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Naoko Wake Collection of Oral Histories of US Survivors of the Atomic Bombs Collection
Title: Kathy Yamaguchi Interview
Narrator: Kathy Yamaguchi
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
Location: San Francisco, California
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<Begin Segment 7>

NW: Do you think this kind of thing or any aspect of your work with survivors changed over time? So you have quite a history, you started out, including this study group, that you studied out in 1979, it's, it's what? More than thirty years.

KY: Right, did what change?

NW: Any aspect of your work with survivors, do you think? Or your understanding of it, that this project occupies in your professional life?

KY: It doesn't really occupy much in my professional, my professional life, is you know, a totally different patient population. This is a treat because, as I say, they're, they're, the people tend to be, you know, polite, kind, generous, you know, grateful, they're just, you know, it's so, it's . . . I, I can't say that's part of my professional life.

NW: Okay, okay, I understand that part. But do you think that any aspect of that part might have changed over time?

KY: Yeah, I think I probably got to know some of them more, and it's always interesting for me to learn about other cultures and I find the Japanese-born people really interesting. I know there's some in, in the Bay area. Sometimes, born in Japan people and us, you know, Nisei and Sansei. We, there's nothing much, people think there's not much in common and . . .

NW: Are you a third generation?

KY: Sansei.

NW: Sansei.

KY: Sansei.

NW: Okay.

KY: And, but I find the people really interesting because they're just a little bit different. But then when you can find out you're not so different, that, that's great.

NW: Yeah, I see what you mean.

KY: If you appreciate the differences, and I can learn from them, that's great. So that's where I, it's too bad I don't speak Japanese because the older ones would have a lot to say. But I can't really . . .

NW: Yeah.

KY: . . . speak to them well.

NW: Yeah, they feel probably more comfortable in just explaining things in their own native language.

KY: Right, right, right, right.

NW: Right.

KY: And I think since, with, given what they've gone through, there's something special about them. And to see them also on this weekend, come together with each other and the ones that are friends really, like, you know, spend the whole time together . . .

NW: Right.

KY: . . . talking

NW: Right, right.

KY: It's just

NW: Do you yourself double up that kind of personal/friend-like relationship with survivors or was it always professional?

KY: I'm not that professional, so it's more of, I see, I see people at other, you know, events: Japan, you know, Jap, you know, Japanese-American events

NW: Right, right.

KY: Yeah.

NW: So you have a connection with them outside of this.

KY: Yeah, yeah, it's a "hi," you know it's just "hi." It's not necessarily medical.

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