Name of interviewee: Bill Kim
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Name of interviewer: Bill Yeingst
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BK: Okay, my name is Bill Kim, I'm 68 years old. I'm an American and here I have my wife Mary with me. So today is November 19th.

BY: And we are – where are we?

BK: 2014, Atherton, California, my home 32 years.

BY: Today, we want to have a conversation and talk about your family, your background, your childhood, your education, your decision to come to the United States and how your life unfolded over time.

BK: Okay. I came to America in 1964. I was 18 years old. Then Korea was very poor underdeveloped country. I think the GDP of South Korea then was under $500.00 a year, so you can imagine the life conditions. So for young boy, rather an adolescent, I wanted the opportunity to broaden my dream, become successful, and go to college, of course. All this was my dream, so when I was allowed to come to America, it was just a blessing. It was an opportunity that one out of, probably, I would a million chance to be able to come to America. When I came to America, I landed in Los Angeles. I could not believe my eyes, how wide it was. When I saw this freeway in Los Angeles, the Santa Monica Freeway then, I didn't know what it was.

It looked like a huge parking lot and my brother, who came earlier, drove me. I thought he kept going on bit parking lots, so then I realized it was the Santa Monica Freeway that had just opened. It was, for me, it was an opportunity, and at the same time, a big challenge because I couldn't speak the language and I had to work right away to feed myself. In fact, my brother who brought me the plane ticket, if I recall it was about $550.00 and the day when I came and he gave me this book. It turned out to be a payment book to pay for my plane ticket. It was like, if I recall, easily $50.00 per month and for four months, I believe and he said, you have to pay for this. I don't have money to pay for it.

The next day he took me to Social Security Office and got me a Social Security number. Then it was easy to get a Social Security number and the following day, the third day, the following day, I

started looking for job. Then I found a job, working for a beach umbrella manufacturing company where I was a painter, painting the beach umbrella pole, all day. It was hard work, but I did it and I knew that I was making money, so this was just how I started.

BY: If we could just pause for a minute, I'd like to go back to something you said about coming to America in pursuit of your dream. As a young boy growing up in Korea, talk about how did you become aware of that dream? What was the image of the United States for a young Korean man? If you could talk a little bit about your family in Korea and the community where you lived.

BK: Okay, I was born in **Shera**, this is in a city called Andong, A,N,D,O,N,G. This is an old traditional Korean town. It's not a big, big town – now it is, but then it was very hidden town that mostly Confucianism and old value survived until then and that's where I was born. From there, as I was born in a very difficult time of 1946, my parents moved us to Taegu, which was a larger city. Then when I was 15, I believe, my family moved to Seoul. I went from very old village, farm village, to medium sized city to Taegu, then went to Seoul, and then went to United States.

BY: Describe the house that you grew up in, you were born in.

BK: Yes, the house I was born is actually built in – I'm sorry, I was thinking of other ancestor, 1670, 1670 around that area so it is what – 300 and some odd years old family home that still stands. It became now the national monument and I actually helped them to improve and to revive. People can go there and stay and I thought it was such a valuable asset, I personally am involved in renovating, and the bathroom was not clean enough, so I actually am funding that project right now.

BY: So what was it like growing up there?

BK: My recollection is just very old traditional Confucianism family. Kids were not to talk too much, quiet and obedient. Food was very scarce, very limited. You had to work at farm and then when I was about six, five, during the Korean War, our family moved out of that town and went to Taegu. So, Taegu was a little larger city life, so that's really my recollection of my hometown. I still – when I go to Korea, I always do visit my village, and it's a beautiful place. It's hidden and it's very comfortable for me to go back and meet relatives and visit the shrine, tombstones, and the tombs. These are always my very favorite project when I go to Korea.

BY: How did you learn about the United States?

BK: Well, the United States was known to be the most desirable place to live because Korea went through Korean War and when I was – during the Korean War, I saw American soldiers coming with uniforms, very proud and a lot of chocolates. Chocolates and I used to line up for any kind of chocolates that GI would give out and it's just – America was always a dream place for us to go. And America was always helpful for South Korea, to defend the country against Communism, always really appreciated obviously. It would be a dream, not just my dream, but it was the dream of every Korean then.

BY: Talk about your decision to leave and come to the United States. That must have been difficult for a young man to leave his family and community.

BK: Yes, it was somewhat scary because obviously I'd never left Korea until that time. But at the same time, it was just such a dream and the dream overcame any kind of fears about the trip and I was just very fortunate to have that opportunity.

BY: So your reason for coming here was –

BK: Well, education, education, yes, I wanted to go to college and I wanted to educate myself, but unfortunately I was not able to complete my education as I'd planned because of financial reasons. I could not – well I went to graduate from El Camino College, a junior college and then I transferred to UCLA and then I could not complete my education because by then, I got married in 1968 and I had to support my family because I had children, one through three, '69, '70, 72.

MK: '69, '71, '73.

BK: Yeah, thank you. So I did not complete of course, but I did get to go back though later when I was somewhat successful to Stanford University Executive Programs and it's not a degree or anything, but I went three months and I was a pretty good student. It was in my 40s.

BY: So tell us a little more about your early experiences of making a life here.

BK: Earlier life was very strenuous, difficult because I had to go to school; I had to work odd jobs and different kinds of jobs that can give me income. I slept probably every four or five hours a day and it was difficult, but of course, I was young and very ambitious. I was able to do it and I was always appreciative of the opportunity. I'll make it, I'll make it, and I'll make it. That was really – I don't think it would –

BY: How would you support yourself?

BK: I'm sorry?

BY: How did you support yourself?

BK: Well, I did sheet metal work. I worked for that company. I was doing side weekend and gardening jobs and then later in 1967, I started selling wigs because selling wigs was – wigs were very popular in the products then. It was much more intellectual, if you will and I wasn't shy to go to beauty salons and face with the ladies and show my wig collections. If I sold one or two a day, that was enough income, or more so, than I was working for sheet metal company. That was my first job, but yes, I did all kinds of different kinds of jobs.

BY: Were you married at that time?

BK: No, I was – we got married in 1968, so then yes, I was selling wigs. Yes, that was my sole job and still going to school. Then I got married, so you can imagine – all these different kinds of assignments.

BY: How did you meet?

BK: Well, we met at the language school actually in 1964. Mary came to America earlier than I, she came in –

MK: February.

BK: February of '64. I came in June of '64, so during the time while I was working, I knew I had to go to school and my English was not good enough. I registered to this language school in Los Angeles and one day this young, cute lady walked in and the teacher said the lady – ladies and gentlemen, we have a new student and then introduced her. When I saw her, I knew she was Korean right away for some reason and I said wow, I have a Korean classmate.

Well, we were only two Koreans and we met there and we start dating right away.

So from '64, we got married in '68, so we waited at least four years, but I was only 23 then.

BY: Mary, can you tell us a little about your family and your background and where you were from.

MK: My name is **Myung Soon Lee**, and I **[inaudible][00:16:48]** and I came from Seoul. My brother was here in the United States. He came to the United States in 1957 and then I came 1964 and then my brother encouraged me to come to United States to go college. I agree and then my mother, my father says that would be good idea. You have a better opportunity going to America, go college there. Your brother will help you. But unfortunately, when I came to United States, my father got ill so he could not help me. I have to get a job and like Bill's brother did, my brother gave me a payment book that I had to pay for my airplane ticket, which I remember, was $727.00. Then I had to get a job right away.

So I went to the factory and then I got a job at the assembly factory. Then I was minimum wage, at that time was $1.00 per hour. When I got a paycheck, weekly there was $40.00 and then they take out the Social Security and tax, and then I get the paycheck, $36.00 per week. So I had to – I finished my payment for my airplane ticket and then I went to college and then I had to still work. At that time, my wish was I can sleep seven or eight hours straight because I have to work in the night, I have to go school during the daytime and that was my difficult time. So I couldn't finish at that time.

I come to college and then I couldn't finish it. Then later on, I had three children and my youngest child went to first grade and I went back to school. Then I finished, I went to here near my house. Here in Atherton, we have two junior colleges, Canada College and Foothill College, then I major home economics, I finish and then I worked in tourism, horse sales and retails and I finish with an AA degree, two degrees. Then I went back to school and I got an interior design class, then I finished and then later I went back to school two years later and then I got a Japanese major. Then I finished that too.

BY: Wow, so it sounds like five AA degrees.

MK: I have six AA degrees and then so now, I do social work, I do biology work and then I help with Korean-American Community Foundation. We help the elder people in Korean community and then I help sometimes in church, Catholic and do help some friends. If anybody needs any help, then I go help them whenever they need help for sickness, or if they need help for any other things.

BY: Was it challenging for you to come to the United States back then?

BK: Yes, coming to America was a big decision and it was the right decision for me, and so as Mary. When I see new immigration coming and I'm hoping that that dream of really challenging, new world survives. Some people cannot make it, some people do, but in our case, we were very happy and I think, in our ways, very successful.

BY: So it was difficult to receive a Visa to come here?

BK: Yes, it was – for me, it took almost two years, and so is Mary.

MK: Yeah, I took two years and a half and then to me, it was – I want to come to America, so when I was in middle school and high school, I saw American movies. Then it was houses in college and the campus was so beautiful. So when my first daughter was visiting colleges to go, then I saw the Connecticut College, the campus was so beautiful. So I turned to my niece when I came to United States, I wish I can go there to that college campus, which unfortunately I didn't have. My wish is you can go there college and then I can support you; I can buy a car or something. So she went to Connecticut College.

BY: So when you left Korea, did either of your families send anything with you with the concern that you would be able to survive in America?

BK: Well, I brought $50.00 in my pocket, Korea was such a poor country, and they allowed only $100.00. So, it's not so bad. That's the reason why I had to work so hard, but in hindsight, it's good for youngsters to have that kind of challenge. When you don't have options, you usually work harder and in my case, it was actually good motivation factor that came from a poor country and be able to appreciate the opportunity. I think that was my motivation factor. I'm not sure – Mary was better off than I was, but still it's just a little better off than worse.

BY: So you were very motivated to work hard to achieve your dream. Let's pick up following the wig business and talk a little bit about how your life unfolded.

BK: Well, my attitude did not change until – even though I was in the US by then six or seven years, but still as I got married, I had big responsibility to support the family. So I went to start really selling wigs, I moved to San Francisco in 1972, and I started my company, Kizan International and selling wigs.

BY: Excuse me, where does the name come from? Kizan?

BK: Kizan is my, K, I, and there was my classmate partner, Japanese American, Mike Shigezane, with Z,A,N, so we put it together and we've made a name, Kizan International. We import – then we imported wigs and distributed as a wholesaler to beauty salons and beauty suppliers, wig shops. So it was a wholesale company and by then, I already had some selling experience so I did very well. But the wig business started going down probably about 1974, '75, so I knew I had to start something else. Because wigs, the demand was diminishing. So I started searching and I found this item, LED watch, LED – it's a watch that you push the button and the light comes on. I think there is a – LED stands for –

MK: Digital?

BK: Huh?

MK: Digital watch.

BK: Light emitting, light emitting diode, that's LED. So when I saw that item, being near Silicon Valley. Then Silicon Valley did not exist. I don't think I heard the word Silicon Valley until the late 70s, but anyway – I thought – when I saw that product, I said this is fascinating and I want to change my career and go into electronics. So electronics was then – there was calculator. The calculator had LED functions, so I guess same technology applied to watches. So watches was really fascinating and I thought there was great opportunities. So again, I went to a module manufacturer in the Silicon Valley. There was a Fairchild semi-conductor, there was AMI semi-conductors – they were the manufactures. I just went myself and then I said I am an importer of wigs, but I do have some connections in Korea. I can manufacture watches and I'd like to purchase modules.

So I did and then I took the modules to Korea. Then I wanted to have some import experience so I put together watches, the cases were manufactured in Korea, so I put together – assembled the watches. I wish I had that watch. I could not find them unfortunately, but I started selling. I did very well. It was – the cost was low. My cost was, I would say, if I recall about $25.00 and I sold the watch very high-priced because the market for it was anywhere between $100 to $200 wholesale, retail it was like $400 to $500. There was a lot of profit to be made and I started immediately – it was very successful. So that went and drove me to think that if I really built this big volume, I could really make a big success out of it.

I got a little greedy and went and purchased and did 10,000 units and I went to a bank and borrowed money and started really expanding. But like most electronic products, the price started plummeting and in less than six months – and this is about 1975, '76, in less than six months the market was down to actually below my cost. So I lost my shirt, I could not really continue the business but meanwhile I was in big debt. I went to my bank, the United California Bank and I told the situation and they didn't want to extend any credit for me, but by then I was already thinking of other products. Knowing that this kind of products were for big companies actually – ITT in Texas was the largest company and this was really what I call big-boys business. So I said I'm going to get out of this business.

What other good business can I expand into? It was the clothing. Clothing was the natural progression, if you will, in importation business. So clothing was something that I wanted to start, but I didn't know how to start it. My friend in Los Angeles, this person named Raphael van Seumeren, he came with the idea and my friend Louis, Louis Kim – this friend who is in Los Angeles. He had wig shops actually and he told me that he has next door clothing boutique store. He's a French designer and he has these gabardine pants that if we import, if you import you can make a lot of money. So I said bring them over.

So the first time I saw these gabardine pants he brought and he said this fabric comes from Korea and if we can manufacture these pants, you will be able to sell a lot and you'll make a lot of money. So I said let's do it. Then I was still very young so I took upon that information and went to Korea and located the fabric manufacturer and placed the order. Then I came back and worked with the bank. This person, Don Newman, I still remember his name, he was the branch manager, he said Bill, no way, no way, no credit, no way.

You already owe – I owed oh boy, over $150,000 and that was a lot of money and I couldn't make payments.

So I refinanced my house that I had and then got every penny I got and I convinced Don Newman. He said no way and I think – I don't know, but one day he called me and said I'll help you the last time. But you'd better make it or else my neck's on the line. So I took that and I told myself, this is it. If I don't make it, I'll lose everything and will have to bankrupt the company or lose everything. Well that shipment of pants that I brought, I started selling and I went to trade shows, different small trade shows and I displayed my pants and started selling. It was amazing, I was selling and there were people who were coming to look at the pants. It was very cheap in the first place.

Market price was $60 or $80; I was selling at $20, so it was obviously very cheap. I'm sure that was the reason, but still I was – I started selling and I was the only agent in the whole show – it was all these – so I would be like this strange guy. Who is this Asian selling? So they would come over and talk to me, I bragged myself being a businessman, and I have background in Korea. They thought I really had the big support. So that's their imagination. So I kept selling and then I was able to really make good business out of it. I had clients and they liked the pants and there were a lot of other details but I don't want to go through every detail.

I just learned as I went on and I had this entrepreneurial spirit and these days I do some public speeches for Korean Americans, young Korean Americans. My topics are always about entrepreneurial spirit. You have to have that entrepreneurial spirit and the real desire. Of course, you have the idea, but you really have to execute your idea. People lack that. They just – like my son, he just analyze too much. Yes, you can analyze, it's important. You have to have a business plan and all this, but still the most important thing is exercise your thoughts and have a conviction about yourself going in. In my case, that's what I did. When I did the wigs, I did the watches and pants, nobody would teach me, but I just heard the conviction. If there is demand, I can do it, I'll learn, I'll do it. That's really what I always talk about when I talk to kids.

BY: In addition to that hardworking conviction, you took risks.

BK: Yes, yes and risk is something that a businessman, my admiration goes to people like Andrew Carnegie – these are immigrants. This

was mid-1800, you know he's the kind of people – you know, there are many others of course, but people do take risks, they should take risk. Andrew Carnegie, he took – he always, his phrase – one I like the most is put all eggs in one basket. This is very different than diversity. That's why – of course, you have to analyze, you have to really have many sleepless nights, but after all, it's a conviction and take certain risks and execute your idea.

BY: So, how did you grow the company from selling pants at a trade show to the international company that you now lead? How have you distributed your products?

BK: We are a wholesale company, wholesale apparel, wholesale men's apparel company. The main product is men's pants. We are one of the largest men's pant producers. We sell to all the department stores across the country, but we had evolved from selling to boutique shops, small shops and there's a limit to sell and there are less and less boutique stores and we had to focus more to sell to department stores and large groups. But now, it's very different. It's all e-commerce. Our project is e-commerce. Our website will lead consumers right to be able to purchase. We service all the dot-com, Macy.com, Pennys.com, Kohls.com. We service them all. It's an ever-evolving process and a businessman has to be always awake and follow.

BY: So, in 1986 you were named Businessman of the Year. That must have been a very rewarding moment for you based on all of this work and recognition, to finally receive recognition for what you had accomplished?

BK: Well, it was a small – but I had other recognitions, but Korean government recognized me quite a bit because I helped Korean economy during the time that the 70s Korea was still developing countries. Now, actually since 1980 Olympics, Korea became too expensive so we are mostly now in China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia and different parts of the world. We used to manufacture in the United States too, in Georgia. We had some manufacture – we manufactured in Mexico, Caribbean countries – so this apparel manufacturing, it's always evolving to the countries where they have lower labor costs.

BY: You're very engaged in your community here in California and actually around the world. You seek to make a different through your philanthropy and your civic engagement. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

BK: I always appreciate factories. We don't own any factories. We contract them out so every time when I visit factories, I see these workers – how hard they have to work. To make a pair of pants, there are so many – there are 26 different processes that that has to go through and all the accessories involved, all sewing – it's all done by hand. It still is – there's automation, but still – when you go to a factory, I have this – I become humble actually to see all these people working so hard. I always like to do something. I'm still the businessperson, but yet I would like to do something for these people. That's where my philanthropic work began. I did some in Mexico, but mostly because now the products are all done in Asia, so I would like to do something for these people who really help me to succeed.

So that's where my philanthropic motivation becomes – I became the chairman of Give to Asia from 2006 to 2009, yeah. I visited just about every Asian country and visited disaster relief work, earthquake, Laos, Cambodia.

MK: Mongolia.

BK: Mongolia, all these different places and most of the work that I did was to give to Asia where they have donors like me, corporations, large corporations, Johnson and Johnson and all these people that do business in Asia. This is my work that I really like to do and continue on for the rest of my life.

BY: What does it mean to be American?

BK: We, Mary and I came from South Korea and America is still the place where immigrants like us can achieve our dreams. I think it's different than when we came 50 years ago and I'm sure our life was different then when Andrew Carnegie came. But I think still there are opportunities, there are all this chances for pursuing your dreams that may be different. Again, there may not be as much labor work as it was, but now there are a lot – looking at Silicon Valley for instance; there are a whole lot of opportunities. One thing about Americans, they will accommodate new commerce like they did for us.

They will not separate you because of your race, background. Individually there may be something, but still the society will be very acceptable to your ideas like I had. I went and started selling pants. They buy, I don't think that would happen in Asia or Europe. I don't think so. It would be very difficult because it's a lot more closed – culture for them is much most closed. America

is open. I think that's why still immigrants like I and I know many others who become successful in their generation. It's unlikely that could happen in any other countries in the world.

BY: What do you consider yourself? Do you think of yourselves as Korean, as Korean-American, as American?

BK: We're Korean-Americans.

MK: I feel like I'm more American. After 9-11, I was in New York on 9-11. My son was in Japan and my daughter was in New York. And then, before I felt like a 50-50, but after 9-11, how can they attack America like that, those innocent people. Then I was so mad and I was oh, I now, I feel like now I'm American. So I sent a letter to my son. I use to think of 50-50, but now at this moment, I feel like I'm more than 80 percent American.

BK: Yeah, yeah, I agree. September 11 was pretty shocking. We both were in New York and we saw the World Trade Centers coming down. Oh my gosh.

BY: So when do you feel Korean?

MK: When we have a New Year, family together, we have Korean food together, and I cook, my children enjoy the cooking. Then we have Korean dress, everybody wearing Korean dresses and then we bow for Happy New Year to elderly people. So that's somewhat like a tradition, culture – that's the day we feel like a real Korean.

BY: That's pretty good. Are there memories of times when it was difficult when you tried to fit in and it was challenging? Or that you've felt that you stood out because you came at a time before there was more open immigration from different parts of Asia and Central America and Africa. So I'm curious if you had faced challenges back in the 1950s and 60s?

MK: Well in the society, in the American society, everybody's nice and kind. Once we belonged to two country clubs, one is in **[unintellegible][00:48:22]** and one is in Palm Springs. Whenever you go, there's always one or two people who kind of rejects – not really rejects, not really kind, no more kind, no more nice – you can feel it, you can turn around even I say hello and there's no reply when I say hello. I don't know, she doesn't like me or what, rejected my race, I don't know. But mostly many places, we're okay. But once in a while, one or two person, I mean not majority,

just about once per ten years, once for two years, I'll meet somebody like that.

BK: America went through a lot of changes in the 50 years of my life in America. At the beginning, yes, there was some prejudice if you will, but you know, through times and decades passing, I feel now perfectly comfortable. I fit in well, especially living in West Coast, particularly San Francisco. It's such a diverse city and through my social work, I'm a trustee and commissioner of the Asian Museum. I do belong to other non-profit organizations and particularly Korean-America community. I try to – sometimes the exact question comes up, what's the challenge in some people with glass ceilings? I think every society has that. I do know South Korea, for instance, there are about 350,000 foreigners now because their economy is so up.

There are many immigrants coming in and I see how Koreans treat foreigners. I compare that with Americans, how they treat – I think, to me, to bluntly put it, Koreans are more prejudice than Americans. I think Americans are very open, they will accept, especially with the last 20 years, huge changes. I do know occasionally kind of issues come up, but in my opinion, America is well into multi-cultural, multi-racial now. It wasn't when I arrived.

BY: From looking at some of the objects in your home, you're clearly one of the people who protects the history and preserves the history of your family. You're very attuned to your responsibility as someone who holds some great treasures that are part of your history of your family. So that's a way that you remain connected through the writings and through these books and objects. What other ways, in addition to, food and clothing and holidays – or maybe I can ask it in a slightly different way. When are these cultures blended together? Do you celebrate Thanksgiving, for example? If you do celebrate Thanksgiving, is it with a turkey or is it Korean food? When do traditions blend together?

MK: Yeah, for Thanksgiving, I usually cook turkey, but now son is in Singapore, my daughter is married so we go to our daughter's house and then she – her mother-in-law and father-in-law, they invite us, and I share. So we went together – so we just blend in and have a good time. Then it's a tradition, a family tradition to get together, so we get together and celebrate like Americans do at Thanksgiving.

BY: So if you were cooking Thanksgiving and had your children here, what would you serve?

MK: I would serve turkey and cranberry, salad, potatoes.

BY: Okay.

BK: One of the things that I like to teach our children is Korean heritage. I think it's very important to continue on so I do have my father's book collections that I think is very valuable. I do try to teach our children Korean traditions such as Confucianism, the philosophy meaning behind how Koreans have historically survived history itself. These are very important things and I do have quite a bit of collection and also I have donated some good objects to Asian museums. I think Asian populations is growing, but at the same time, I think there are American values that blends with Asian-Korean for instance. There are really good traditions such as – talking about food. Kimchi became really international food, same thing. There are a lot of traditions that should be preserved and I always am like to be part of that tradition and help the next generation.

BY: Do you see a difference between your children and your grandchildren? Whether its language or other forms of Korean identity and food or clothing or recognition of rituals or celebrations or holidays?

MK: Our daughter, she cooks Korean food and now she has a six-year old daughter. She has a private lesson teacher teaching Korean, so she knows how to read, she knows how to write, but she not able to conversation – can't have a conversation yet. Whenever I go to Korea, I buy Korean storybooks and then I read it for her. Then she's learning now. She's been going to school with a private teacher about a year and a half now.

BK: By the way, my daughter, to show the difference, my daughter is married to an African-American. My granddaughter, my first granddaughter is kind of Asian and African-American. She's really cute. In fact, I have a picture of her and then she divorced him and she married a Jewish-American. So now, she has another child, so the two sisters are completely different look, but we adore them. They're all good kids.

MK: So my daughter, she's open minded. She's very Westernized, so Asian people, as you know, you feel a special- married to African-American – there were sometimes, my daughter– they didn't ask me – you didn’t ask me you born as a Korean, we didn’t, they didn’t ask me to born American, she didn't ask to be born African-

American, so you have to accepted the fact, the reality – I say that's okay.

BY: So speaking of children, what advice would you give for future generations?

BK: I'd tell them to do your best. I'd tell them I don't dictate their future and as you can see, my son is a Finance Major, my second – our daughter, the first one Christine is a curator, contemporary art curator and then Laura made a career change. Now she's going to become a schoolteacher. This was all at their will and I- we gave them a good education. They've all got their masters and they pursue what they'd like to do. I think that's important as we have done, as I have done. I chose to become a businessman and whether I meant to or not, but I think that's another beauty about America. There is enough opportunity to pursue your likes.

But, then what do you do? I think once you decide your career and what you want to do, you have to do your best. I don't like my children to become lazy. I don't like my children to go off sideways and not to really respect his- her job and that's not my children. That's my main teach to them, do your best, do as best and not to slack off.

MK: I realize in my friends around us, our generation, they ask children, oh, you become a lawyer, you better become a doctor, you better become – they pushed the professional job, but to me – they don't sell any – they always make them stay with them and do not go to college out of California. You have to stay in California, Berkley, or UCLA, settle there, stay there. They don't allow what they like to stay their children with them in the same state. But to me, I allow them to expose to other states, other countries. When they were 12 or 13 years old, I send them to Switzerland for summer school. When they were high school, I sent them to Korean school in Korea, summer school to Italy. I send them to many other place to travel. Because when they travel, they realize and open their eyes, open their minds, they see our world. Other Korean mothers, Asian mothers, they don't allow children to go far away, even during the summer. But not me. I send them every summer to somewhere ever since they are 12 or 13 years old, they can travel by their selves. I send every year somewhere, some place.

BY: So you've had very successful lives. What are you most proud of?

BK: Yes, I am proud. I am proud of my family. I am proud of my being part of American, America and I do take great pride in my

Korean heritage actually. That's why when you asked me earlier what do you see, I said I'm Korean-American. I think it's very different, but my daughter says they're Korean-American and they are definitely happy and successful. They have their hardships I'm sure. I think it's important that to stay positive and proud of yourself. I think that's –

BY: Good, so you've go back to Korea. Have your children been to Korea?

BK: Yes.

MK: Yes.

BY: You obviously have connections.

BK: Yes.

BY: Do you feel that you lead some of trans-national lives today? That you are more connected with family, friends in Korea through the use of travel, modern travel, and technology. You can pick up the phone. You can use computers, Skype.

BK: The world became so small now. You know, it's amazing. We go to Korea and we feel as easy now – and it wasn't earlier but now its being I'm American, being in Seoul or in any other cities – Korea became very advanced now. I do miss old traditions and luckily, I came from an old traditional family. We still preserve a lot of old shrines, family shrines and the home so we're very lucky in that aspect. But Korea has changed a lot. Let me just add about Korea. We're came from South Korea, but you know, I think North Koreans are also Koreans, in my opinion.

I'm happy that there has been a lot of UN – actually, the other day there's UN Human Rights Committee passed the resolution to criminalize – I don't to become political, but to tell them that human rights is an important issue. I'm hoping that this is a good beginning and to be able to help this North Korean people. They are in horrible situation. You hear about the concentration camps and there's very little human rights and it's – I feel just terrible that we cannot do more. I just wanted to end that. I think it's a good UN – I'm sure China and Russia will reject that – the Security Council, but still I think the world is saying that human rights is important and the North Koreans have a right to live like others too. I think it's important.

BY: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

BK: Not really. We were asked questions and I hope I covered.

BY: It's been very successful.

BK: Okay.

BY: Thank you very much.

BK: Thank you.

MK: Thank you.

[End of Audio]