

**NAME OF PROJECT:** *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** June 27, 2011

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:** Vancouver, BC

**NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:** Honourable Dolores Holmes

**NAME OF INTERVIEWER:** Raymond Culos

**NAME OF VIDEOGRAPHER:** Anna Wilkinson

**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Krystle Copeland

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**PROJECT NOTE:**

**Please note that all interviews have been transcribed verbatim. The language in this transcript is as it was provided by the transcriptionist noted above. The project staff has not edited this transcript for errors.**

**ABSTRACT**

The Honourable Dolores Holmes was born in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1929. Dolores Holmes followed in her father's footsteps, Mr. Angelo Branca and became a lawyer at her dad's firm after graduating from law school in 1952. The majority of this follow-up interview includes her early experiences in Vancouver including walking to school, her church attendance, and travelling for both her first year University studies, and to visit family. Dolores Holmes does not discuss too much of the wartime experience in this interview, however her father was forced to report to the RCMP as well as submitting his minutes from the Sons of Italy meetings. The majority of the interview focuses on Dolores Holme's family life, her experiences as a Judge, and her experiences through law school and career.

**INTERVIEW**

**DH: Dolores Holmes, interviewee**

**RC: Raymond Culos, interviewer**

[Title screen]

[Fades in at 00:00:10]

Interview with Hon. Dolores Holmes. June 27, 2011. Vancouver, British Columbia. Interviewer:  
Raymond Culos Videographer: Anna Wilkinson.

RC: Uh this is Raymond Culos uh, in conversation with uh the Honourable Dolores uh Holmes  
and today is Monday, June 27th, 2011. I wanted to uh, pick up on some of the things that we  
talked about just recently. And one was uh, there was uh moment where you wrote an article  
for the uh Italians Club's uh program. The Confrontolanza Italo Canadese. And you expressed  
how you felt growing up Italian. Do you remember that?

DH: I do remember. [nods] I don't remember exactly what I said.

RC: Yeah.

DH: But I, I remember writing it and it bringing back some nice memories but it also made me  
think about what I actually had received.

RC: Yes, I think the connection in particular was the sense of the community within the Italian  
community itself.

DH: Yes, that's right.

RC: And ah, what school did you go to when you were in elementary school?

DH: I started, well I grew up in Hastings East. So I went to the Catholic School which was Our Lady of Sorrows. And it was about ten blocks from where we lived. We lived at 2500 Block Cambridge. And you used to walk up it— it used to be called Clinton. I think it's called Penticton now. And there was a group of kids that walked from Eaton Street which was the next street north of Cambridge. And we all kind of walked together. There were three of us that went past Hastings School and we all walked together until we got about a block um, just at the edge of Hastings School. And then all the kids that were going to the Prot— the uh Catholic, the Non-catholic School across the street and joined the group of people that were going in. And all I can remember is I had my sister and another little girl with me. And I think my cousin was with us. And we're walking along and of course they're wondering because the kids on the other side, side are calling us cat-lickers and all these other beautiful names that we used to have. And we'd get past um, Hastings School and then we'd be at Hastings and then we're, we're okay because we're just a block from the school.

RC: Yeah.

DH: But at, in the afternoon when we were coming home at three o'clock, same thing happened. We'd be walking down together and we'd get to the border, just past Hastings. Have to go by the Protestant— Hastings School. And of course they're all out. The kids that are to walk home with us are in the next block so nobody supposedly, sees them join with the Catholics. It— you can't, you can't miss this.

RC: [laughs]

DH: Anyway, we'd all, we'd all get to past the school and all of the Protestant kids walked over and they started to walk home with us.

RC: Oh!

DH: It was really odd! But you know in those days everybody went home for lunch. So that you, there was barely time by the time you walked there, had a sandwich and a glass of milk to walk back to school. But it got so that you know everybody on the street.

RC: Yes.

DH: It was a very, it was a nice, nice feeling.

RC: When uh, you were going to school with the kids as you mentioned. Uh, would uh Pat, your sister Patricia be with you?

DH: Yeah. She was two years behind me. So uh, my mother used to walk me when it was just me. And then um, and my sister was in a—what are those push cart things?

RC: Sure.

DH: And um, but after that, when Pat started school I was old enough. And you know nothing really happened to kids in those days. It was perfectly safe. We're in a good neigh— well, it was a working class neighbourhood. But we all lived there so, one had the same as the other, which was practically nothing.

RC: That's true—

DH: You know.

RC: For all of us that grew up in that area.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: So, did you uh, happen to have a single uh, friend that you, you—

DH: Yeah, I had some good friends. [nods]

RC: Grew up with [unclear]—

DH: Um, most of them were Italians in my class. Like there was Jerri Martelli. Uh, she was there. Uh, there was Tonka oh, what was her name? Uh, Ovadavich or something like that.

RC: K.

DH: Anyway, there were a number and then there were a number of English people. The Donnovans were there. The Gregs were there. [nods] And, but none of them came to the north side of um, Hastings. They all lived on the other side. [motions with hand from one side to the other] Um, you know it's funny because when I go—my sister can't drive anymore so when I go, occasionally I try and do it uh, twice a month. I go over and get her and take her to church on Sunday. And first Sunday that we're there and she says to me, she can't see anymore— she has [macular degeneration]. So she says to me "you know I think Louis Lochran is in the front row." I said "she always sits there." Do you remember the Lochrans?

RC: No, I don't but—

DH: Well, they were in my class. And ahead, she was there. Anyway, I, I get up and of course there's this old lady as we're all old. And she's uh, sitting at the end and I think is that [Lois] or not? I really have to look at her. Anyway, we stopped on the way out and it was her. And I thought to myself, I can't believe I'm, I'm here.

RC: Yes.

[5:44.8]

RC: All these years later.

DH: All these years later.

RC: And, and which parish do you belong to now?

DH: Now I belong to St. Pious the Tenth. Which is just the parish up here.

RC: Yes.

DH: So, it's a fairly new parish. [nods] Um, my sister belongs at St. Anthony's in West Vancouver. And so, it's, it's quite nice.

RC: Yeah. So, at the time when you were going to Sorrows.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: I was probably at Sacred Heart.

DH: That's right. You were. [nods]

RC: A few blocks down. And uh, uh, church mass uh— very important. And we adhered to all these.

DH: All the rules. No meat on Friday you know. And everything else. Lent was really a time of abstinence and everything else.

RC: [laughs]

DH: But what I do—. You know it's funny because there used to be an Owl Drugstore, or a Rexall store right in the corner of um, Penticton or Clinton and Has-- and Hastings. And uh, we didn't have a car so on Sundays we all walked to church together. And my dad would stop at the drugstore. Go in and they used to have a table of English cups and saucers. And they would be, the most expensive would be five dollars. And I can remember to this day, taking my mother in and he'd say, "alright Vi. You take whichever one you want and I'll buy it for you." He did that every Sunday. And it turned out to be beautiful cups and saucers. Real English. And every time we have dinner or we had people in or we served tea my mum got out these beautiful cups and saucers. So when she died, she must have had...easily 60. And so my sister and I, we decided when we were dividing things up that it would be just the two of us. We wouldn't consider anything else. So we we were over at my mum's house this day and we had all, we had the dining room table full of cups and saucers so we decided I was the oldest, I'd go first and she'd go next. And that's the way we divided the cups and saucers up.

RC: Isn't that wonderful.

DH: Yup, and even now, my kids look at them, they know which is mine and which is my mother's. And they've got them all parceled out. They know who's going to get what and what they're going to get and how they're going to get it. So, it's really interesting but what's nice is it brings something of my mom and dad's into everything we do.

RC: Absolutely. Yeah, and they see that so—

DH: They see that. And I think that's, I hope that's why they want some of the things so that they're going to pass it onto them. I have my mother's uh, you know. [Mill] my sister's husband had that store, so he had access to all this china. But one of the things my dad bought my mother was a Spode dinner set. And I can remember when we first got a dishwasher, and you know that was really something. Before that it was everything by hand. And we never even thought about it, we put those dishes in the dishwasher. And she had a set now for 24. I've got it now [points to chest] and I look at the dishes. There isn't a fading on any of the colours; they're as beautiful as they were when we used them at home.

RC: Oh, and I thought the opposite would be true.

DH: It's not though.

RC: Now, isn't that remarkable.

DH: Those—. But yet other things that happened after the war at, yes, they are starting to fade. But yes, I use them every Sunday. It's really interesting to think of that because when my mother and dad—well you know the house that was a lovely house. And it was a big thing our Sunday dinners for the families. And it's just really nice because it's gradually come around with mine that they're all coming home Sundays. Now, they do a lot of the cooking, but I like that.

RC: Now you were saying just a few minutes before we started that the group is 18 now.

DH: Yes it's 18. [nods]

RC: So, that's your five children...

DH: And their children.

RC: And so your grandchildren.

DH: Oh yeah, all the grandchildren are here.

RC: [laughs]

DH: The other thing is, remember I told you about Michael Anducchi?

RC: Yes.

[10:14.7]

DH: Well, his son Robert came down and this goes back to the years Simon Fraser first started. And they lived in Trail, so they came down and we had just put the swimming pool in and my husband and one of my law partners were down and you know it was hot. They were pouring cement to get the tile around the pool done. And I can remember, Mike who was, who was my dad's friend. My dad was here and he was helping but my husband and my partner were doing

the, the big work. Uh, dad was great at pouring cement but not getting it the right— so anyhow.

RC: [laughs]

DH: Uh, Pat took that over. But this time Mike came down with Robert. Robert has been out to the University for his interview and been accepted, so he's in a suit, white shirt, and tie. He comes in, of course and the kids are all small so they're everywhere. And um, so the next thing I know he's got his coat off, his tie off, and shirt undone and his sleeves rolled up and he's pouring cement. So we find out that he wants to uh, he's down with his dad looking for a place to stay and school started the next week. So, my husband looks at this kid who's working really hard and he says to me "you better tell Mike he can stay here with us." We only had two children then. Pat was just going on three and our house wasn't as big as this, but we always had a recreation room with a fire place, so Robert slept down there and the boys slept up here. But they loved going down to wake him up. [nods]

RC: That's a good story. [laughs]

DH: It is good. And you know, he still, he and his family are great friends still. So when they come for dinner, we're 22. [nods]

RC: [laughs] That sounds wonderful.

DH: It is; it's good.

RC: Just before uh, we move from uh, Our Lady of Sorrows to uh—. I remember we had a uh, a music teacher at Sacred Heart who made all of us, or introduced singing in the choir to all of us.

DH: Uh hmm. That's right.

RC: Even I participated.

DH: Yup.

RC: Did you get involved in the choir or CYO when you were—

DH: Uh, we were involved in the CYO when it first started and that was when it, by that time we were in Immaculate Conception. Which is the Jesuit parish. And um, they had a youth group at the school. We were only a couple of blocks from that, that church. We were on 24th, that was on 27th. And um, it was, they had this youth group going and they had some um, parishioners that had children in the school that would come and they'd, of course there were no dances, you couldn't do anything like that. And they would come and they would teach us signing. So that they would present concerts because the sisters that taught us were religious from one of the RSCJs you know that are at the Convent of the Sacred Heart and they were semi uh, cloistered. So they, they could meet people but they couldn't come out to concerts or things like that. So, they used to have, this, this man used to come over from St. Peter and Paul and teach us signing. And it was— the basement of the church was what you had to sit in. And the school was right there. And it was really quite nice, quite nice.

RC: And did you stay with that for a year or two or—

DH: Yes, we stayed with that and then by the time that was really going, I went to um, the—a convent in California for my first year. There's an interesting point. Because uh, my friend who was staying with us on the weekend was from um, one of the Central American countries. And

she was going to go on to San Fransisco it was called. San Fransisco College for women, so she, she came home over to our house every weekend. So she became very close with my mom and dad and um, she says to my dad one day. She says, "Mr. Branca. Why don't you let Dotto come and come to school with me? Because—" she says, he say—she says to him, "I don't know anybody." And so he asked me if I'd like to go and I thought. Oh, San Fransisco would I like to go? "Yes, I would!" So, um, we, we applied, get accepted and it is a boarding school. And at that time the nuns were plentiful. So all of the nuns lived in the school in a different part of the community than we did. But my dad said now— this is fine, this is the first year of University. He said, that's— "I don't mind you going down." And he said, "you can come home for Christmas. But you have to stay for the whole year." I didn't think anything of it; I thought oh, yes, that would be great. I get to stay the whole year. So, my mother took me down, took—and Lillian's mom came up from Al Savador. Get us settled and then they come home. My dad gave me an allowance of a dollar a day. I had never had money. Never money of my own. So uh, the school was on the way from downtown San Fransisco to the beach, halfway up. And it was, there was a street car so you had no trouble. And right below was ah, Golden Gate Park and there was a beautiful church there and the Jesuits School was there. So that the Jesuits served those schools. So we get down and we're having a great time, and my friend had a car. We met another girl from Beverly Hills and she, you know it was a regular dorm that you're in. I had never been in a place like this. There were 12 girls from all over the world. And you had a bed, you had a side table, and you had a dresser. And you had a desk, but the desk wasn't there, the desks lined the perimeter of the room, so anyway I'm next to this one girl. Who lives in Beverly Hills. So—and she had a car. And so, first weekend we're there. I knew I had 30 dollars for September so she— and we're, nobody is from San Fransisco. So we're all uh, foreigners so to speak. So this day she, we decided we're going to go over to Marine County. Which is near Oakland and, so Petty's driving. Her name was Perpetua, and I had never heard that.

RC: Eh, no.

[16:58.0]

DH: Anyway, she, we all. There was six of us and we get in the car and we go over and we had a wonderful day because none of us had been there before. And we stop for lunch. And I think lunch came to something like seven dollars. And I get home, this is the first weekend in September. We get back to the dorm and I think seven dollars. I can't do—. I have to really watch my. You know, when I think about it, my mom and dad were so smart. Because I thought I was having this money that was going to be— I'd have money left over. Well, when the reality because we felt that when we had to buy gas or help her with the gas, even though she didn't want it. Anyway, by the time half of the month is over I have like seven dollars left. And so this third weekend comes and she says, what'll we do this weekend? I says, "I think I have to stay and do some homework." And she said, "you short of money?" And of course there was no shortage on her part. And said, "yes." And she said, "well, I'll loan you some." I said, "no, I can't do that." And she says, "okay then, we'll all stay." And so everybody stayed. That taught me a lesson. I knew I had to divide that money into the number of Saturdays.

RC: Great lesson.

DH: Oh, absolutely great.

RC: Yes.

DH: And it was easy because everybody else, a lot of the girls had money. A lot of them didn't. There was a girl from Nebraska that was there and she had less than I did. But we all appreciated the fact that our parents were doing something extra to send us and give us a better part of life. Which was, that stayed with me a long time.

RC: Do you consider that to be uh—

DH: Absolutely.

RC: Good decision to go?

DH: The best decision came when he, dad told me we could come home. And my friend from El Salvador came with me. So at Christmas time we came home. And of course it was a beautiful Christmas. There's snow and there's parties and everybody is just great. So the uh, um we're leaving on a Friday. And on the Wednesday night, I came home and this is just the week after Christ— after New Year's. And I said, "Dad I want to talk to you." And he said, "the answer's no." I said "how do you know what I want to say?" He says, "you want me to say its okay for you to stay home, don't you?" And I said, "yeah, I really like it, but I miss home." He says, "nope, the deal was a year, and that's what you're going to do." So... [shrugs]

RC: Back you went.

DH: Back I went. But it taught me, I'll tell you it taught me a number of lessons. And when he said something he meant it. And he didn't repeat it. He just said, "well yeah that's fine but you're going to be there for the year, do you really want to go?" "Oh, yes. I mean, I'd love to go." Taught me a lot of lessons. It taught me how much I love my mom and dad. The other thing that was really important is he wrote me every week.

RC: My.

[20:04.7]

DH: And his letters were...I never expected this of my dad. He'd talk about the weather and how beautiful the flowers were. What he noticed on the way to work that morning. And I always thought, gee how lucky I have these. My mother would, would write, everything's fine here dear, don't worry about things. And she says, I'll give you a call this week. That would be mom. Loved me just as much as my dad, but my dad liked writing.

RC: Isn't that amazing.

DH: Uh hmm. Yeah.

RC: Well, he did have that natural bend to express himself. Obviously, that was his career and—

DH: Yeah, it was really something.

RC: So, you stayed the year.

DH: Stayed the year, came home, went to UBC.

RC: And you went to UBC.

DH: [nods] Uh hmm.

RC: And when you graduated uh, from UBC you went to law school.

DH: Yes. No, I— uh, at that time after three years of arts and you've went into law after your second year of law you got a BA.

RC: I see.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: So uh, um, did you start straight away uh at the uh—

DH: No.

RC: At your dad's office or did you—

DH: Yes, after I, well I'd always worked there part time on Saturday mornings so. I knew a lot of the people that were there. And the other people that worked— one of them was Tosca Trascallini. Who was my dad's second secretary. And what's interesting about her because— do you remember the flying seven?

RC: Yes, I do—

DH: She was one of the five, first seven women in Canada that got a pilot's license.

RC: Yes.

DH: She was just—

RC: She was an amazing woman.

RC: She really was.

DH: And she was from that Trascallini family which goes on even now.

RC: Yes.

DH: You know so.

RC: Very athletic.

DH: Oh, everything.

RC: Very—

DH: Yeah. And the boys went away during the war but you know they were all always very close.

RC: You know that family, just as you pointed out. Uh, was exceptional. During the war uh, there were five Trasallinis children.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: And uh, four of them were in the service.

DH: That's right.

RC: Uh, it's just amazing. I think Tosca was the oldest. So, she probably felt that she could be more [unclear].

DH: That's right.

RC: Now, she's an interesting person because she was my dad's uh girlfriend.

DH: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

RC: Yeah, and I know it was before he met my mom.

DH: Uh hmm. [nods and points at RC] Yes that's right. [laughs]

RC: [laughs] But uh, uh, he told me, but my mother embellished that uh, at a time when women generally speaking—

DH: That's right.

RC: Weren't given the opportunity to advance. She was just full of beans.

DH: Yeah. Absolutely.

RC: And uh, uh, I've forgotten how old, but she would have been say.

DH: Well, she was a good 15 years older that I was.

RC: I would think. Yeah.

DH: Uh huh. Actually, she lived for quite a long time. It's just in the last ten years that she passed away.

RC: Yeah, she moved to California.

DH: That's right. Uh hmm.

RC: And I think uh, that uh they actually have named a street after her in Palm Springs.

DH: That's right. That's right. [nods]

RC: And uh, uh I don't think she got married until well after the war.

DH: No, I don't even remember meeting her husband.

RC: Uh, I...

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: In your own uh, uh, uh, uh quest for ah a law degree, did you find ah, any obstacles that were artificially put there by men. You know?

DH: Well I remember one example because, this, this happened after I had graduated and I'm in my year of articles. And there used to be the County Court you know which is a lower court than the Supreme Court. And this is before now they're amalgamated. This is before. And there, on interim applications. Students generally did that. So my dad came to me this day and you know we're all in the same office and he says, "Dode, I've got some applications, do you want

to go up to the County Court chambers?" And I said, "Sure I'll do that." And there used to be one uh, well there was a number of Judges that were were there. And some of them were really self important. And I happened to get one like that. And there was, the chambers were crowded because there's a—. Everybody goes for preliminary applications like substitutional service, things like that. So I have these three cases. And when I see the Judge comes in, I know I'm in— I was going to say a word. A— deep trouble. [laughs and covers face] And I—

RC: Do do.

DH: Yeah, do. That's exactly it. It was exactly it.

RC: [laughs]

DH: Anyway, we ended up by, I'm by the main part of the courtroom is full and they've got chairs all around the side and I'm sitting on the side wall. Next to I know uh one of the senior lawyers. Well of course as soon as I see who comes in, my hands started to shake because I knew I was in for a really bad time. And um, this man next to me turns to me and he says, "You're Angelo's daughter aren't you?" And I said "yes." He said "would you like me to take your applications." And I said, "oh yes, I would." And he did all my applications for me. And then, when I walked out the courtroom, I walked out and I'm going down the front steps, you know the ones that are down at the courthouse.

RC: Uh hmm.

[25:30.6]

DH: And the judge is there, and he comes over to me and says, "You're Angelo's daughter aren't you?" And I said, "yes." He says, "It's really nice to see you." Which isn't what he would have said if I had stood up and said anything. I've never forgotten that, because there was a real, I mean it was made easy for me because this man knew me, or knew my dad. And realized I was scared shitless.

RC: Yes.

DH: And, and that was ah, and criminal law of course women there was no, no I don't remember any criminal lawyer. But they were doing civil and they were doing family.

RC: Yes.

DH: But that's it. There was a real. There was probably, um three, four of us. In the class of law school, uh law class that I was in. And my class was the last of the classes that took uh Veterans.

RC: Veterans.

DH: Because they had to go to Sea View.

RC: Oh yes.

DH: Do you remember the school that was on fourth, to bring up their education so that they could go to do law school. They didn't have to go for a BA; they went straight into law school. But most of them, well they were, my class was over 200 and I think graduated about 160, which is exceptional, but—

RC: And how many women in that 160?

DH: Well, five. [nods]

RC: Five.

DH: Five and of those five, four of us became judges. [holds up four fingers]

RC: Oh my!

DH: Yeah, it was really quite something. But what was really interesting, was um, the first year that I was there, I was 19 and all of the other, I mean there was another—I don't think there was anybody that came straight into law without having a job or being in the services. So, I was really in the minority. And I can remember uh, writing my exams, and that year I was too nervous to do anything. So I sat at the very back of the classroom and I was hoping nobody would ever know who I was so when, I, I did get through the year and when I got my marks I failed. History, history of English law. So I, and you know, you can't go on. So I can remember uh speaking to my dad. Of course, my mother and dad knew what my marks were. And he said to me uh, "what are you going to do?" He says— well I said well "I'm going to have do it, take the year again." Because you had to repeat everything.

RC: Oh—

DH: And he says, "okay. That's fine." So, he paid it again. I— but this time, I'm sitting at the back row, again, hadn't figured it out, and it's a new class. So this lawyer comes— or this student comes in and he's, he's a married man. I'd seen him before in the class. And he sits there and I'm at the back and he's going up to the front and he said, "You're Doddie Branca aren't you?"

And I said, "Yes." He says, come on up and sit with me." So I thought, well it can't be any worse than I am here. Because I didn't know anybody in the class. I sat with him for the next three years. He was the Governor General's— got [stumbles over words and makes a noise] received the Governor General's award when we graduated. And he taught me how to study law. He did it every day. We would— our classes were from 8:30 to 11:30 every day. And then uh, the people that were veterans. I mean they were not there to fool around. They were there to learn, get out and get a job. And he got me into that same routine, that he— and, and I was welcomed into the study group that they had. I learned more from them in a practical point of view than I would have ever have made on my own.

RC: Isn't that remarkable—

DH: I really thanked him for that.

RC: Yeah. One of the veterans I believe in your class at the time was Julie's uncle, Pat Holgan.

DH: Oh yes! Yes, and actually you know it's a funny thing. That class has stayed together for a number of years. And every five years at the beginning we had a reunion, and it would generally be at the Lawyer's Inn or someplace like that. And you know we were about 160 that graduated. Some of them were from Vancouver, some of them weren't. And so what we did eventually do, on our 40th anniversary, we had a dinner here for everybody. And we invited their husbands and wives so everybody came.

RC: That's a—

[30:21.0]

DH: There were about 60 of us here. And the dean came. Now Dean Curtis, for anybody that was at law school is legendary. He never forgot you, I mean he couldn't see you for, or if he hadn't seen you for 20 years he'd say "hi Dolores, how are ya?" And I'm thinking, what's his first name?

RC: [laughs]

DH: Anyway, uh, we were here and we were all standing around and he was here and Charlie Born who was another Principal was here. And the dean had just lost his wife so, you know it was a difficult time for him but we were all sitting down and I hesitate to say this, but you didn't really want him to say a lot because he never knew when to stop.

RC: [laughs]

DH: Anyway, one of the other uh, lawyers said— I wasn't on the bench yet. Said, "Dean Curtis, would you like to say a few words?" Well, he said yes, and he started, but what was amazing is he talked to each one of us individually, using our name. Now, I, I, I'm sure he, he called me Dolores Branca, but she's now known as Holmes. I don't think he ever used Holmes. But he went through every one of the women. There was one that wasn't married, everybody else was married and he reminded everybody who they were, where they were sitting in the class and how well they did. It was amazing.

RC: It would have been.

DH: He was absolutely amazing. And he had to be close to 100 at that time.

RC: Oh my!

DH: Walking without a cane, just doing well.

RC: That would have been just wonderful if in the day of, the technology of today you could have just recorded it and videotaped—

DH: Uh hmm, yup. We took a lot of pictures uh, that night and a few weeks ago there was an alumni dinner where one of our classmates was honoured. So, we got together with everybody else and there was about 12 of us I guess. Because we were the only ones that were able to go. And it was very interesting because you know, it, watching it. And the other man that came with us that day was Charlie Born, he was a big, tall man, and he spoke slowly. And I don't know where he got this, but his nickname was Spook. Well, he's one of the people getting an award at this well, uh this table that I'm sitting at just about dying because [says laughing] this is the last one, he never expected to get an award, but it was great, it was so wonderful seeing people that were well.

RC: Of course.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: Well, Uh, during those years when you really uh hit the books so to speak.

DH: Yeah.

RC: There was a period of relief when you decided to go to Europe.

DH: That's right. That's right.

RC: I, I think it was just following uh University.

DH: That's right. That's what my parents gave me for a graduation gift. [nods] They gave me a trip to Europe, six months. And the purpose was to travel in Europe and then go to my relative's. Which is where I learned my meager Italian. But, they didn't speak any English, so it was a case of either I learned, or I wasn't going to talk and that was impossible.

RC: Didn't you take the car, the family car with you?

DH: No, no. The second time I went I took the car. The first time I went and I don't know if you remember Mr. Contolli?

RC: No.

DH: He had a watch ma—a watch store. Leo Contolli was his name and he was a client of my dad's and he was going. He, his family came from Switzerland. Mine were in northern Italy, so it was ah, very close. So he took me over with him and brought me to the family, you know you didn't travel alone in those days.

RC: Oh, yeah. So, your grandfather, Phillippo Branca—

DH: Uh hmm. [nods]

RC: Was from uh, a town just outside of Milano.

DH: That's right. Uh hmm.

RC: And ah, I think you went there and met cousins?

DH: Yes, yes, I'm still in touch with those cousins. My, my cousin has two boys. And she's still alive but doesn't walk well. She's had ah, a cancer operation, so. She's pretty well all there but she's very well situated. My cousin had um, and I don't even know what you call these. It's a factory that manufactured uh, like fire hydrants, cisterns, and things like that. It was a very well-run factory and he sent um, he sold things all over the world. So they lived a very nice life and still do. And they, after he died, he died after about I'd been there both times. And he was alive, and then after that he died and left the business to my cousin.

RC: Uh hmm.

DH: And uh, two other cousins from the other brother. He so—

RC: Isn't that the first vacation—

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: If I recall the story correctly.

[35:20.8]

RC: Uh, you did a little cycling tour in the neighbourhood in the farm area.

DH: Yes! I was uh, thinking of that the other day. Uh, we're, we're riding uh, you know there's no cars. So you could go all over the road. Anyway we're— and I see um, I see uh, a farm. And

they have corn. Nobody ate corn. I didn't realize that it was only for the hogs or the pigs, anyway I'm looking at this corn and I say to my cousin, I say "I'd really like some of that corn." And she says, "you're not going to eat it are you?" And I say, "oh, it's delicious." Well she says, "we could ask the farmer." So there's somebody working in the fields and so we go over and we park our bikes or lay them down and walk over and he wonders what the heck are these two girls going to do? And so, she— because he had no English at all. So she asked if we could buy two cobs of corn. And he says, "well, they're for the pigs." And I thought, oh geeze, what is she going to say now? She said, "No, we just need them to take them home." So he said, "well you can have them." So anyway, we get to talking and um, because I, my cousin knew where my grandfather's farm was. And so they get to talking and he says, well, "I think my friend owns it." Now I can't remember whether—if they were joining or very close to where we were. Anyway, that was where my grandfather came from.

RC: My god. And he actually remembered—

DH: He remembered my grandfather, not him, but the fact that it was the Branca farm and he had gone to the new world I think is the way he put it. Amazing.

RC: It is amazing. And I know you and your grandfather, Phillip, uh, was working in Utah in the mines.

DH: That's right.

RC: That uh, uh, he sent for your grandmother.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: Who was from maybe the Brenner Pass?

DH: Yes. Right in there, in near Inns Brook.

RC: Uh, did you ever get that far north?

DH: Yes, I did. I went to see—yeah her sister was still alive when I left. And um, she, she had, she wasn't living on her own, she was living with her nephew. And so my grandmother had written her, because you didn't phone in those days. To say that I was coming over. And so my aunt wrote back and said she really would like to meet me. So I had a trip planned to go there. And um, so we did go up and but she— she had passed away, but her son was still there. And uh, I can remember going into this little town. It was [Lindz] and uh, found we found the house, how I'll never know. And I, it was I have never been so happy being greeted. They treated me as if I were a long lost relative. And I guess when I think about it now; I probably was a long lost relative. Because now that my, my uh, aunt who was living there, my great aunt. Had passed away a month before. So there was no link to my grandmother. Any, any, and they didn't know what was happening. So I was able to establish that. And, and my pigeon Italian, I would write them every once and a while. And telling what it, it was amazing. They lived in a house— there was no indoor plumbing. When you walked in the front door, there was a closet to the side and you opened it, and there was a two-hole toilet. And outside, you know, it's not in the part of the house that's warmed, it was, it was very interesting because these people were, were certainly educated. They had a good job. He was a professor, but this is just the way they lived.

RC: And that would be maybe 1954.

DH: It was '54. Uh hmm.

RC: 1954. And uh, uh, if I recall correctly your grandmother was a Christopher, or Cristoforo.

DH: Yes, that's right. Cristofoli.

RC: And was that [unclear]—

DH: Yes, they're still there. They're still there—

RC: [unclear] nephew.

DH: The nephew and their children. [nods]

RC: Oh...

DH: I'm not sure, I haven't heard from them in a couple of years, so I really think he's passed on. Because I, I, I never met the children.

RC: Did uh, you and Patricia and your mom and dad ever have holidays together? 'Cause your dad was extremely busy.

DH: Uh, well before— before we, before I was an adult, yes, we did. My dad would take us places like Bone Island. And he was gonna to stay with us, and then, no he had to go back to the office. And then he'd be over every day but he always got busy. Never really got over every day. It was you know, and my mother is stuck on Bone Island. With two kids. [laughs] Uh, dad was kindly thought of at times, but not really my mother, I'm sure would rather have stayed home, but it, it was, it was, wonderful from my sister and I point of view.

[40:26.4]

RC: You described your mom as being very understanding of your dad's profession.

DH: Hmm.

RC: And uh, and she had certain characteristics that you and Pat seem to have uh, in your genes, inherited. Uh, being uh, being dynamic, being uh, stubborn maybe?

DH: Oh yes. [nods] Uh hmm.

RC: What uh, what kind of uh, support did your mom offer your dad when he was in those years of building the practice and so on?

DH: Anything he wanted to do, she accommodated.

RC: Isn't that right.

DH: You know, she took us, she came from Olympia. And every single summer, she took us down for uh, a month. My sister and I went, because she grew up on a farm. And it's now, uh, in Olympia, but at that time it was just outside of Olympia. They had a big farm and it was ah, a working farm. So, we would go down. By now, all my mother's brothers and sisters had moved out and had their own families, but everybody was close by. And the big thing in her family were picnics. And, yet everybody would go on a picnic to a park. And everybody would bring something, they would have beans, they would have chicken. Everything. And we'd be there for the whole, the whole day.

RC: Oh my!

DH: Which was wonderful.

RC: Good fun, and you were able to connect with your grandparents.

DH: Oh, yes. Yes. Uh hmm.

RC: Was that the Millar family?

DH: That's the Millar family. Uh hmm.

RC: Were your grandparents also born in uh, that area of Washington, or did they come from another state?

DH: No, my grandmother came uh, she was a French background. And she uh, was in Mississippi. My grandfather was of German background and was living— uh working in Mississippi, and that's where they met. Uh, my mother was one of six children. And they moved out to Olympia, for I don't know what reason. But all of the uh, it was interesting because two of my, my aunts married Canadians. And both of them worked for the telephone company, were lineman. And you know, I think, and I listen to people talk about what they do at, I've still got a great respect for the telephone company, but people that are talking about it are nothing like what these two were.

RC: [laughs]

DH: But my aunt, my uh aunts both lived, now do you know where the Scow Street school is in Burnaby?

RC: Absolutely. Yeah.

DH: Okay, they live just down the block from that. And of course they all belong to uh, the parish in um, um, Hastings East. Up on the hill. St. Helen's.

RC: St. Helen's.

DH: And every weekend, they would have uh, some type of a community dance there, and so all—and families would go, so my mother would be out there, so she would walk up with her, with her sisters and my dad would go with his family from, because they had the farm there now. So they would go all out. And there's another couple there that, that remained friends of my mother and dad's all and mine. And Tom Braidwood, who turned out to be one of our, my partner's and my dad's, uh his parents were there too. And every Saturday night, everybody in the area walked up the hill to, whatever place the dance was. It was a...you know, really a family affair.

RC: Yes.

DH: So, that's where the Braidwood's came in and um, they weren't married at the time of course. Uh, that relationship too my mom and dad started then.

RC: Well, Tom Braidwood's uh, father I think had a butcher shop—

DH: That's right.

RC: Is that true?

DH: Exactly. [nods] Exactly. I can remember going into that because of course we bought all our meet from him. And every time I walked in he gave us a wiener. And I thought, I loved them.

Yeah. [laughs]

RC: The key to a kid's heart.

DH: That's right.

RC: A wiener.

DH: That's exactly it.

RC: Well, he uh, he uh, Tom, of course. I call call him St. Tom for the conversation. But I mean I respect the fact that he's a former Judge. He just did uh, um ah, uh, one of those investigations that was incredibly—

DH: Yeah, uh the taser inquiry.

RC: Exactly. And Judy and I read everything we can in the newspaper because it uh, it, his judgment must be uh, wr—of great, um, um, um, uh interest to the law fraternity as a whole because he just sounds like a person who has a gift.

[45:23.8]

DH: That's right, he is great. He retired from the Court of Appeal. Which is the top Court in British Columbia. But he is the same person that I met; I've known him all my life. And he just is so, calm uh, and he, he looks at things and he gets right straight to the heart of it.

RC: Yeah.

DH: There's no bullshit with him.

RC: Yeah.

DH: And he calls it the way he sees it. You may not like it but that's the way he, he calls it.

RC: Uh hmm. Well, fairness comes with that type of calling.

DH: Yes. Uh hmm.

RC: Yeah. of course your grandfather, going back to Phillippo, um, was the founder of the [Società Veneta].

DH: That's right.

RC: Of the Veneta society and your dad of course, for 50 years was prominent in the Italian community and founded the [Confrontolanza Italo Canadese]. On your mom's side was there uh ah uh, an ethnic group to which they belonged? Like your grandparents?

DH: No. No, they became pure Americans. And my grandfather, actually my grandfather poured—he had a cement farm. And he poured most of the uh, sidewalks in the old part of

Olympia. And it's really funny because as I'm walking with one of my cousins a couple of years ago and we're just going down the hill toward the uh, downtown. And we're crossing the street and you know how they have the date and the name?

RC: Oh yes.

DH: I looked down and there it says, Millar, 1928.

RC: Wow.

DH: And I think, holy, that's really something.

RC: That— yes. Especially for a small community.

DH: Yeah. Uh hmm.

RC: Yeah, in fact the, the, that was something as kids we would do. Because uh, uh in the east side they changed the names say from—

DH: That's right.

RC: Barnard to Union or [unclear]—

DH: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

RC: And I bet the same applies, would have applied there. So your mom then, rather than having to have been involved yourself. In any organization, was the person who ran the house—

DH: That's absolutely—

RC: And supported her husband and made sure the kids were reared in a way that would be uh, uh, you know beneficial to the children.

DH: That's right.

RC: So, then uh there is an uh, uh, an interesting story I believe uh, with your professional side. Uh, you were a professional lawyer, and then you decided to be married and then following that of course you had your children. And then was a time when you had to split yourself between husband—

DH: Yeah.

RC: Children, and uh, your profession.

DH: Yeah. [nods] That's where the choice of my husband was perfect. Because he supported whatever I wanted to do, I felt when the kids were small and there's so many of them, that I really should be here. But I didn't want to stop practicing all together, 'cause I really thought that maybe I wouldn't go back. So of course, I'm working for my dad, and he said, well "why don't you just come in three times a week?" And so, I did that. My mother came out and took care of the children. And then when, uh the days that I worked my dad would come out and

have dinner with us. So it was and of course my dad absolutely loved the children. And they loved him.

RC: Yeah.

DH: It was really nice.

RC: Isn't that wonderful, that relationship.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: Especially with the older children. That—

DH: That's right.

RC: With Angelo and Pat.

DH: That's right. [nods] That's right.

RC: And I think he, as he got older and maybe not feeling himself. Quite so uh, that he uh, started to talk to them. And they volunteered to become involved in the Italian organization.

DH: Yes. That's right. Which is great.

RC: Yeah.

DH: It's really good. For both of them, they begin to understand what the aims of—are. And you go back to the community when you have a lot. And I, I think our children are very well done by.

RC: Well uh right, today, uh your son Angelo is the President of the [Confrontolanza].

DH: Uh hmm. [nods]

RC: And Pat uh, offers uh, you know legal advice.

DH: Yeah, that's right.

RC: And offers the uh, the books in terms of the uh,--

DH: Yeah, yeah.

RC: The uh, treasury. So they have done the family proud by staying with the Italian group. I think—

DH: Yeah, and they like it.

RC: Yeah.

DH: You know they don't uh, they don't consider it a chore. But they actually take, take part in the actual running of it. Which I, I think is good because I think we all need new people.

RC: Hear, hear.

DH: Uh hmm.

[50:07.0]

RC: Yes, so from your five children. How many grandchildren do you have?

DH: I have eight. [laughs]

RC: Eight.

DH: Yeah.

RC: They are among those who come on Sunday.

DH: They all come every Sunday.

RC: Yeah and so, uh, uh—

DH: No, well two of them don't. One daughter lives in Whistler. Her husband is uh, an arborist and was working for Whistler for the last ten years. Getting everything ready for the Olympic games. He did a lot of the, of the clearing of the trails, so he's worked there for uh, they've been married for maybe 16 years and they've been up there the whole time. They took, well you know they rented, rent when you're talking about family is a not a concrete amount of money. [laughs] Anyway they stayed at our place at Whistler for uh, a number of years before they bought it. And then uh, they had a fire and they decided that they would sell it and move to Pemberton where they could afford. Uh, my son in law likes uh farming. He's really a good gardener. And so they bought acreage in Pemberton.

RC: Excellent.

DH: And my daughter works for the municipality there.

RC: So, uh your career of course uh, after the uh, after the story that you related with the children and so on. You became full time again—

DH: Yeah.

RC: And then uh, were appointed to the bench, uh I've forgotten the year.

DH: It was 19— uh it was 1974.

RC: Yeah, I was going to say it was '75, so right on. And then I should imagine that that took you to retirement.

DH: Uh hmm.

RC: In '88.

DH: Uh hmm, yeah.

RC: And since retirement uh, I believe you've been appointment to a number of boards and—

DH: Yes.

RC: And uh, uh, well to do with, uh well you tell us.

DH: Okay, um, well I uh, I started to work for uh Peter Richie. When he started the Picton matter. And he assembled a group of lawyers to uh, to help him and I have a great friend, Nancy Morrison and this is—uh, my husband had just died. And she was, she was, she had just lost—her partner was Bruno Gerrusi. So, we had been close, Nancy and I had been close for a number of years. And so, uh, Christmas passed—uh my husband died just before Christmas. So, by the time we got through the funeral and Christmas and everything else that was going on, it kept me busy. And in January all of a sudden I have nothing to do, and the other thing that Pat did was a lot of crossword puzzles. So I've saved all the crossword puzzles for about a month [puts face in right hand] and I'm— it was terrible, I'm so cheap. I couldn't throw them out. Without at least trying them. So I started to do these and one day I'm sitting at the table and I'm doing a crossword puzzle and Nancy phones me and she says uh, "hi, what are you doing?" And I said, "oh, I'm just doing a crossword puzzle." And she says, I'll never forget this, "are you dressed yet?" And I said, well "no, I've still got my pajamas and housecoat on." And she says, "well, for Christ sake Holmes, get your act together." [laughs]

RC: [laughs]

DH: And so, she told me about Peter starting this, this was at the very beginning of the Picton and wanted to know if I would like to join him. Which I thought was such a compliment because I have such high regard for him. So I thought about it and I said, "I don't want to work full time." Uh, doing this, because I'd been retired for maybe four or five years and he says, "no, you can come in whenever you want." And so I thought about it, and I decided to do it. And I never regretted that. It was just wonderful, they were really good. And then after that one, we had the taser inquiry was just starting. And Art phoned me. And asked if I would like to work with

him. And I, oh, I just love it. Tom was the commissioner there [points at RC] and so that went on for two years I guess, so—

RC: What was the title of that one?

DH: It was call the, the, Dziekanski, Dziekanski um.

RC: Yeah, he, he was uh, [unclear] in the airport—

DH: He was the Polish—

RC: [unclear]

DH: That's right.

RC: And he was an immigrant that never got past the door so to speak.

DH: That's right. [nods] Never, he got in the door, which was lucky for, for him, because he was admitted as an immigrant. And which made a lot of difference in the consequences for the four officers. Because if he hadn't been admitted he would have—

RC: [unclear]

DH: That's right.

RC: from Poland and—

DH: that's right and they'd be entitled to ask for the extradition.

RC: Oh, my gosh.

DH: So that was really an interesting case. [nods]

RC: Well, it isn't it wonderful that these opportunities have presented themselves, especially if I may say, on your terms, where you don't have to be committed full time.

[55:23.1]

DH: Absolutely. Absolutely. It kept me going, but it got me back into it. And that was the important thing.

RC: Because you just relished it after a while.

DH: I did, I did. I'm working for um HRDC, Human Resources Canada now. And that's really interesting. I'm finding that— it's not like anything that I've ever done before. Its unemployment insurance appeals and I sit on a board with a labour representative and a, and a management representative and we hear appeals from the Unemployment Insurance Act. Which is just really interesting because I have never done that kind of law. I had done mostly criminal law when I was sitting.

RC: So this is, you're still growing within yourself if I may say. [laughs]

DH: Yeah, uh hmm. [nods] I, I really hesitate to stop because I'm afraid I won't do anything again.

RC: Well, it's true. I mean we can identify on this score uh, because um we're both retired. But uh, if your mind is, if your active your mind is moving at a pretty good pace, and you—

DH: Yes, it is.

RC: And you are healthier.

DH: Yeah. Well, that's the way it works for me. I'm not saying that everybody should do it, but certainly I think you have to have something to follow what—yeah.

RC: To uh, to keep your mind active, that's really what it is—

DH: That's right. Uh hmm.

RC: about I believe. Um, so I'd like to if I may, just go to this one article. That I find very interesting. And you, entitled it uh, "Growing Up Italian." And uh, as you'll recall you put yourself right back to those early years when being Italian was important because of the people involved. And you mentioned the [Zannins] and the —

DH: Yes, Minnichello's—

RC: Uh hmm, Minnichellos.

DH: Valenti's. Yeah. I was— which I was thinking about the other day. Because that group, I have been involved with them since I started. I can't remember when I haven't been. And we still get together, and actually I was thinking about it the other day because I usually have a barbeque and we come out because it's so nice here. And we sit and we talk about old times,

and it's just like what my mother and dad used to do with all their friends. Anyway, but we get together and then Christmastime most of them come out again. Which is great, I, I love having them.

RC: Well they, the uh, fact that these same people are people you knew when you were young.

DH: Nods. When I was growing up.

RC: When you were growing up, and your parents and my parents—

DH: And most of their parents are all, are all friends. [points finger across the room] Yeah.

RC: Well I uh mentioned the [unclear] Angelo was you know about because there's a four generation connection. And I think you've said something about that when we first started this, this afternoon. Uh, it has evolved—

DH: Yes, yes.

RC: Your friendship has evolved—

DH: Yes, I keep in touch with them all. And what's uh, something went through my mind the other day about this. Um, well you know the Benny's. The Bennedetti's.

RC: Yes.

DH: Well they have a place in Palm Springs. And when we, first started to have the money to go away, we rented the place and it's right in downtown Palm Springs. I love it because you can

walk everywhere; it's all flat. And so uh, we haven't been down for a number of years and I don't know uh, Raymond and Beebe were doing something and anyway, I said, "you don't my any chance still happen to rent out— still have your house?" "Oh yeah, we do." They don't go down as much, but they go down. And I said, you wouldn't be interested in renting it would you? Well, "they said, yes we would, when do you want to go?" So I said, well, in January. So they rented to— they wouldn't take any money which wasn't what I intended, but I went down with another friend of mine who's also a widow. And we drove, and I thought my kids would have a fit. They did. And I said, "well look, I'll phone every night." And I did. Every night I phoned when we were stopped for the evening. But then I didn't phone again. [laughs]

RC: You're a, you were having a lot of fun.

DH: Well, not only that, well I thought, they know I'm here, they know the number if they want to phone, phone me. Didn't work out that way. Anyway uh, I was told when I got back from my sister— by my sister she said you know they were having fits. They didn't know what you were doing, and I said, well "they don't really have to know what I'm doing", but that didn't do too well. So. Uh, anyway we didn't but had a great time. And you know they're just so generous. With everything. You still go down to Benny's with—as I do. Uh hmm.

RC: Uh, I'm going there tomorrow.

[1:00:27.7]

DH: Oh, well I'll tell you something funny. Do you remember at the conferences they used to have those dinners. Your dad and my dad were there. And they used to have a table where you bought things, well, um, about two years ago I'm cleaning out, well I'm starting to clean up my house.

RC: Yes.

DH: And I come across, it was an envelope and I thought, it's my dad's writing on the outside and it has 25 dollars on the outside. Well this is, we're back in the 60s here. And so I open it up and it's a gift certificate from Benny's. So I thought, I'm going to get Raymond here. So I go down, and I said, okay, I said, "now this is vintage, and it was worth 25 dollars now, here it is and we're 25 years later, I want today's value." Well, [laughs] he just about died. And his son was right there. Anyway Raymond said, I said, "We'll I'm negotiating this now." So I got 25 dollars. I don't know how much it was of the best cheese I have ever eaten. It's some kind of cave aged cheese. That I would never pay that much for, but anyway, and I don't offer it to anybody else. And he's cut it into pieces that I can keep in the fridge and the freezer and I can just take out a little piece to eat at night. But I don't even think about that.

RC: That is a wonderful story.

DH: Uh hmm, it is good.

RC: That's a good way to end. It's great.

DH: Yeah. [nods and smiles] Yeah, it was just great.

RC: Thank you so very much—

DH: Oh, well you're welcome, thank you for bringing back nice memories. We're off now? [says to videographer as camera fades out]

[1:02:09.8]