. It was into tuberculosis cemetery and convert like a hotel [laugh/giggle] for people who came to visit La Paz. I, myself, and my family lived in family trailers. There were a few trailers in the camp—and they assigned to families like mine. So if there is a board meeting in La Paz I would invite Philip Vera Cruz and Pete Versalco who was treasure of board to have breakfast with us. We would talk mostly about what's happening with the farmworkers—the United Farm Workers of America union as well as actually martial law in the Philippines. That was when martial law declare in 1972 and we were already in La Paz and I already met Philip Vera Cruz and Pete Velasco and we would talk about that too.

NGUYEN: We already mentioned your about—right? Okay. Let's see. How were you able to support yourself during the boycott?

BONTA: Well, you know. Since we work with the national counselor of churches, we were paid survival wages. We were a family. So the trailer was our was the shelter that they provided for us. And we would have allowances for our food just enough for the family and also we would have clothing allowance that would allows us to buy 2 outfits for each of our children. 2 were were preschool ages and then of course the baby came in '73 and it seem to work you know with 2 outfit. 1 nice one and 1 for every day. And by the time they outgrew that, then we would buy the other set of 2. So that's how it was for the 5 years where we work for that we worked in La Paz. So the question was: how did you support yourself? Yeah we were a family. So that was the way we were cared for by the national counselor churches Farm Worker ministries.

NGUYEN: And so it was a collective support?

BONTA: What do you mean?

LINDA: Well—were there any support systems in place for strikers?

BONTA: Well we were the only ones. We were the only family that was hired as—

NGUYEN: Yes.

BONTA: —a volunteer. So I don't know about volunteers who you know who purely volunteered, so it wasn't collective.

LINDA: Thank you. Were there any support systems in place for strikers?

BONTA: Like what?

LINDA: There's the churches? Were any powerful stakeholder person or someone powerful that was there to support the strikers? Any important influence, person, or politician?

BONTA: Jerry Brown, you know the current Governor of California.

NGUYEN: Yes.

BONTA: He was young then and he often came to support the strikers and whatever the event they had. Arturo Torres, let me see. I don't remember their right thing. We should strike that...but there were quite a lot of influential people who were supporting the boycott. I mean we know of course Robert Kennedy who were good friends with Caesar Chavez and of course Martin Luther King before he died. Hmm. Let me see...well he died pretty early during the strike. He died in 1968...April 1967. There were those 2 years or 2-3 years that I'm sure he was supporting the strikes. I'm sure he learned about and heard about Caesar Chavez?

NGUYEN: Do you recall when the 1970 contracts were signed?

BONTA: No, I wasn't there yet. But I just read about it.

NGUYEN: Mhmm. Did you help construct Agbayan—

BONTA: Agabayani Village. You know, I never really did get a chance to go over there and help build it. I know a lot of students build it. I think I know I was a mom and I had to take care of my kids and I lived in Sacramento by then and was pretty much involved in a lot of other things in my activism.

NGUYEN: Can you tell me a bit more about Agabayani Village? What is that?

BONTA: Agabayani Village was built for their retiring and aging farm workers who could no longer work. That was really nice to provide housing for them because housing is also difficult thing for the elders. Agabayani was the name of the farm worker who was killed in the village strike so it was named after him. After I visited the Agabayani Village—that was more recent than way back then. So there were no farm worker living in Agabayani Village and there when I was there. I guessed it was treated of some museum sorts. I don't know how actively or functionally it is right now but I'm sure that there were a height in its life when a lot of the farmworkers lived there but I wasn't I'm afraid I wasn't directly involved. I didn't help construct it. I only know about that Agabayani Village.

NGUYEN: How did you feel when the grape growers signed the “Sweetheart” contracts with the Teamsters?

BONTA: I didn't like the Teamsters [laughing].

NGUYEN: [laughing]

BONTA: Um yeah that was unfortunate. That is all. I could just feel that way and not, but I really wasn't involved in anything about it.

NGUYEN: Can you tell me more about Teamster if—

BONTA: No,

NGUYEN: ok.

BONTA: Not really. Nothing directly.

NGUYEN: Okay, we're back.

BONTA: I would like to say more about my involvement as a volunteer in the Farm Worker Movement. As I have said, I was a mom and because I was a homemaker of my schoolchildren and had to take them anyway in the Casa de Nana in any work either in the office or field. With the infants. They were the infants. There were the older kids. I can add that aside from doing office work, mostly for my husband, Warren Bonta who was busy setting up health clinic for the union. You know, he had to hire doctors and nurses for low paid. You know, people who were willing to give their services for almost volunteer arrangements. So I would do office work and then when I'm not doing that, we were sent to attend meetings, inside and outside La Paz and sometimes women were sometimes asked to go out into the field to call out the scabs and that would be the most dangerous kind of work that I ever got involved in, but I didn't realize how dangerous it was. We just did it because I did it because I was told. We knew that the growers was military or their security very alert for unwanted people in their fields like us but I think that the United Farm Worker Union also had their own security system. To make sure that when we were out there especially the women of the union that and the volunteers that they would be there to protect us.

LINDA: And you mentioned about there were—you were there and you had to escape or. You did something that is dangerous. What was that. Putting your body out there—?

BONTA: No, no you're out in the fields and border of the field and the scabs are in there, you know and working and they shouldn't be there. The drive won't be effective there the scab. So you call the scab out, and you tell them, 'no you can't do that you'll break the strike, you join the union.' And that is what it was.

NGUYEN: Thank you. I know we talked about the grape strike. Can you...it was just over the price...

BONTA: Well, you know, in 1965, even before then. See September 8, 1965 when the Delano strike occurred and that was when they walked out of the field and refused to work. Before then there were Coachella strike by then and they already won that strike in Coachella and they were also against the same growers that were in Delano. And so they moved north up. And Larry Ilong was already in the Delano area and had been organizing the farm workers from all over Stockton, asparagus workers, and he was going door to door organizing Filipinos to get ready for a strike when they were ready and so in 1965 they were ready but they also knew that they needed help from the Mexican farm workers because they were up larger number and a lot of them with national farm workers—Workers National Farm Worker Association of Caesar

Chavez so they had to invite Chavez to joined them and have join soon after sometime a week after. The Filipino struck and that was a very good thing. So I suppose people know where Delano. Hahaha.

NGUYEN: I need to go there. That is interesting. We are going to take a quick break.

BONTA: Do you want to stop real quick?

NGUYEN: Yes.

NGUYEN: Ok so it is 1:06 p.m., we are ending. I just want to thank you so much Cynthia Bonta for being here.

BONTA: Thank you. I am very honored to be interviewed. Let's go out to lunch. Are you Okay with Greek. Actually they are not really Greek there is a selection. Let's go. We can always come back

Interview with Cynthia Bonta, Monday, June 5, 2017; 3:15 PM [00:28:32]
[0:00-10:00] – 10-minute interval

NGUYEN: So it is June 5th, 2017, it is 3:15 p.m., and we are—this is PNDA project and we're with Cynthia Bonta.

BONTA: Hi. This is Cynthia.

NGUYEN: Hello. So, let's start off with some questions. Can you tell us about yourself or your chronology?

BONTA: Mhmm. Yeah. We talked about my involvement in the Farm Worker Movement and that started when I first came to the U.S. in 1965 to take my masters in religious education in Berkeley at the Pacific School of Religion. It was at that time that I was a member of a committee called the Social Concern Committee that introduced me to the Farm Worker Movement. It just so happened in 1965, that Delano Grape Strike had begun in September and so by [inaudible] December of that year, I visited during the Christmas break and I—that's how I got involved with the Farm Worker Movement. Then, I stayed with the United Farm Worker Movement of America until 1975 after which I moved to Berkeley, and was involved in actually curriculum development to include Filipino American histories and experiences in a bilingual curriculum for elementary age, K-12, including high school. And got involved actually in quite a few district—school districts: The Oakland Public Schools, the Berkeley United Unified School District, and the San Francisco School District. So I was there till—I was doing that until 1977 [pause] at which time I moved to Sacramento with my family. My husband had found employment with the state and one of the I think was the Department of Health and Services. And when I was in Sacramento, that's when I got involved with the Filipino community there because they have quite a good concertation of Filipinos in the south area of Sacramento and into the Elk Grove district, which is the city, next south of Sacramento. So how did I really get involved? Actually, the first activity that I got involved in for the Filipino community was

organizing what it called the Philippine National Day, which is their Filipino Fiesta, you know, their annual community-wide gathering to remember their history in the Philippines and their histories and experiences here as Filipino America, the contributions to the community, and to the broader society by Filipinos—and—you know, talk about issues that that the Filipino communities is facing, you know, so that they can do something about it you know? Empower the community, and be engaged, and be involved in addressing the issues themselves. So as a project, I was directly connected to the organizing of this Philippine National Day, you know? I was—I would prepare flyers, you know? With little write up on why we were celebrating fiesta. We called it Philippine National Day Bar fiesta [->(?) inaudible] at that time. And the reason why we called it National, instead of Independent was in a way a project that is presented to the community as an alternative to the what was the turn of formal balls[inaudible] of the community that were—was support by the consulate, you know? We didn't want to leave out the majority of Filipinos in the community because you most often the people that were invited to these consulate, [inaudible] where you know, the moneyed, and the professional, and those with government leadership and stuff like that. The common people have no way of celebrating their Filipino heritage. So we organized Philippine National Day for that purpose. Again, that is to recount, and to remember, and to understand our history here in the U.S., the Filipino history in the U.S., and their experiences, and what contribution they have made in building this nation—the United States of America. So I would also be involved in the program. You know, and then also in the organizing. We—in the program we would usually have like different stages where one stage would be dedicated to youth participation, you know, their art, and their dance, and their song. And there would be another stage where anything else can happen, you know, that the organizers want. They might have the big speakers, you know, to talk about some kind of issues. And if there was elections going on, then there could be both sides of the election campaign to speak about their camp—you know why they're running for office. So I was pretty much involved after a while with the youth program because what happened was this: we in our committee which is the Philippine National Day Committee decided we wanted to build an organization of our own that had other parts to its program, not just the fiesta. Because we wanted recognition program, or kind of educational, we wanted to reach the students, you know, the Filipinos in the secondary, you know—elementary and secondary school. And then we wanted to also engaged the youth and provide them a channel to express their art in music, in dance, and in drama, or storytelling. So we all said we found a theatrical group—the Sinag-tala theatre project and our recognition program was called Outstanding Filipino Youth Awards. And then we also had later on we build a leadership conference which we called Filipino American Youth Leadership Conference. So those were pretty significant occurrences in the development of PNDA as a nonprofit. First it started not being nonprofit but already starting our programs, you know—the education program and theatre program—and then later on we became a nonprofit which was—so we were kind of started in 1990 and then we didn't get nonprofit status until 1994. So 1994. So what happened there was that the committee, Philippine National Day Committee decided, “Well let's just make ourselves an association [laughing] and do this project,” so we called ourselves Philippine National Day Association. It is really funny because when we got to—into a lot of our projects, we wonder, “do you think we should change our name?” But then community actually the community were actually said, “No. PNDA is unique when we said PNDA we know PNDA and what kind of program we had. It is different from everybody else so keep the name.” We haven't changed the name for the past 27 years. That's how long we existed in Sacramento.

NGUYEN: For those involved of the founding of PNDA, do you recall any challenge in the PNDA?

BONTA: Actually, it seems like a natural thing that developed because we were already working. Actually before we worked on the Baru Fiesta [sp?] itself, we were already doing community education on Martial Law because the Philippines was under Martial Law from 1972-1986. And we started holding the Philippine National Day—yeah the Philippine National Day in 1974. No wait, was it '74 or '75? Somewhere there, you know. Probably 1975 because then I joined them in '77. It could have been '76. I'm sorry '75 or '76, but we have to verify that later.

NGUYEN: I'm just curious, why did you gravitate to the PNDA again? Was it just the education? The culture? Or—

BONTA: I think it was a lot the history. We needed to let the community understand their immigration history. It's interesting because PND really believed in the three waves of migrat—immigration of Filipino to the United States. The first wave being the manongs, or the farm worker. People who came in the 20s and 30s as teenagers and wanting to get a—an American education and go back to their families and improve their lives but had to stay in the—in California and then maybe even and laboring areas of the U.S. because they really couldn't get an education, it was—money was hard and they ended up working in the lettuce fields, and in the grape fields, and going up and down the West Coast picking fruit from different orchards. So [pause] we [pause] really were into educating our community about that. About our coming to the U.S. why were there three waves.

After the first wave of farm workers, we have the military in the 50s, and then in the 60s, 60s like exactly after the Immigration Act of 1965: professional, Filipino professional were allowed to come in because of the low [stress] labor supplies in those areas. So nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers were allowed to come in. So that was the third wave.

So for each wave, you know, they don't really know what other wave went through [chuckle]. So everybody has different story of their experiences as immigrants to this country. But if we educate that the community at one time about all those differences openings in the years for Filipinos who come to the United States, you know, when immigration laws were opened up so that they could come in. If we look at that altogether as one community, then we would understand how we developed. How there were so many different waves that came to the U.S. and bringing their different experiences and therefore we have not a common understanding of our experiences, you know, if we were to just to think of our own experience it may not be shared by others that came after us or before us. That is one of the things that really drove us to continue Philippine National Day as a formalized organization. So we could—so we could do a little more systematically through theatrical, through educational forum, through our leadership conferences, you know. We thought that we try different formats because we wanted to reach actually the younger generation to know about their heritages.

NGUYEN: When did you become a part of PNDA. Because—

BONTA: Actually from the very start. We were founders. There were committee—the committee in PND became the signatories for the formation of the PNDA as a nonprofit, you know? We were about fifteen or so people that signed in. We were all involved in the PND.

NGUYEN: Oh ok. And, do you recall any significance occurrence while being involved in the PNDA? Any specific campaign issues that your group responded to locally, nationally, or internationally?

BONTA: You know so much already has happened before PNDA was established so that we could really redirect our focus. Before then, you know, these same people that gathered to become PNDA were involved in cases like the Narcisso and Perez's case, which involved two Filipino nurses in the veteran hospital that were scapegoated to have been—the been—the guilty parties in a multi-, multi-, what do you call that, multi murders. I mean, there were a series of murders in the veteran hospital and they—can you imagine where blaming these [inaudible] Filipino nurses? We have to fight that. There were a lot of work to do, both legal and political but we won the case to make a long story short.

NGUYEN: Nice!

BONTA: We were to free the nurses. I remember having posters saying... “Free Nurses and Perez. Free Nurses and Perez,” that was a big celebration. That was one issue I can remember. Do you remember the BAKI decision which started in UC Berkeley? That also happened before we were formalized as PNDA. But a lot the people involved were also involved in the BAKI decision. This has something to do with discrimination in—I—I—I think, well it happened in UC Davis and it has to do with—what you say [pause]? I think it had to do with applications and acceptances and that BAKI was one of them that was not allowed to enter. I wonder if it was a law school? Gosh it's been a way back. But that was one of it. We can talk more about that in detail. If we were to mention issues that was significant that would have been the overturn BAKI decision and I think that later on, you know, when we became an organization for many years and we had some internal problems to do with the Sinag-tala theatre project. I think it is important to talk about this and not to hide it although it is a sensitive issue. Because a lot of the community accused PNDA of splitting just because they didn't agree. Just like any with other Filipino organization who you know what happened here was the Sinag-tala theatre project which was under PNDA wanted to develop its outside of PNDA. And yet still would be under PNDA which was a little bit confusing. So we discussed that and we concluded that the ghost of the theatre project has changed and was not anymore within the mission of PNDA. So if they wanted to do that they can do separate and other board member who agree with that should go with them because then they didn't—they no longer could work to defend the mission of our PNDAs. So we removed some four I think four or three or four members of the board because then they just join this new formation. One other reason why we had to do this was because of our [inaudible] responsibility as a nonprofit. We have to expose to the community that Sinag-tala theatre project is no longer going to be run by PNDA and for what reasons, you know. So it was a big community meeting to expose this. Because in other words, what we have been entrusted in terms of funds and resources of the community to do our work, we is now—has now changed because it doesn't include Sinag-tala theatre anymore. They wanted to change. They wanted to

separate. So the community have to know about the change because we felt responsible to them. It is their resource that we steward off. So when fundraising happens and their funding for their raising funds for Sinag-tala theatre they should know they are not PNDA. They are different. We have sponsored them like 1990 to 2004 and then we split. We separated. So that is one significant thing. It's too bad that is still misunderstood and the people concerned are taking it personally and don't understand why it happened. They thought it was a personal thing when it wasn't.

NGUYEN: Were there other challenge to your involvement? What were they?

BONTA: Well, you know. I must—I must share this. A lot of times, because we live in an anti-Martial Law background and in Sacramento have Martial Law camps, we were considered radical and they would say nasty things about us. That when we became PNDA, there were of course a lot of rumors that would be spreading to the community that weren't very pleasant, you know. That we either words redbaiting. They would be redbaiting us because we were having successful in our leadership conferences. We were successful in our theatre project and because they wanted to discredit us, and to, you know? They—we would be redbaited and it could be because, you know, we were also anti-Martial Law forces. We were—we were educating the public about the support of the U.S. through the Marcos dictatorship and they shouldn't because, you know, why give our pay tax dollars to aid our military dictatorship. We were going towards our education, and we weren't overthrowing our government. We were just educating about dictatorship and they were violator of human rights. My friends became—politically prisoners and they went to jail and they were punished for that. So those kinds of difficulties, you know, in politics, the opposition always doesn't let go you that easy, you know? [chuckle]

NGUYEN: Thank you. Do you have anything you would like to share? Like what can we do as younger generation would like learn—or what can we do—what can we learn from your history? What can we take from that?

BONTA: Always take your history seriously. Know who you are—know your history. There is a motto throwing about—know yourself, your history, if you don't then you don't have history. That sort of thing. Into that. And knowing who you are. You should then assert who you are and engage in the democratic process and make a contribution, be involved, participate because that is the only way democracy works if you participate. A lot of reason why we came to this country is because it is a democratic country. A lot of immigrants fled from their leave their country because it was undemocratic situation. And so we do value democracy a lot in this country and we have to make it work by participating. Another thing would be once you believe in something no matter how difficult the opposition makes it. If you are true to yourself and you—your conscience tells you are in the right, don't be intimidated, don't get discouraged, don't stop, you know, keep on going. And just, you know, don't be terrorized, you still have your rights for your beliefs and your expression—right of expression.

NGUYEN: Mhmm. Yeah, and I don't know—so I want to ask. Do you have any files or artifacts that you would be willing to share?

BONTA: Yes. It is a matter of collecting them. And we definitely would rather have be great if UC Davis have it in their achieve than anywhere else because the students will be benefiting from it. could have it because the students will be benefiting from it.

NGUYEN: Yes, thank you so much. We are out of time. Thank you so much. It was a pleasure having you.

BONTA: Thank you. Thanks so much Linda. It was fun.