

Chanda Parbhoo



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46:34

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SPEAKERS

Chanda Parbhoo, Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 00:03

Hello, it's October 17th, 2022. My name is Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz, interviewing Chanda Parbhoo. I'm located in Oak Cliff, Dallas, Texas. This is for the Gone to Texas oral history project. Chanda, can you introduce yourself, share your pronouns, and share where you're located today?



Chanda Parbhoo 00:24

My name is Chanda Parbhoo, and I live in Dallas, Texas, and I go by she/her/hers.



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 00:32

Thank you. Could you share your ethnic background, please?



Chanda Parbhoo 00:36

Ethnic background? I am South Asian of Indian origin.



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 00:44

Where were your parents born, and what kind of work did they do?



Chanda Parbhoo 00:48

My parents were born in Johannesburg, South Africa. And when you say work, it's a complicated question, because they did lots of different things. So I could start from the beginning if you want me to start with what they started with and what they ended up doing.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 01:06
Sure.

C Chanda Parbhoo 01:07
Yeah. So my parents had a family business. And we had a mail order business in South Africa. They had a brick and mortar store, but due to the apartheid laws, they were only allowed to be in a certain part of town, and only sell to a certain group of people. And so my uncle came to the United States and saw the Sears Roebuck catalog, and he said, "We should do mail order, and that way we can reach people outside of our community," because of apartheid laws, we weren't allowed to sell or move to different parts of the community. So we started a mail order business, and it ended up being the largest mail order business in the African continent eventually. So that's what we did in South Africa. And then the political situation was getting worse, and our rights as communities of color were consistently being attacked. And my grandfather said, "For my grandchildren, I want you to move."

C Chanda Parbhoo 02:21
And so that's when my dad moved to Canada, and we only knew one other family member there, and he had owned several types of retail businesses. He did import/export, goods, he had a clothing store, we had a laundromat, we had a gift store. So there were several things that he owned at that time. And as South Asians, we really grow up in networks of families. And so my dad's older brother really wanted to be with him, but he couldn't come to Canada, because it was too cold for him. And so we decided to go to the other extreme and come to Texas, where it was really warm. And they knew nothing about the business, but they got into the motel business. And so my parents were in the motel business, and eventually, into the real estate business.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 03:34
Wow, that's amazing. When you say it's a complex answer in just answering what kind of work did they do, I understand why that is?

C Chanda Parbhoo 03:44
Yeah.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 03:45
So were you also born in South Africa?



C Chanda Parbhoo 03:48

Yes.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 03:50

Could you describe your childhood? What events or things do you remember about your home in South Africa?

C Chanda Parbhoo 03:59

So I don't remember a whole lot, because we moved when I was four years old. And so I have vague images of our nannies. I have vague images of our home. I have vague images of people. But we did come back and visit. And so you can imagine what a four year old leaving South Africa, not knowing that it was during the apartheid years where we were segregated, none of that is absorbed by a four year old, at least at that time. And so you come to Canada, and all of a sudden, those barriers are gone, and you're free to roam. You are interacting with people that don't necessarily look exactly like you, whereas in South Africa, we were confined to the Indian community, so everybody around us was Indian. But in Canada, we were able to have a store where we wanted. We went to school where we wanted. And it was just a really big mixing pot.

C Chanda Parbhoo 05:04

And I think I remember when I got older, I was maybe six years old or something, when we went back to visit. And I think that's when I started to realize what a difference it was. Because I remember going to a park, maybe it was a zoo or a park. But I just remember seeing this big pumpkin, and there was music coming out of it. And I was like, "I really want to go there." And I said, "What is that?" And they said it was the bathroom. And I was like, "I want to go to the bathroom." Then they took me to the bathroom, and it wasn't the pumpkin. Next to this pumpkin, there was like a brick wall. And behind the brick wall, there was running water, and that's where you got to go to the bathroom. And I was like, "Well, I want to go into the pumpkin." And they were like, "Well, that's for the White people, you can't go there." And so it was jarring to see, how come I can't do that? And then in another instance, I think there was a playground. And it was very evident the way they set up the societal designations of who you are. They wanted little kids to know exactly where they belonged. And so it was the same with the playgrounds. They were right next to each other. And of course, I wanted to go to the colorful, playful ones, the ones that were really pretty, and it was like, "No, you can't go there, you can go to the one next to it," which is just wooden and wasn't kept up, it was rusted. But that's when you started to realize.

C Chanda Parbhoo 06:34

And as we got older, there were just little things that I remember. In Canada, we always were - our neighbor was a policeman, so we just had the most respect for policemen. And they were just the nicest family in Canada. And then all of a sudden, we go there, and my family's like, "When you see the police man, just look down. Just don't look in their eyes. Just

ignore them." And we were instilled with fear. So every visit that we came back, I got to see the differences between the two worlds, and starting to absorb how apartheid had really affected our family. And then of course as we got older, my dad would tell us the stories of some of the obstacles they faced and what it was like just living there every day, and what they did to try to accommodate and be successful there.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 07:36

Can you describe what it was like growing up in Canada?

C Chanda Parbhoo 07:41

So I was really young, we left when I was twelve. And I think if I had to remember, the most important things was tobogganing downhill and skating on an iced pond. And I think those were the memories that were pressed into me. It's just the fun stuff. And there are some times where there was some racial issues that we faced, and those were jarring. Having things thrown at my brothers or taunting at our family. And there was a movement called Dotbusters, and people used to just beat up Indian people. You remember that, and then you also just remember the innocence of the crackling of the ice under your skates on an ice pond and tobogganing down your neighbor's hill and skiing. And I used to play ice hockey, nobody does in Texas.

C Chanda Parbhoo 08:46

But my dad, he had this theory, and I always remember him saying it on a regular basis. And he's like, "The white people can do it, we can do it too. You are to take advantage of every opportunity, because I didn't get that." And so my sister and I were two little skinny, skinny, skinny little Indian girls playing ice hockey [laughs]. That was his favorite sport. But any opportunity he had to expose us to an opportunity that he didn't have, he would open that door for us. And it's like, "I don't really want to play ice hockey," and for for somebody who's been living in a country that you think it's the norm, you can choose whether you do something, and he was like, "No, you need to at least try." So he was always pushing us to never leave any stone unturned, because he had so many doors closed on him before he even had an opportunity to try things.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 09:54

Wow, that's wonderful and a beautiful story. Thank you so much. What were some of your first memories of the United States?

C Chanda Parbhoo 10:06

Yeah, so we moved from Toronto, Canada to Tyler, Texas. And it was a very interesting situation. They didn't know what to expect of us. And we had a group of teachers that met us at the door when my dad said, "I'm bringing my kids." And so they spoke to us like we weren't going to speak English, they're like [speaking slowly], "Welcome to America." We're like, "Okay,

that's nice." And then we went to class, and a lot of kids didn't know where Canada was and asked me to speak Canadian. And so those were things that took us off guard, because we knew something about the United States, we knew something about America, we knew something before we came. But it just was shocking that a lot of people had never left the city. A lot of people had never left the state. And a lot of people had never left the country. And so it was a very different experience. It took a little bit getting used to, but we eventually really bought into the East Texas hospitality. Everybody was just super, super nice.

C Chanda Parbhoo 11:35

But it was also a time when - I would have to say this for Canada as well as for Tyler, Texas - people were just unaware of who we were and not sure where we fit in. I know a lot of the kids were like, "Well, what are you? Are you Hispanic?" And I was like, "I'm not Hispanic." And they were like, "You're just saying that, because you just don't want to do this, that, or the other." And I was like, "No, I'm not Hispanic at all." And so I think that was the hard part is people just didn't know, because there wasn't very many of us. And so it was really hard, and it was kind of like the gym story that I told you about last weekend. But it was that you had to find - every time we moved, I feel like I was a chameleon, and that is that you learn to absorb the culture that you are in. So we used to own a clothing store in Canada, and we had the most latest of fashions. And when you got to Tyler, Texas, that wasn't really working. You quickly learned to wear Wrangler Jeans, and I think we bought our first cowboy boots, and we just became chameleons. We absorbed the culture that we were a part of.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 13:07

Thank you. Could you speak about what the migration process looked like, and maybe by what means you came to first Canada, and then the US? How long of a process was it?

C Chanda Parbhoo 13:28

So to be actually honest, I don't know exactly what my dad had to do to get to Canada. I do remember he telling us that the most amount of money he could bring with him was \$500. So that was the most, and I think we relied on his sister, my dad's sister was there. So I think we stayed with them for a few weeks, just to get ourselves established, so that dad could - I think he was looking for a business. And so yeah, so that was the process. I think there was - maybe it had to do with business. I will have to ask that very particular question about what process he had for how we came to Canada. But when we came to Texas, it was because he bought the motel. I think you have to invest a certain amount of money, so he bought a motel, and he got a group of people to invest, and that's how he was able to come.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 14:35

Thank you. And when you traveled from South Africa to Canada to Texas, you always did this with your family. Was it a, from what you remember, a stressful time? Was anyone's health impacted by that travel?

C Chanda Parbhoo 14:57

I know it was an emotional - as a kid, I remember the emotions at some point, because we had moved from South Africa to Canada. And then I just remember in the second grade, my dad said he had had enough, and that we were gonna go back. And we packed. I remember packing everything up, because our entire family is there, hundreds of relatives are there, and we left everybody there, all their community, all of the things that two generations worth of family had been building in South Africa, left all of that behind to come to a country where nobody knew who you were, there wasn't any sort of support system, because there were so few South Asians. And so we packed up all our things and went back, and that lasted a whole one month, I think. We took a U-turn, and we came back. And my dad just said - it was still during the apartheid times - so he said, "Yeah, in good consciousness, I can't raise my kids in - I don't know what their future is gonna look like, and I can't do that." So we came back. So I think that was really stressful.

C Chanda Parbhoo 16:22

The whole motel situation was stressful, because they'd never run a motel in their entire lives. And so my dad, the first day owning it, he got all of us together that night. And he just said, "I don't know what I'm doing, and here we are, and all the employees that came with the motel are gone, and I don't know where they are. And so we're all going to have to just pull together and figure this out together." And so we would come back from school, and we would have to clean rooms and do laundry. And that's where we lived. And we did everything. We had to do everything until he could figure out how to run the motel. Which is just mind boggling to me, because I don't think I could have ever done something as brave as that.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 17:21

Hearing your story about your dad and being an entrepreneur and business owner, do you feel like that impacted your own career pathway?

C Chanda Parbhoo 17:34

Yeah, definitely. I knew how hard he worked, and it was a long journey for him, especially with learning on how to run a motel when you've never done such a thing. But he made it, and he did good on it. And he raised all of us through it, raised the family, put us all through college. But it just made me think that if there's something that you really want to do, that you should just do it. But did learn a lot about running your own business. It is a lot. It is very stressful. You are responsible for everything, and your success depends on how invested you are in the situation.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 18:35

Yeah. Did you go to college, and what did you study if you went?



Chanda Parbhoo 18:42

I went to the University of Texas at Arlington, and I studied marketing.



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 18:50

And what made you choose marketing?



Chanda Parbhoo 18:54

Well, I wanted to do architecture, and I wanted to do art, and my dad said no. And he said, "You should do engineering, or you should be doing sciences." And I think then he was content, and I felt like marketing was about as creative as I was going to be able to get, and he was paying for my education, so I got a degree in marketing. But my daughter became an architect [laughs]. And she talks about the big scam, she goes, "It was always your dream. You made me become an architect." But she loves what she does, so it wasn't a scam, but she became the architect that I could never be.



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 19:36

Yeah, she's living that for you.



Chanda Parbhoo 19:38

Yeah.



Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 19:38

You get to enjoy it together now. That's wonderful. Did you participate in any community events or organizations in your adulthood to help build that community that you might have thought you were missing in your earlier life?



Chanda Parbhoo 19:56

Yeah, so when my kids started school, there weren't very many minorities in the schools. And so I started organizations for AAPIs [Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders] on on their school campuses. And that was really to bring those parents together, who are oftentimes not really participating and volunteering or really understanding what was going on at school. And so to bring those parents together, but also advocate for different things that we didn't see was happening in our school. And so one of the things we talked about was the diversity of the reading lists. And so it was very quick that in one of the schools during the summertime, they opened up the reading list. Instead of the traditional books that were normally handed out,

books that were diverse, including some AAPI authors, and then also becoming very sensitive to our Muslim community and portraying their religious beliefs in some of the teachings that were going on.

C

Chanda Parbhoo 21:08

So became an advocacy group advocating for our community, but at the same time, also making sure that our kids felt included, and that, most importantly, our families became a part of the school. Because a lot of South Asian families didn't really get involved in schools. It was just like, you drop your kid off, and then you close your eyes, and then you come back and pick them up. And it's like, "No, it's a lot more. It's a community effort. And this is the different ways that you can -" And I felt like when we were asking for those reading lists, or when we were asking, "Can we share our major holidays?" I began to see our community really become vested in the interest of like, "Oh, they're talking about me now, and I'm so excited the school is including me." And a lot about how I'm organizing our community is really finding those things that connect to them or make them feel like they're being heard. And I think that has helped me in organizing our community.

C

Chanda Parbhoo 22:19

Trying to think of something else that I did. Somebody was like, "Oh yeah, you've been doing that for a long time." But I can't remember right off the top of my head, but somebody just reminded me about that about a year ago. They were like, "Oh well, you've just been doing this for -" Oh, I did it in college. Yeah, that's the other time that I did it. So I came out of a high school where there were no South Asians. In my school district, there were only two South Asian families in the entire school district. So I didn't have any Indian friends when I was in high school at all, ever. Growing up, I think we had some family friends, but they didn't live close by. So I didn't really have any Indian friends growing up. And then all of a sudden, I went to UTA, and there was a lot of Indian kids there. And I was so proud to be Indian for the first time, because I got to see people that were just like me. They were celebrating the same holidays I was celebrating, and we could all celebrate it together, versus my American friends were not celebrating Diwali with my family.

C

Chanda Parbhoo 23:29

So I just all of a sudden felt a real connection to my culture at that time. And we got involved in a dance troupe, and then I decided that I was going to run for president of the Indian Students Association. And there was a big uproar because they're like, "Well, she's not even from India, and she doesn't even speak the language." And when I took it over, my goal was, once again, to make sure that we have a voice on campus. And so before, the Indian Students Association pretty much meant that you bought pizza, and you watched Indian movies Friday night. And so what I did is pushed to have a seat in city council, so that we could have a seat at the city council, as well as participating in the activities. And so we participated in homecoming, and making sure that we were a part of the parade, and to make sure that we have international week, and making sure that our community was participating, because we didn't have anybody from the Indian community participating in that. So making sure that the students there didn't

silo themselves into their own community, but remember that we're part of this larger community, and how you can have a voice by making sure that you go out of your comfort zone and be included in the larger community.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 25:11

That's so awesome. What historic events have had an impact on your life, and how?

C Chanda Parbhoo 25:20

Can you repeat that question?

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 25:23

What historic events have had an impact on your life, and how have they had an impact?

C Chanda Parbhoo 25:31

So I think was one of the most impactful things. So being that I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, I had birth rights, and so did my dad, and so did everybody in my family. We all had birth rights. And so in 1994, when Nelson Mandela was running for president, we actually got to vote for him in Dallas City Hall. I just remember that so distinctively, especially for my dad. [crying] Sorry, he just came out of the hospital, and we were just talking about these things. That was such an important day, I remember, for my dad. I mean, he was really touched. And having to grow up in the apartheid system, this was such an important day for him. And I could play that reel in my head almost anytime. I just remember everything. I remember the people taking in our ballot applications and validating who we were. And there was a group singing the new African national anthem. It was just really touching. But my dad, I remember saying many years before that, that there will never be an African person who will be president. And here he is, voting for the first African president of South Africa.

C Chanda Parbhoo 27:17

And it was the same thing for Obama, my dad - we've always felt othered. And we never saw ourselves in that place. We always felt there was them, and then that there were us. And for my dad, he got to vote for Obama, which he even block walked for Obama. But he said the same thing. This country will never have a person of color be president. But here we are voting for him, and he wins. And then the last one was just the fact that we're othered. We were never supposed to be in the highest office. And then here we are voting for Kamala Harris, in the highest office in the country.

C Chanda Parbhoo 28:10

And so I think those were really, really, really impactful situations that just changed my belief

systems, because we all grew up with this idea that certain things will never happen, because we live in these structured systems, where certain opportunities will never be made available to us. Just as I tell my daughter, women who run for office, who are running for president, is that ever gonna happen? But when I was younger, I never saw that. I just said, "It'll never happen." And so there were certain things that were never supposed to happen. But I think it's the will of the universe, the will of the people, that open up those doors and opportunities for us, and it happened. And so never say never, because I think the world does gravitate towards those opportunities. And it happened. Those type of things happened. So those were the most, I think, impactful things that really is the stories behind what I do what I do.

V

Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 29:26

Wow, that was so profound. Thank you. Could you share about the work that you do with SAAVETX [South Asian American Voter Empowerment Texas] and your mission?

C

Chanda Parbhoo 29:36

Yeah, so like I said, when we first moved to Texas, there were very few South Asians, and my dad faced a lot of discrimination when he started his business. People wouldn't give him insurance because of our last name, people would be unfair to him in the banking system, and he eventually had to get a partner to be the face of his business, just so that those doors would open up for him. And you shouldn't have to do that. And I knew that all of those things were happening. But it was because he didn't have a support system. He didn't know how to advocate for himself. He didn't know who to advocate for. So I tell these stories to my kids today, and they were like, "Why didn't you just sue somebody?" And I felt like the immigrant story was that you just didn't want to be noticed, you didn't want to cause trouble, you just wanted to put your head down and provide for your family. And so that was what we did. We didn't raise our voices. If something was wrong, we would just take a fork in the road and find another opportunity to make sure that things were right again.

C

Chanda Parbhoo 30:50

So I know that our population had grown exponentially since we had first moved here. And I didn't know what the numbers were at the time, but I just thought that this was an opportunity for us to have a voice. And I try to express to the community that have recently moved here, it's like, "No, you don't understand. Once upon a time, we didn't have a voice. There were so few of us, we weren't able to stand up for each other. But if we bring our collective voice together, we can affect change for our community. We can affect change to making things better for everybody." So the inspiration was all the stories that I just told you about earlier. I want to strive to make a better place for everybody, and I think we have the opportunity to do those types of things if I'm able to mobilize our community, and also educate them on the importance of being civically engaged. We have a lot of people who became citizens in their thirties or forties, so didn't have a lot of civic education before coming to this country other than the citizenship test, which is helpful, but it doesn't tell the full story of voting and how to become engaged. I knew that there was an opportunity to fill some of those gaps in

empowering our community to have a voice. And I'm going to keep fighting, just striving to make sure that the community feels included, and to make them feel like they're a part of the system.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 32:47
What goals do you have for yourself?

C Chanda Parbhoo 32:52
For myself, or for the organization?

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 32:58
You could do both if you wanted, but if you prefer speaking about one over the other, then that's fine, too.

C Chanda Parbhoo 33:07
Well, for my organization, I think there's a huge opportunity of a very large part of our population who is not registered to vote. And I think these are people that are often overlooked. We do have a lot of voter suppression laws. That makes it very difficult to reach our community. So I hope one day that we have registration that is easy for communities of color to access, like maybe online voter registration. That would be my dream. My goal is to advocate for easier ways for people to become registered. But I think the overall goal for our organization is to make sure that everybody has a voice and that voting is accessible to people. If they want to vote, they should be able to vote. And just making it easier for everybody to have a voice. I was born in a system, because of the color of my skin, simply the color of my skin, I wasn't allowed to vote. My family didn't have representation. So I really value every single vote, every opportunity that you can have to have a voice.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 34:25
What kinds of cultural traditions and practices do you keep, and why do you tend to gravitate towards those traditions?

C Chanda Parbhoo 34:37
We grew up in a very - my mom and my aunt used to celebrate every single holiday that we ever had on the Indian calendar, and they have both passed on. But thanks to Google, it reminds us of all of the different holidays that we might have missed. But yeah, I think it really helps my kids even to identify with who they are. I think some of the holidays maybe don't happen anymore, but it's sort of our connection to being Indian that I really appreciate. So this coming week is our biggest holiday, and it's called Diwali, which is the celebration of lights. So

we already started eating our sweets and getting ready to clean our houses of debris. It's all for the celebration of the new year. Next Tuesday will be our new year. I don't remember what year were on. 2078 maybe. But yeah, those are some of the traditions that we keep.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 35:56

Wonderful. Do you see any cultural differences between your father's generation, your generation, and then the generation that your children belong to?

C Chanda Parbhoo 36:10

Yeah, I would call myself the flexible generation. Mom was a stickler for, "This is the day that this happens, and everybody's got to show up on a Wednesday night, and you've got to do this before sundown." And here I was trying to raise two kids on two different parts of town doing two different kinds of lessons. And one's on a debate tournament this weekend, and we couldn't do it. And so we're like, "Mom, it's okay, we're gonna do it this weekend, and it'll just have to be on another day." So I think my generation just has learned to be a little bit more flexible, because Diwali, this year, actually shows up on a Monday. So at least people can take off the long weekend. But if it shows up on a Wednesday, it's just really hard. That's one of the things that we advocated for in the schools is to allow children to take off on particular holidays without being - for having an excused absence for those holidays. So we worked on that.

C Chanda Parbhoo 37:24

But I would say that we're more of a flexible generation. But we're also, I think for me and my siblings and cousins, we are working really hard to preserve, because we've noticed that we let a few things - my cousins call each other up, and we're like, "Isn't this so-and-so day? Shouldn't we be cooking this?" And so I think we're starting to realize not having our mothers around who were constantly the pillars of this is what we're doing. So I think we are looking to do that for our kids. But our kids are very, I would say, acclimated to American culture, where they're celebrating all of the holidays. We celebrate all the holidays. We celebrate Easter, we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate anything that there is to celebrate. But yeah, I think we're losing a little bit with every generation.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 38:39

Have your views about living in the United States changed at all over time, and if they have, how so?

C Chanda Parbhoo 38:49

Yeah, the early years were somewhat tough, a little bit difficult, being that there weren't that many of us. And I remember my dad picking us up from school one day, and somebody threw a smoke bomb in our car. And so those types of things were really hard, being told to go back where you came from. And I felt like at some point, maybe a decade ago, I think I finally found

that, "Okay, we're done." My kids were very comfortable. I feel like I carry a lot of baggage for living in this country, because we have felt a lot of the racism, and so I'm very [cautious], and my kids don't have the same fears that I have, that somebody might try to hurt them or anything. Like, "Mom, you're overthinking it. Nothing's gonna happen. I'm going to be safe." I keep having to have conversations with my son, like, "If somebody stops you, this is what you need to do." He's like, "Mom, you don't need to have this conversation with me. Nothing's gonna happen to me. This is not a thing." And for me, I'm still a little bit nervous because I come with a lot of baggage of experiences that we have had. But yeah, my dad and I were watching the news last week, and he was just like, "I don't feel like this is the country that we came to." And he just told me, "You have to work really hard to change it." So that was the conversation we had.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 40:55

Thank you. Is there anything you'd like to add or clarify to any of your answers today?

C Chanda Parbhoo 41:07

No. I think the immigrant journey was a really tough journey sometimes. And I just remember as a kid, just like, "Oh, we're moving again?" I think I moved thirteen times before I was eighteen years old, which is why I have lived in my house for thirty-two years and haven't moved a bit. I just remember everything being really hard. And in looking back, I can just see that each step took me closer to be the person that I am, and maybe gave me that will to fight for something even more, or to fight for any experiences that I had experienced to make sure my kids don't have to face that or another family doesn't have to face that. So I think every experience that I had was horrible, nobody should have to experience any of those things. But it's really made me who I am.

C Chanda Parbhoo 42:10

And I think since we are talking about 1965, which was the first year that communities of color were allowed to vote, I also bring back to our community the struggles of the communities of color that came before us, and that fought for those rights for what we have today. And it was the fight of Martin Luther King and John Lewis. It was that fight that inspired the apartheid uprising against apartheid in South Africa. So not only did John Lewis and Martin Luther King inspire a nation, they inspired another world in South Africa to rise and to say, "Yes, you you can do this." It took them a few decades to get there, but I always go back to the value of the work that was done for us in 1965, being such a pivotal year. It also happens to be the year I was born [laughs]. But just a pivotal history for our community, the Indian community here, and the future generations, and the impact of what they did, and how it inspired all of us to do the work that we're doing, but also inspired people in my homeland of South Africa to dismantle apartheid. So that's a really important and pivotal year for so many communities, not just in the United States.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 43:55

Thank you. I don't think narrator has named that correlation yet.

C Chanda Parbhoo 44:00
Yeah.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 44:02
I'll ask one final question, and then we'll go ahead and wrap up. But Chanda, you know that this is going to be a resource for people in the future. And so if people listen to this, or when people listen to this, what would you like to be remembered by?


C Chanda Parbhoo 44:23
That's a loaded question. I would want people to know that America is a really diverse country, and that it's stronger by all the different voices and all the different experiences that make us who we are. And at the end of the day, it is a country that was based on our dreams to make a life better for our children. And so that is why my parents left apartheid South Africa to make a better life for their children. And me as the second generation here, I am striving to make a better life for my children. And if it means that I'm fighting for their rights in this country, it's a little bit of a different fight, but I'm fighting for for them, and to make it better. But that's what's wonderful about this country, because you are allowed to have that voice, you are allowed to say things when things aren't right. And I think that's what the immigrant experience brings to this country and continues to strive towards: those unexpected goals that I mentioned earlier that sometimes we feel we're not going to reach them, but I feel that this country does give us the opportunity to mend and to be a better country.


V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 46:02
Beautiful, thank you so much for taking part in this project. We really do appreciate it, and thank you for sharing your experiences with me today.


C Chanda Parbhoo 46:14
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my story.

V Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 46:19
Absolutely. If it's okay with you, I'll go ahead and end the recording now.

C Chanda Parbhoo 46:24
Okay.

 Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 46:26
Is it okay with you?

 Chanda Parbhoo 46:28
Yeah.

 Victoria Ferrell-Ortiz 46:29
Okay. I'll end now, thank you.