

INTERVIEWER: So this interview is between Kathy Creamy Westmoreland and myself, Laura Madden. Today is Tuesday, July 5th, 2016, and we're meeting in Kathy's office at Wesley Woods in Atlanta Georgia and discussing her memories surrounding her time as a student at Georgia Baptist Hospital's School of Nursing in Atlanta Georgia. You graduated in 1977, is that correct? Okay, alright, so describe the thought process that went into your decision to become a nurse.

WESTMORELAND: Um, it wasn't something I always wanted to do, but I needed to make a decision my senior year in high school – what to do. Really, my mom said I thought, "You'd always make a good nurse." I kind of thought about that and mulled over it and I liked that better than – at that time just teacher, teacher, you know, a woman did – and so that's what got me interested, and the more – and then I was fairly good at science in high school, so that's what come. I felt called to it, to be honest with you, really, once Mom said I felt like that was my – that she helped my calling to that, that God was speaking through her to me.

INTERVIEWER: That's great. Alright, why did you choose to attend Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: Went to Georgia Baptist, I applied there, and Piedmont. Piedmont was also a school of nursing, hospital-based – because I heard it was really good, both of those were really good. It was in Atlanta. I didn't think I wanted to travel anywhere when you had two good schools there, so and they accepted me so that's why I chose it, but its reputation preceded it.

INTERVIEWER: So were you from the local area?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So what other programs – other than Piedmont – did you consider any baccalaureate programs, associate degree programs?

WESTMORELAND: No, not at that time. Not going in.

INTERVIEWER: Explain how the classes were structured at Georgia Baptist.

WESTMORELAND: I'm not sure I understand your question. Like . . .

INTERVIEWER: Just talk about the classes. What do you remember about the classes that you took?

WESTMORELAND: Well, it wasn't too much different from, like going into a high school class. They weren't that large and you'd just go in and of course you had your

different subjects your first year. You had some from . . . oh gosh I forgot the college name . . . Tift College.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember anything specific about those classes from Tift?

WESTMORELAND: I should remember that instructor that was just – when she was talking about Anatomy and Physiology it was quite funny.

INTERVIEWER: Miss Tribble?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What was funny about it?

WESTMORELAND: Well she just – there's no holds barred. She just talked very honest and open about that. [Laughs]. Get a mirror, that's how you learn your anatomy and physiology. So other people might have said that. [Laughs]

INTERVIEWER: I remember her saying that.

WESTMORELAND: But it made it kind of fun, too. And we had, I think from Mercer actually, was Pharmacology, somebody came and taught, so he was talking about if somebody's on drugs some of the things you'd see, and one was they'd wear sunglasses. So the next day we all came in with sunglasses. So that just kind of made it fun. I remember it not being a drudge, but being with friends, and, you know, the classes were okay.

INTERVIEWER: So what about after those first classes with Tift? You remember things about the other classes? What do you remember?

WESTMORELAND: The rotation, like med (medical), psych (psychiatric), OB (obstetrics), and all those classes. I really don't have anything specific to remember, you know, I just – I enjoyed them. I thought, you know, the instructors made it interesting and – but I don't remember anything specific about those.

INTERVIEWER: So talk about the clinical experiences. How were they structured and what do you remember about them?

WESTMORELAND: The clinicals, you know you'd be given your patient assignment the night before. You'd go over with your yellow jacket, go over to the hospital, and you'd get the information on the patient, even drug that patient was on. Then you'd go back and you'd go to the library and you'd research about everything because – it doesn't matter. They'd

find something to ask that I didn't have. The next day was early so you'd go over to your clinical if you had morning, but what was great was that you had all shifts. That's what I remember, and I remember the 11 to 7 a lot, and how much I got out of working the 11 to 7 shift.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that? Why do you think?

WESTMORELAND: I thought there was one time . . . Well, there was one time I was sitting there and I thought I had done everything. The instructor came by and we talked and she said well, she said, "I guarantee you, somebody's awake." She said, "Just go to each room." So I just remember that and you go and sure enough, you go and you sit in the room and you just talk to that patient. And that's where some of those skills, where sometimes during the day, you'd sit and talk to the patient, but you're so busy, you know, but, um, I just, and you're kind of more, a little bit more, on your own, you don't have as many of the – even the staff there, so . . . I was very aware of that just heightened that awareness.

INTERVIEWER: So did you do most of your clinicals at Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: I did most of them there. I did my Psych at Grady. I think that's what saved me on my Psych exams, actually. Well my boards. Because if I recall right – I don't think there was a psych – I think everybody went out to Psych rotation. I got Grady with some others, but we were the only rotation that we were able to chart on our patients, and I think that really, because you – you know you have to learn your- you have to know – when you chart you have to kind of know what you're talking about, so that helped, and I had difficult patients there. So when I took my boards, a lot of that came back, from them. Psych was my lowest I think but, which is weird because now I'm on Psych, but anyway. Yeah I do thank Grady for that, because I think that's why I passed.

INTERVIEWER: What else did you have at Grady?

WESTMORELAND: I think that was it. Psych was my only rotation at Grady.

INTERVIEWER: So everything else, you did all your others were not at Grady, at Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How about Peds (pediatrics)? At Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: Yes, we had a Peds floor.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. It seems like it changed, through the years. Some people had a lot of clinicals away, and then some people, like I said it was just kind of the luck of the draw maybe . . .

WESTMORELAND: It might have been yeah, because that's the only one I remember going off to.

INTERVIEWER: So talk about doing clinicals at Georgia Baptist. What do you remember about that?

WESTMORELAND: Oh gosh, a lot. Anything specific?

INTERVIEWER: Tell what you remember.

WESTMORELAND: Being able to do things, like I loved the OR (operating room). So they said – you first get there and they said just be quiet and learn and watch, but before I went I was learning all the instruments because I really wanted to get up there and pass the instruments. So I did, I was just quiet and learning, and eventually they let me up and by the end of that rotation I was passing instruments, and that's what I wanted. That was just so . . . I just loved that and I probably would have gone into that but the nurses, they were so mean. You know they asked and they said you ought to come back, but I thought, I don't know if I want to be around such . . . You know, I think everybody's gotten nicer through the years. I don't think you'd find that now, but . . . And I liked labor and delivery, um, you know, at one time I was in there and the doctor just set me down and helped pull the baby's head, so that – you were able to get, do hands-on, that's what I remember about clinical.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about the physicians?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, most – well, physicians are nicer now than what they were, I think they, um . . . I was intimidated, I guess, at the beginning. At the very beginning, one of my first days on the floor, patient's tray was late and the physician was mad and just lit into – you know I had nothing to do with the patient's tray being late. I'll go call and bring the patient's tray. But, you know, I did, I just started crying, I thought, this is just going to be horrible. I got in the wrong profession, didn't even realize, okay. I don't . . . yeah I think, um, most of the time they were good, but I think they've gotten better. I think they've been trained better, to treat nurses better now.

INTERVIEWER: So do you remember the medical students? Did you have any interaction with them?

WESTMORELAND: I remember that mainly after I graduated, yeah, not as much, because I think the interaction would be with instructor if I had any questions, or the other nurses on the floor is where the help came from.

INTERVIEWER: Talk about the instructors. How did they facilitate your learning, while you were there, on the clinical?

WESTMORELAND: On the clinical side they were really good, like, um, well my first major mistake – well my first mistake – I really didn't have that many mistakes, but we had – I gave this patient a wrong pain medication or at the wrong time, I mean it was – and you look back and go oh my gosh I can't even believe I even got upset about that because it was just, you know, something over the counter now. But I remember Miss Godfrey, she came over and she said well, you know, she said that's good. You're human now. I thought okay, well you might make mistakes but this is how we deal with how we make a mistake. Then we walked through it, and how not to do it again, and I thought this is what I need. I didn't need somebody just to say how horrible I was, but – because you're going to make mistakes throughout your career, but this is how you deal with your mistake. So I thought that was really good.

INTERVIEWER: That was a good way to learn that lesson. What other instructors do you remember?

WESTMORELAND: Miss Greene. I remember Mrs. Rawlins, and there was a night nurse and I can't remember her name but she was really good too . . . I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Some other people have mentioned the night person and I don't remember her name, but . . .

WESTMORELAND: She was a good teacher, I thought.

INTERVIEWER: What made her a good teacher?

WESTMORELAND: I thought she – well, if it was the same person, just coming around, you know, you don't just sit at night. There's nursing to be done and there's other things. Have you thought of this and that? I think either I was with the person because I don't think it happened to me, but we were in an ICU (intensive care unit) and the Foley catheter, somehow it came undone so the urine emptied out, so you couldn't get I & O (intake and output). So she said okay, this is what we're going to do, we're going to empty out – let's see how much is around there and empty it out the same amount and that's what you chart, obviously, this is estimated amount. She wasn't going to take – no you don't just put it emptied out for the Foley, we're going to try and figure out about how much was in there.

INTERVIEWER: That was an interesting way to do that. I never would have thought to do . . . How much did you have to do night shift?

WESTMORELAND: You know that I don't remember. I remember doing all the shifts, and I don't remember how often the night shifts were. Three to eleven I thought was good, too, it was a different vibe from, you know, from the hospital area. And you got to meet the other nurses on the floor. And so, you know, you kind of learned from them, obviously, too.

INTERVIEWER: Talk about the staff there at the hospital. How were they toward you as students?

WESTMORELAND: I thought they were good. You knew where you ranked. You knew that you never sat down, because everybody else sat down – this is really saying the age because you would sit down and give report, although nowadays I don't think that ever happens although walking rounds, see they're coming back to what we used to do. But I never felt like someone was really mean. You know, I really never had a bad experience of that.

INTERVIEWER: Well good. Okay. Describe the hierarchy among the students at Georgia Baptist, the different classes.

WESTMORELAND: Oh, um, well you remember the auditorium you know you had your seniors sitting up in front and then you had your juniors and then you had freshmen in the back. So you knew that you were hoping to get to the front, but, and then they had . . . You know you had your Big Sisters

INTERVIEWER: Talk about that.

WESTMORELAND: I really liked that. Now I need to get back in touch with mine. She reached out a couple of years ago, and we kind of talked, but I need to get back with her. You know I thought that was good because you had somebody, an upperclassman that you could go to, that you could talk to, or they will say this is coming up, or this might be hard, if you have a question, you know, during this class or rotation, I don't mind you asking. So I always felt like I could go to anyone and ask and they could help me.

INTERVIEWER: How did you get your Big Sister? Was it assigned or did they choose you?

WESTMORELAND: They chose you.

INTERVIEWER: How did they choose?

WESTMORELAND: That's a good - I can't remember if they – I think they left like sometimes flowers or a little gift on your desk and say will you be my Little Sister?

INTERVIEWER: Okay, that was nice. So did you have a Little Sister?

WESTMORELAND: I did have a Little Sister, but you know, we did not stay in touch. We have not stayed in touch but while we were there it was nice.

INTERVIEWER: How was it, being the Big Sister to the Little Sister, do you remember about that?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, it was good.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel like you were able to give her words of wisdom, like you received from your Big Sister?

WESTMORELAND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did she get a -

WESTMORELAND: A grand Big Sister? Gosh, I can't – probably so. But you know, I think my relationship to my Big Sister was better – I'm not sure why. I think it just stayed that way after we graduated. While we were there my Little Sister was [inaudible].

INTERVIEWER: What else about the different classes – what do you remember? What is the difference between freshman, junior, senior?

WESTMORELAND: Well my freshman – I don't know if you know this but when I first got there . . . And you know nowadays I would never be able to get into nursing school, and that's what's sad about nowadays –

INTERVIEWER: You don't think so?

WESTMORELAND: No, no. I would not, I guarantee you, but I've always considered myself a good nurse, you know but I would not have gotten into nursing school. And then – first quarter I might have failed out, flunked out, because I should've graduated in '76, so, um, I thought this was it, I'm not going back, and my dad said, "Well when you go back" – and I thought, ah. What I needed, I spent that time . . . I had a tutor. I went back and took a couple of classes from a college and just learned how to study. Then when I went back it was just like, oh yeah, and it's just in high school I don't think it got me ready for those type of classes. You know, I don't think my grades would've gotten me into nursing school, which is sad now.

INTERVIEWER: It's competitive.

WESTMORELAND: It's very competitive, and so I think you're getting, it's almost like, you only get this particular kind of person, instead of getting a wide range of people, if that makes sense. I know you're an instructor now but that's how I feel.

INTERVIEWER: So talk about the traditions surrounding each class.

WESTMORELAND: Oh gosh, if I remember . . . Well, you got your . . . Did they get the cape and all and your lamp, you carry that down?

INTERVIEWER: For capping.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, for your capping and all. Then you get your blue stripes. Do they do that? Do they even have a cap anymore?!

INTERVIEWER: They don't have a cap any more.

WESTMORELAND: You know, we used to have the white hose, the white shoes, the white [inaudible] which was nice because now we have gone to certain colors but at some point here, and at probably others, you won't know who's a nurse and who's not, by their dress. I think it confused the patients, satisfaction surveys said I don't know the nurses . . . Then of course the black band for, and the junior, for the blue stripe, we went to Six Flags, you know, and had a party.

INTERVIEWER: That was fun. So just your class?

WESTMORELAND: Just our class went to Six Flags, yeah. Then that's where we got our Blue Stripes, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Then what about your Black Band? How'd you get that?

WESTMORELAND: You know, that I can't remember too well. The black band, it was very significant, obviously. But I remember the blue stripe, my junior, but not the black band, isn't that funny?! I never took anything for granted after coming back to the school.

INTERVIEWER: We kind of already talked about this a little bit, but just describe how the instructors at Georgia Baptist facilitated your acquisition of nursing knowledge and skills. What did they do that helped you become a good nurse?

WESTMORELAND: Well you have the classroom first and I thought they were really good in there. And, um, it wasn't just – like one time for the heart, and I'm sure – see

nowadays I'm sure it's all different, but for heart sounds and all we went to another and you weren't just – it wasn't just - this is what it sound like, you got to hear a real heart. They magnified a real heart.

INTERVIEWER: How did they do that? Was it a recording?

WESTMORELAND: It was, and it was in where the doctors had their – they would go and they would have their meeting. It was all a particular classroom. I think they were able to magnify because – it actually wasn't at the School of Nursing. It was over at the hospital, this particular room. They took us over there, I think doing hands on, so we did have the clinical – you had your beds over at the School of Nursing you know with the mannequins in there you could do all of that.

INTERVIEWER: In the skills lab?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah in the skills lab. You know, I just think you teach in the hands-on so when you got over there, you didn't just learn it in the classroom. Now we're going to teach it over here.

INTERVIEWER: - and put it into practice -

WESTMORELAND: - and you were able to do the things, you know, sitting - I can remember sitting and looking at a monitor and the patient went into V-tach (ventricular tachycardia) so I ran to the patient. The patient was fine, and they said well that's why you don't just rely on monitors – and they did the strip and sure enough but the patient must have just gotten out of it. I just really remember the hands-on and ICU, I remember being able to do hands on. I remember doing a lot, you know, being able to really care for the patient, which probably was scary then. I also remember on my uniform. I finally found my uniform for the last day. You know you tore up your uniform. Everybody signed your uniform. And so it was almost to shreds but I can – I was piecing it together and it said, "Remember our Code 99," and then it said, "Of course the patient died." I started laughing. No-one else would laugh at that. It wasn't our fault the patient died, but there was a lot of that. It wasn't just you were looking back or standing back, we were able to be, I think, a part of stuff. Then we would go back and everybody asked who had a code today? If you had a code you'd sit down and tell everybody what happened. So that's how we learned, too, from each other.

INTERVIEWER: Like in post conference?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah but it was just the students. Everybody wanted to know if anybody had had a Code 99, come tell us and we'd all sit down and the instructors

weren't involved in that at all, it was just the students learning from – you know, we just wanted to learn all those little things, so, I thought that was kind of fun to do.

INTERVIEWER: You lived in the dorm?

WESTMORELAND: I lived in the dorm.

INTERVIEWER: So talk about the dorm and what was it like? You just kind of talked about you guys would go back and talk about it. So talk about more how that was living in the dorm, and how did that help you become a better nurse?

WESTMORELAND: I think just being around everybody all the time, and you know, we didn't have . . . You had two phones, so you didn't have any cell phones, so everybody called, so you had no distractions. I mean when you were there it was nursing 24/7. I had a little TV in my room and I remember we would watch Happy Days – that's our once a week show, because who had time for anything else? So we really – and you didn't have hardly any dates, you downstairs you know had the dating booth, but you to have the mothers come around and you had to have one foot on the ground at all times, but it helped you stay focused, too. You were able to, like with our roommates, well what did your patient do, what did your patient do? So we learned from each other a lot of times.

INTERVIEWER: So tell me, were there any other events, other than being with your classmates that occurred while you were in school at Georgia Baptist that helped make you a better nurse?

WESTMORELAND: [Pause]. I had a patient . . . I don't know if – the instructor, she was inducing an abortion, and she was pretty far along, um. I can't remember the exact weeks. They were asking who would wanted, and I thought I'll go ahead and take her, because I've never had that, and they said if you don't want it, it's fine, so I did, and I think that pushed me because once I got there and saw her pregnant – I did not want to be there, you know, and that was a very difficult, um, shift..

INTERVIEWER: That had to be because – that wasn't real common in those days. It had to be an unusual occurrence.

WESTMORELAND: No it was not, you're right. It was not because the, you know, what I remember is that it was her choice and that's why they were asking, we're not going to assign this to anybody, you know, would you take her or not.

INTERVIEWER: Was that at Georgia Baptist? They did that there?

WESTMORELAND: Yes. And so after that shift I said I never want that again, but it pushed me that, you know, there might be other patients that I might not be comfortable with, but to get beyond that and to try to focus on her the person, and not what was going on that I disagreed with. So if you had somebody . . . um, well when we did Sheffield Clinic, so when you did that, and you saw the women smoke and all, and there they were pregnant, that you try not to be so judgmental, but you try to accept the patient for who they are at that moment, you know. I'm meeting you where you are right now and doing the best I can as a nurse, with you.

INTERVIEWER: So talk about that Sheffield Clinic? What did you do there? What kind of things?

WESTMORELAND: I remember just the OB clinic there. You know, it's funny, I do remember going off one other time, and it was downtown, and it was just I think for a day or two. It was with the doctor that was very old and I can't – she died awhile – do you remember her? She worked really, and she worked with kids -

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Denmark.

WESTMORELAND: Yes! So I spent a day or a shift with her. And that was amazing too – and then – it's awful I can't remember these names but she passed away not too long ago and I remember seeing, oh yeah, I remember being with her -

INTERVIEWER: So at her office?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah where she saw the patients actually.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

WESTMORELAND: Somewhere downtown.

INTERVIEWER: How was that?

WESTMORELAND: It was neat. It was very good. I remember her interaction with the patients because you just don't see a doctor like that anymore.

INTERVIEWER: What were you able to do that day?

WESTMORELAND: You know, I don't remember doing as much as watching that day, watching her interacting with the patients, so that I remember more than doing, that day.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ride the Grady ambulance?

WESTMORELAND: You know it's funny you asked that because I did, but I was thinking I rode the Grady ambulance after I graduated because I was a Life Flight nurse. You would go through different areas, and so that's why I didn't mention that. So if I – I did ride the Grady ambulance so I might be, um – and it could have been both times when I rode it. But that was really good too. I enjoyed doing that.

INTERVIEWER: What did you enjoy about that?

WESTMORELAND: I liked the ER. I liked the fast – I enjoyed the emergency room. I enjoyed those type of patients, so, it was kind of neat to see and eventually I ended up with Life Flight, so . . .

INTERVIEWER: We're going to talk about your career in just a little bit so can't wait to hear about that. Describe any extracurricular activities you were involved in while you were at Georgia Baptist and how did they contribute to your knowledge development as a nurse.

WESTMORELAND: Major Netherland . . . we just called her Major.

INTERVIEWER: Were you on the basketball team?

WESTMORELAND: I was a cheerleader. I was a lifeguard so when I got there I was able to - you know you couldn't work for money in the hospital until after – I don't know – you start your junior year or something – so I made extra money working in the gym, so that's how I knew her. But then I became a cheerleader . . . was it volleyball team? So anyway, that was all really big, the sports thing and doing things like that.

INTERVIEWER: That was how you were involved.

WESTMORELAND: It was, yeah, that's how I was involved.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think that helped you to be a better nurse?

WESTMORELAND: Probably because you were there all the time, year round, and it just helped. To me, if you're in good shape it helps you mentally.

INTERVIEWER: Teamwork.

WESTMORELAND: There you go. I just remember it being fun, you know, and having a good time, and we did go off – the basketball team went to, um, Nashville, and so did the cheerleaders. I believe, so that was a long trip, but it was fun. You know, you just kind of got to be off campus a little bit.

INTERVIEWER: What do you remember about that trip, going to Nashville, anything specific?

WESTMORELAND: Just fun. I really don't remember anything too specific about it, but just that we had a good time.

INTERVIEWER: You got away from the campus.

WESTMORELAND: Got away from the campus, but yet part of the school too so it was good.

INTERVIEWER: What other experiences do you remember occurring while you were in school at Georgia Baptist that contributed to your enjoyment of your time in nursing school?

WESTMORELAND: Oh, my roommate and I we were just like this – people would say we were just attached but we really got along great.

INTERVIEWER: Were you roommates the whole time?

WESTMORELAND: We were, after I came back, we were roommates the whole time. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So then, and you had suite-mates?

WESTMORELAND: Suite-mates . . . Lisa Huddleston I think was a suite-mate. I can't remember the other one, but Lynn I remember.

INTERVIEWER: How was that, having the suite? Talk about the room setup.

WESTMORELAND: You had your roommate and then you had the bathroom and then you had two others. We thought it was great because most of our friends who went off to college had a bathroom down the hall. So we thought this was really nice.

INTERVIEWER: It was pretty nice.

WESTMORELAND: It was nice wasn't it? Yeah. It's just everybody worked so many different shifts, that you just had to be mindful of what your roommate or your suite-mates, so you would be quiet.

INTERVIEWER: Not everybody was on the same rotations at the same time.

WESTMORELAND: Right, right, right.

INTERVIEWER: Your roommate could have Psych while you had med-surg or something.

WESTMORELAND: Absolutely. I guess that's, so if you – I talk with my hands a lot – so if you had a rotation or something, you know, or just had it, then you could talk with somebody else about this or that. They might say this instructor likes it this way or something like that, you know. It was helpful to know someone. Even with a Big Sister, I think, your instructors change, or expectation changes on the floor.

INTERVIEWER: So your classmates that had recently been through or were going through it at the same time were -

WESTMORELAND: Very helpful.

INTERVIEWER: Describe some of the struggles you encountered while at Georgia Baptist.

WESTMORELAND: Academically, obviously, at the very beginning. I think after that – I mean I studied hard. Even throughout I had to study hard but I think what came better to me is that I could do it better clinically than I could on a test. You know I made – after I came back it was As and Bs, but I really – I worked hard for those As and Bs, but on the floor that just came almost – seemed like more natural to me and that's kind of what I'm saying. It's sad. I think you're missing some of these good nurses that . . . So I guess academically, I wouldn't say struggled when I came back, I had good grades, but I really had to work for those grades, whereas on the floor, it seemed like it all came together. Oh yeah, this is why this is happening, what to look for post-op and things like that, it all came together on the floor.

INTERVIEWER: So what you'd learned in class you put into practice?

WESTMORELAND: Right. I could put it into practice better than I could answer questions on a test. I know both are important and I ended up doing it, but I just really enjoyed putting it into practice on the floor.

INTERVIEWER: It helped you learn it and remember it.

WESTMORELAND: It did. It did because – you know like – you can pretend to put a Foley on a mannequin, but actually putting a Foley in on the floor, I mean . . . Because I've had, you know, infection control, okay – people don't know a sterile field or they didn't put in a

Foley and we got to do all that, and that was just great, to me. I could actually, you know, I just thought it was just great. I just loved all that stuff.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel the students coming out of school today compare to the ones that came out of school back then?

WESTMORELAND: I will say I have not gotten my BS (Bachelor of Science), so I think is there some prejudice there? There could be. Um, but I do have a good sense in the way that I am – I go on the floors all the time. I teach nurses, you know, the infection control, and watching them – is their sense of sterile field like it was when I came off, no. I've had some people who've never put in a Foley before, okay well let's go over this. Um, I feel like, these days, um, you're getting all these products to make up for what we should be doing. Do you know what I'm saying?

INTERVIEWER: The basics.

WESTMORELAND: The basics. You don't get the basics. Like I came out, I would never not scrub the hub. I mean now you're trying to teach scrub the hub, scrub the hub. There were things I would just – would never have thought of not doing that, you just are teaching it now. You know, you're just trying to teach the basics. Um, we had a couple of years ago at Emory this nurse came, and everybody just thought oh this is just great, this inspirational nurse teaching about talking to the patients and all, and I told my director, that's what we learned in nursing school, so I don't know – is this new? That's what I don't know. Is this new for the nurses coming out? Because that's just what was second nature to us. I know when I, um, went to a job, and this has been - at least 10, 15 years out of nursing school, and they said, "Oh, you have to take a test for . . ." – and I thought oh my God I haven't been to school, but I did really well on it. Georgia Baptist that's what I said. That's what I gave all the credit to because of how they taught. But I do wonder sometimes. And I do wonder, and this is bad for ya'll, are people going through it and you go straight to instructor having never been on the floor? I've had to talk with instructors and I've – have you been on the floor yet? Have you ever done hands-on nursing?

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the instructors that you had at Georgia Baptist, how much experience do you think they had before they were instructors at Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: I think a lot because they had to have. They were hands-on. They were telling us hands-on, so I think . . . you know, I could be wrong, but I just remember them being great hands-on instructors, because we were able to actually do the stuff on the floor.

INTERVIEWER: And they were right there.

WESTMORELAND: Yes. They were right there on – yeah. And if I wanted to do something, like if I had not done something I wanted to do something I felt – and they encouraged us – come ask us and we'll see if you can do it. I'm glad – because that was another thing, so I was at, you know, do that. I liked it. You know if you can't do it, you know, we'll do something. Then if there was a code I wasn't push you back to the very back of the room so you don't learn anything – get right up there and see. Learn from it as much as you can. If they're not letting you do anything, then you just be right up there and you just watch and learn, and we weren't pushed back, and I think that's nice. Did you have that?

INTERVIEWER: I did, yeah. I know, I agree, I mean it just . . . I mean I'm a very hands-on person, too. I think nurses generally are, and I agree, the clinical really helped a lot. I don't think I would have been a good nurse if I hadn't had all the clinical.

WESTMORELAND: And doing what I do now with infection control, I think one of my strong points – I mean we can just stay in the office all the time, but I go out on the floor, ok show me, and I see certain infections. Okay show me how you're doing this procedure, and I can sit and watch them and you know it's – both of us or all of us that's ever doing it, okay how can we do this better and I feel like I can make some suggestions because I had that clinical side for so long. And that's made me a better nurse, that you did all the rotations. Even now, even though I've never done OB afterwards, you know, as people talk about OB or we have to do . . . I have certification in infection control, so you know I'm still having to keep up with infections in OB, I can remember some of the OB stuff. Okay, I was there. I've done, actually, at birthing, so you know some of those terms that are talking about.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. It stays with you for a long time.

WESTMORELAND: It does, because you actually saw and helped with it.

INTERVIEWER: Helpful to have!

WESTMORELAND: There you go. You know, it was not just a classroom, and that's . . . I guess some people learned just in a classroom but it would not have made me a better nurse.

INTERVIEWER: It's hard, it really is, to just see it in a book or in a video, or even a simulation, it seems like it's not the same as doing it hands-on with a real person. So describe your – you said you haven't been back to school?

WESTMORELAND: No, I haven't.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever consider going back to school?

WESTMORELAND: I did at one time. And I thought about it, and I think part of it, I thought, I wondered if I could do it, the academic part. Then, to be honest, I was able to move up in my career without having it. I need it now, but I'm not going to go back now. I'm at the end of my career and I'm not going to do this . . . I guess and I never want it to be manager director over anything else. I was over this but I like more being hands-on and on the floor than all that other – than being a director. I never wanted to do any of that. I really wanted to be more hands-on. The only thing I thought I would have enjoyed doing is teaching, maybe. But I just, you know, I get that part going out on the floor. So, I do in-services and things and I thought well . . . Then I had children and I just could not. That was my focus. It just you know I had waited. I got married a little bit later. Took me forever to have kids. I thought, I just don't want anything else right now. So I work but I just don't think I could take that on. So I probably should have gone back, but I was able to do what I wanted to do in my career without it. Until now – and now Emory will only hire BSNs (Bachelor of Science in Nursing). So you're going well here I am but please keep me one more year.

INTERVIEWER: Of course. So talk about your career. What did you do when you graduated?

WESTMORELAND: I graduated and went right to the Neurosurgical floor. Everybody thought I was crazy . . .

INTERVIEWER: At Georgia Baptist?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah. Remember Dr. Anderson and Dr., um, – Richard, what was his? I can't remember his last name. It'll come to me. So everybody thought I was crazy because there were two of us but that's where I did my leadership nursing and worked on that floor. But he was known just to scream and yell at everybody, and everybody thought we had to have an interview for him . . . I say "they" you know all my nursing student friends, and so, but we didn't. I loved the Neuro floor . . . Dr. Anderson and Dr. Richardson. Richardson was his name. I did not like Dr. Richardson, um. I liked the nurses on the floor. They were good. With teaching, he was great. Somehow we clicked, Dr. Anderson and I, and then I went and to um, went and worked on the IV team some, then we opened up a Neurosurgical ICU and I worked there.

INTERVIEWER: I heard there were only 4 beds. I remember that. I worked there as a student.

WESTMORELAND: You might wonder if you came along while I was there, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I graduated in '81.

WESTMORELAND: I'm sure so because I worked there 'til '84, right after I graduated. Then Life Flight started and I got into Life Flight. I loved Life Flight. It was good, although I think that's when I had the most training of any of my nursing career. We had to go through OB again. It's a continuous rotation through ICU, OB - we even went through anesthesia so we could learn to intubate. It was just continuous training. We were trained as EMTs so it was challenging.

INTERVIEWER: So what made you decide to get into flight nursing?

WESTMORELAND: With neurosurgical patients there were a couple of times we did a fixed wing somewhere with the patients. They had to be – they wanted to go home or to fly, so I did one or two of those.

INTERVIEWER: Like with spinal cord patients?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, or um, head injuries, too. Then when we started that, the PA (physician's assistant) that was actually working on the floor was talking to me about it, and I said yeah that does sound good, and um, so that's what got me into it.

INTERVIEWER: How was it in the helicopter? You weren't afraid?

WESTMORELAND: I wasn't afraid of the helicopter. I got sick one time though, going to get the patient. Um, but you were also, you know, if you're going to get OB patients you were reading up, you know, and so we had these notebooks, so just reading up. You were always learning. You were always making sure you were up on everything.

I really did like it, and then it started . . . You just know at a certain time when you're ready to move on. We were having all these hard patients and then this little infant had meningococcal meningitis and I don't know if he made it. So then this infection control started coming open, and then when she asked I thought, it's time to move into this. You just get burned out. That's what's great about nursing, though, you can, you know, move in and out.

INTERVIEWER: It is.

WESTMORELAND: Then I started that and that was great. I met my husband a couple of years after that, then had kids, so that's Monday through Friday. I did Recovery Room

a couple of years, or PACU (post-anesthesia care unit) they call it now, when we moved up to Chattanooga and I did that for five years and then came back to infection control.

INTERVIEWER: So you were at Georgia Baptist until you moved to Chattanooga, and then when you came back, you came to Emory? So how long have you been here at Emory?

WESTMORELAND: Really Wesley Woods, 21 years.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. That's a long time.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, it is.

INTERVIEWER: You've seen a lot of changes here.

WESTMORELAND: Too many, yeah. I think this hospital, Wesley Woods, it's just...

INTERVIEWER: Good. Okay. So talk about, um – let's talk about the 1970s. So if you remember, the Vietnam War was at the beginning of the decade. So the Women's Rights movement kind of traversed the whole decade. Never did pass, but it seems like all the things they wanted we have now anyway. Then you had Nixon and Agnew and all of their political scandals. At, um, the end of the decade we had Ford. We had Ford and then we had Jimmy Carter. The economy was bad. Do you remember events? What events do you remember? How do you remember any of that social political economic influencing you, like your decision to be a nurse, or your decisions for your career afterwards?

WESTMORELAND: None of that influenced me.

INTERVIEWER: None of it influenced you?!

WESTMORELAND: Once I started nursing school, to be honest, really in the 70s, that whole time because I was so – and single – really I was so focused on nursing, and a career, and all that. It really didn't. Influence? I knew what was going on, yeah, but I worked so much that really that was my focus and it really didn't have anything on what I did or didn't do.

INTERVIEWER: You were able to have a job.

WESTMORELAND: Yes, well that's true. Able – did have a good job to support myself.

INTERVIEWER: No trouble ever getting a job.

WESTMORELAND: No trouble ever getting a job. Nursing's been good to me. I will tell people that all the time. I was able to get the jobs I wanted, when I wanted, and have the shifts that I wanted. I did all those other crazy shifts, then I had a family. I was able to settle in Infection Control, and even though it was crazy at times being on call, or I had to come in or something, but it was not like on the floor. I don't think I could've been on the floor, with the family.

It's very intense. To me, it was intense, when you're on the floor. It's a very intense time. When you first graduated I'd go home and just lay in bed and think what did I do wrong? I left the – med keys are there check – this is check – you know you're just . . . I don't know if everybody did that but right after I first graduated you know you're just trying to make sure. I just remember working hard. You know, long shifts. You'd work double shifts sometimes, or cover this. I'd work two weeks, 7 to 3, two weeks 11 to 7, I mean, you know, it was just...

INTERVIEWER: That had to have been hard.

WESTMORELAND: You know what's happening, but I don't think it influenced me, except for like you're saying, which I never thought of it. Yeah I had a job, but I never not thought of having a job because the jobs were always open for nurses there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think it's different now. The students have a little bit harder time.

WESTMORELAND: Do they really?

INTERVIEWER: Sometimes they have a little bit harder time getting a job, but.

WESTMORELAND: But I thought everybody needed nurses all the time?

INTERVIEWER: Usually they do, but . . . I mean, they all do get a job. Yeah they do, they just don't all get the job of their dreams.

WESTMORELAND: Well see that might be a different . . . the job of your dreams you work up to. You don't get the job of your dreams, and you shouldn't get the job of your dreams right away because it's a lot to learn, right?

INTERVIEWER: They want it right out of school.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, I think that's different. We did not expect the job of our dreams right after school.

INTERVIEWER: You were happy to have a job.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, and we knew . . . I do see now nurses, that they want job experience all the time, so I don't know if they looked at ours that we had job experience or you're working on the floor all the time, so they knew you. So like for me, the floor knew me, so they were saying, if you want to come work for us...

INTERVIEWER: Did you work extra on the weekends?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, I worked extra.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that helped you?

WESTMORELAND: Yeah I do.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think that helped?

WESTMORELAND: You didn't have the instructors there, right, so you had the other nurses telling you. It was – you know you worked like, I guess like a CAN (certified nursing assistant), but, [Pause], there was no fallback. I remember you didn't have – you couldn't say call up the instructor and have them come over, or help you with this situation. You were just on your own. And even though you had the nurses on the floor, you learned to rely on them more and to ask them more stuff . . . To me the more you're on the floor the more you're going to learn. Every time you go on the floor it's something different. Each time I worked extra you got that little bit more experience, and the people got to know you more, so that was the other thing. A lot of us, they were asking us, you want to work here, you want to work here? Because once they knew you, hopefully you established your credibility on the floor as a nursing student and then as – you're a CNA, your extra job.

INTERVIEWER: So tell how the education you received at Georgia Baptist facilitated your transition to nursing practice.

WESTMORELAND: It was everything. I mean I can't tell you how many times – you know, you think back – I know I'm not answering this very good -

INTERVIEWER: You're doing fine.

WESTMORELAND: Am I talking too much?!

INTERVIEWER: You're doing fine.

WESTMORELAND: I'll tell that time, taking that test again – that was the PACU job. Then you just – I mean you thought back on everything when you first got out. How did I handle this situation with the instructor here? My first code, I was thinking now if the instructor was here what would I be doing? That's how you handle it. Okay, this this this right? Like a mom and Dad? The instructor's voice, to me, talking -

INTERVIEWER: You could always hear them?

WESTMORELAND: You could. I could at first, you know, this is what you need to do, or you think – you see other nurses take a shortcut, and you think no, this is how I was taught. You have a choice right then and what's your choice going to be? So Georgia Baptist won out.

INTERVIEWER: So the clinical.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah, the clinical side of it did. I mean that's what all the clinical say and that's – I learned the most with clinical. You couldn't do the clinical without the classroom right? But it was the hands-on that I really learned more from.

INTERVIEWER: Made you put it into practice.

WESTMORELAND: That's right. But that's where – and even on in my career, you think, well you wouldn't look back, but you do. There's always going to be somebody wanting to do it the wrong way, or shortcut, or you know – I guess it's just – I know Georgia Baptist really doesn't exist, but they taught you at the time you want to go out and be – at Georgia Baptist you want to do things right and you stand for something. You stand for where you graduated from.

INTERVIEWER: We still want them to.

WESTMORELAND: Good!

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely! It's the reputation -

WESTMORELAND: It is the reputation. You went into the school, knowing the reputation was good and you wanted to keep that reputation going. But also, I think the patient was number one. Always, always, always, from day one even in the classroom. And I think the instructors . . . [crying]

INTERVIEWER: See, I told you it might happen.

WESTMORELAND: You think now it's not. It's too – you have people – I have the machines. We didn't have any of those machines.

INTERVIEWER: You had to use your own assessment skills and knowledge and everything, yeah.

WESTMORELAND: So, I don't think the patient is first anymore, like it was for us. It is now, for me. When I go on the floor or when I tell a doctor, you know, you tell a doctor you need to wash your hands, you know, and they start getting upset, or you tell a nurse that and they get upset. Then I just remind them – okay do you want the best for your patient? Well yeah. Well, that's all I'm doing. Because one chance of not washing your hands can mess up everybody who's foamed in and out for that one patient. When you put it like that it helps, but I do think the focus of the patient is lost sometimes and what's best for the patient, and that's what I was taught from day one.

I think that's what I continue now. I don't do hands-on nursing but in some ways but in some ways I do, because you know you're helping the nurses hands on, on the floor, trying to do the best they can, and prevent infections, and that's so huge now with everybody. It used to be – I think my career was backwards a little bit, because people didn't know why I went to the neuro floor, and then when I did Life Flight, they would go well you're not a real nurse. Now Life Flight's – yeah. Then when I went into Infection Control, it was - you're not real nurse. Now it's just so about infection control all the time, I mean you know. Well maybe I was a little late on everything.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like you were cutting edge.

WESTMORELAND: Yeah right!

INTERVIEWER: Well that's the end of my questions. Is there anything else you want to say?

WESTMORELAND: I do think that patients are lost in everything sometimes. The nurses have so much now. I don't know. If I knew what I know now, I don't know if I'd get into nursing right now. There's just too much paper . . . You probably, being an instructor, I'm sure, think no, no, but you know, just seeing them on the floor, it's just all about charting, all about – and being on these teams – they're just so pulled, you're pulled away from the patient.

INTERVIEWER: It's hard. It is.

WESTMORELAND: It looks hard. And we're pulled away from the floor. I mean everybody wants all these numbers, and the time I used to spend on the floor I'm not there as much. Do you enjoy teaching?

INTERVIEWER: I do. I'll turn this off.