

Transcription: Beatrice Soto

CT: Okay, here we go. Today is March 2nd, 2022. This is an interview for the custodians and janitors in Colorado oral history project funded by an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress. As part of the project, we are interviewing people employed in the janitorial field to record their stories, document their skills and knowledge, and better understand their important role in our communities.

The recording and transcript will become a permanent part of the collection at the Library of Congress. My name is Cynthia Torres. We are recording in Colorado. The time is approximately 11:00 AM. For the record, Beatrice, do you give us your permission to record your story?

BS: Yes.

CT: Wonderful. Great. We'll start with can you tell us your name, the year you were born, not your entire birthday, just the year you were born and your current job?

BS: Okay. My name is Beatrice Sotito. My birthday is [REDACTED] and year 1968 and working for custodian for six years in Boulder CU.

CT: Great. Awesome. Tell me a little bit about your early life, like growing up and where were you born and how did you come here to Colorado?

BS: Yes, me born in Mexico, Durango, Mexico, coming for United States. My husband a resident here and for working a custodian, and they work for a lot of time in Super Target, 30 years, which is moving for a CEO for custodian. I like my job.

CT: Yes. Oh, very nice.

BS: Yes.

CT: What made you come to Colorado?

BS: Oh, Colorado living for 30 years. Yes. 30 years living in Colorado.

2:05

BS: Wow. That's a long time.

BS: Yes. A lot of times.

CT: Yes. Wow. Can you tell me a story about being a custodian when you first started?

BS: Okay.

CT: Was it like learning?

BS: Yes, my job, the first custodian in CU, not like it three months, not like it, the custodian, not like it for the people, too much problem, the people that work here. (inaudible) I try it, the problem, resolution problem. I like it now.

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CT: Okay. What do you like best about it?

BS: In the library.

CT: Okay.

BS: Yes.

CT: What time in the morning do you start?

BS: 4:30.

CT: Oh, wow. Yes, that's early.

BS: Yes. Very, very early. I wake up every day, the Monday and Friday, 2:30.

3:04

CT: Wow.

BS: Yes, for the living in mid Colorado is 45 minutes.

CT: Oh, wow. That's a long drive. Wow. What do you like best about it? Is it like maybe the cleaning, the sweeping, the benefits?

BS: I like the benefits, my son coming for the student here, which is the 30% off. I like it. I like the clean it up, it's good.

CT: Oh, that's wonderful but the tuition benefits for your--

BS: Oh yes, the benefits, I like it.

CT: Oh, very nice. That's wonderful. Can you talk about one of the hardest days at work? If you think back maybe, I don't know, what was a really hard day?

BS: For the schedule. It's very, very hard, 4:30, wake up too much early.

4:04

CT: Is there one day in particular that was just really hard for you?

BS: Thursday for wake up. Thursday.

CT: Thursday.

BS: Oh my god, did no wake up Thursday.

CT: Oh man.

BS: Maybe for the three days, wake up very, very early, and Thursday, oh my god.

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CT: It's very tough. Very nice but that's hard. Do you see things like at work that are really hard to do? Are there floods or maybe something that happened that was really hard?

BS: Working very hard which is snow, too much snow. Oh my god, I was very, very tired for the snow shoveling.

CT: The snow shoveling. Oh my gosh. Is it hard to drive to get here in the snow?

5:00

BS: Yes, maybe one hour for drive it, very, very slow.

CT: You're an essential employee and so you have to be here even if nobody else--

BS: Nope.

BS: Yes, a lot of time.

CT: That's hard, very hard. Let's see. What about COVID, when COVID happened, how did your job change?

BS: Oh, yes. Change for the COVID is very, very-- trying also (inaudible) ears and (inaudible) nose so you use the mask a lot. It's too much job energy for the (inaudible) and this one, the mask, oh my gosh.

CT: Oh - Were you scared when COVID got started?

BS: Yes, for the people coming, the students, oh my gosh.

CT: Was your family afraid for you?

BS: Yes. Yes, my family afraid for me.

6:03

CT: When you cleaned offices or rooms, you had to use the sprayer?

BS: No.

CT: No?

BS: Only towels and disinfect. Towels and disinfect.

CT: Okay.

BS: It was scary for the COVID.

CT: What was scariest? Were you worried? Did you get COVID?

BS: No. No. No, nothing in COVID.

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CT: That's wonderful.

BS: (inaudible) for me, yes.

CT: But your son?

BS: Yes, my son, yes, having COVID in the hospital for three months in Denver. You take your COVID for to do job.

CT: What job?

BS: (inaudible)

CT: Oh, but you were safe.

BS: Yes.

CT: Okay. Very good. What do you like to do when you're not working?

7:07

BS: Walking.

CT: When you're not working?

BS: When I'm not working, I like to go for the walking or for the shopping.

CT: Very nice. Very nice. Are you proud of your job? When you clean, are you proud, or it makes you feel good? Does it make you feel good-

BS: Yes.

CT: -to do your job?

BS: Yes.

CT: What about makes you feel good?

BS: Listen music. In the work, listen music and clean it up.

CT: Okay. Very nice. Do you talk to a lot of the students or the professors?

BS: Sometimes the guys, they clean it, working in the offices, you know, "It's okay for cleaning up?" "Yes, go ahead, go ahead. No, it's okay. Thank you."

8:01

CT: So that's okay?

BS: Yes.

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CT: Do you have a good relationship?

BS: Yes.

CT: Well, good. Very good. What are you most proud of in your life? When you think about your life, what makes you feel really good? Is it a person?

BS: Yes, happy for the person, the people. Yes, happy for something.

CT: Like what kinds of things?

BS: Sometimes happy I got a volunteer in the church, and the people, "Do you need something? Do you need food?" I go in the something-- for the CU. They come in as students, go for their classroom and everything, the newer students.

9:07

CT: Oh, Is it your daughter who comes to school?

BS: No, my son.

[CT: Your son comes to school.

BS: Yes, my son.

CT: What do they study?

BS: Business.

CT: Oh, very nice. Very good. Do you have (crosstalk)?

BS: Yes, I have one more son and one more daughter. My daughter, student in UNC in Greeley, and then my son is in one in the-- little son (inaudible) coming for CU.

CT: Okay. You're proud of them? You feel good?

BS: Yes.

CT: That's good.

BS: My English is not good, I tried.

CT: That's okay. When you were coming from Mexico when you came, did you want better life for your children? For you?

BS: No. Me coming only for marry in Mexico, my husband and me marry in Mexico. The family then my husband is in here in the United States.

CT: Oh.

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BS: Coming me, having kids, my kids is born here in the United States. The four years is, oh my gosh, it's very, very different.

CT: What is different?

BS: The language is very, very different, only Spanish in Mexico, and here is English.

CT: Yes. Wow. Your kids speak Spanish as well?

BS: Yes, both in English and use Spanish.

CT: Okay. That's good. That's very good, very nice. Can you talk a little about your coworkers? Are they nice or how do you interact with them?

BS: It depends. The guys who work is very nice, *pero* sometimes I don't like it. [chuckles]

11:05

CT: What didn't you like?

BS: For sometimes it's the job. No rotation, same one job.

CT: No rotation.

BS: It's very, very different.

CT: Okay. Different buildings?

BS: Yes, in the library which is no rotation. Only two years in the bathrooms. Yes, too much time. Here in JILA, the people no coming only want the personal, no rotation.

CT: What's different with JILA and other buildings? Do you like the people or--?

BS: This is different. She says it's very, very nice, clean it here.

CT: That makes you feel good.

BS: Yes, I like it for the good, (inaudible) everything's very, very nice clean.

CT: You like to work hard?

BS: Yes, I like it.

CT: Okay. That's very nice.

BS: It's except for the COVID, every table disinfected in the office seat, the bathrooms.

12:05

CT: How many offices do you think you have?

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BS: Oh my gosh. There's three. I'm not sure, but maybe 50 maybe, 5-0.

CT: Yes. Five, zero.

BS: In the classroom.

CT: Then the classroom.

BS: Oh, the conference.

CT: The conference rooms?

BS: Conference rooms.

CT: There's a lot of conference rooms?

BS: Yes. In the lobby areas, like kitchen.

CT: The kitchen?

BS: Yes.

CT: Well, each floor has a kitchen.

BS: Yes.

CT: Yes. That's a lot.

BS: Yes, a lot.

12:54

CT: It's a lot to do. Wow. In your life, what was the hardest for you growing up? The thing that was most difficult in your life, from a child growing teenager, adult, what was the most difficult thing you had to do?

BS: Maybe for the child, more difficult for the child, the chores.

CT: What about it?

BS: We having too much (inaudible) chores.

CT: The chores?

BS: Yes. Chores.

CT: Chores.

BS: Yes. They don't like this one for the too much-- everywhere trash and trash.

CT: Oh, yes. Let's see, it took a lot of courage, courage to come from another country.

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BS: Oh, yes.

14:03

CT: It took a lot of strength.

BS: Oh, yes.

CT: It was hard.

BS: Oh yes. It is very hard for Spanish, no English, is different language.

CT: What about leaving your family? You still have family in Mexico?

BS: Oh, yes.

CT: Was that hard? Do you see them?

BS: Yes, I visit, coming for every years, my sisters, my brother. Not having dad. My dad is died. My mom is (inaudible).

CT: When did you start working? How old were you?

BS: Me?

CT: Yes.

BS: It's 50, 40-- 48. Start work for here, what year? 40 years. 48.

CT: 48 years.

BS: Then CU, in CU.

CT: At CU.

BS: For in United States is 23, which is marry in 22, 23.

CT: Okay.

BS: Yes.

15:00

CT: Wait, did you work in Mexico?

BS: Oh, no. Working in Mexico, yes.

CT: Yes?

BS: Yes, a student in Mexico. I having college in Mexico.

CT: Oh, yes? What did you study?

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BS: I studying for the boys that are having a special.

CT: Oh, special needs.

CT: Special needs and the girls.

CT: Oh, a teacher?

BS: Same one but not teacher, same one but not a specific teacher.

CT: Oh, wow.

BS: I go for two years working over there in Mexico before coming for United States. I have been pregnant for my son, which is no babysitting. I go now school for English.

CT: Which school?

BS: Here, CU.

CT: At CU?

BS: Yes.

CT: Okay.

BS: Go for Tuesday and Thursday for one hour and a half.

CT: That's a good benefit.

16:05

BS: Oh, yes. It's very, very beneficial and the computer.

CT: The computer, okay.

CT: Yes, in Mexico, for me, not having computer, only the machine.

CT: The typewriter?

BS: Yes.

CT: Oh, okay.

BS: Yes, my first school, and there are only these kind of computer.

CT: Do you have a computer at home?

BS: Yes.

CT: Yes? That's good.

BS: Yes, I have a laptop.

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CT: Oh, very nice. That's wonderful, the English classes and the computing.

BS: Yes.

CT: That's good. That's awesome. The person in your life, who in your life inspires you? Inspires, let me see. Inspires.

BS: Inspires?

CT: Inspire. Let me see if I can look up Google translate. Let me see.

17:00

BS: Spires?

CT: Inspires.

BS: Let me check inspires. What is it?

CT: Let's see.

BS: Spires is the--

CT: *Inspira*.

BS: Oh, *inspiraciones*. She says speeding for the more speaking English, me.

CT: More opportunity?

BS: Opportunity for more speaking English.

CT: That's awesome.

BS: For looking at different job.

CT: You like to do maybe in your degree, like your college maybe?

BS: Yes, I have in my (inaudible) was in Mexico (inaudible) it here. Sometimes the companies are needed only trust when I want application for one in (inaudible). I'm back first over there. "Oh, it is good job. You having your paper for the degree." "It's okay. I'm back." "No, like go for CU."

CT: Oh, wow. Well, CU, there's a lot of benefits.

BS: Yes.

CT: I like working here too. Yes. Let me see. Who in your life is most-- Let me see.

BS: My daughter.

CT: They're almost done.

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BS: Yes.

CT: Yes. What about them? What is it?

BS: Yes. For the little son, I lucky the student for here. You have a degree. She only one. Another son is okay. You having the student business, you know, opportunity for another job in Texas.

19:06

CT: Okay.

BS: Yes. My daughter is (inaudible), only my only one more student.

CT: Wow. One more. Where?

BS: Here.

CT: Okay.

BS: Colorado.

CT: Okay.

BS: Yes. They finish here in CU.

CT: Nice. Yes. Do you have grandkids?

BS: No.

CT: No. Okay.

BS: No, my son will marry in December.

CT: Oh, okay.

BS: Yes. December 6th this year.

CT: Oh, wow. Yes.

BS: In Texas.

CT: Oh, wow.

BS: Yes.

CT: Congratulations.

BS: Oh, thank you.

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CT: Very nice. Yes. What if somebody wants to be a custodian, what would you advice? What would you tell them? What advice would you give to somebody? If I wanted to be a custodian, what would you tell me? Let me see if I--

20:09

BS: Yes. She doesn't like job for cleaning everything, for the people no clean it.

CT: Yes. People don't clean.

BS: This job is for cleaning.

CT: Yes. Sometimes people don't want to. (crosstalk)

BS: Yes. The students paying a lot of money for studying here.

CT: Yes.

BS: The people no clean it. For example, my son and my daughter paying loan now for the student, if the student, the custodian no cleaning for the-- example, for the classrooms, bathrooms, and the housing, she's custodian (inaudible) need to clean it up.

CT: Yes. Sometimes they don't.

BS: The people sometimes not clean it.

CT: Wow. and that's not fair to the student.

BS: (inaudible) told you the people, "Hey, guys, I need to clean it up, for me, and my son, and my daughter paying loan for the students here." They're paying the loan, money, yes, for custodians.

21:17

CT: The students are paying money?

BS: Yes.

CT: They need to have--

BS: A house.

CT: Yes, the custodians need to clean. They're getting paid. It's not fair to the students. Is there anything you want to talk about, like about you, that you want to tell people?

BS: Yes. Let me talk to people in the meetings because sometimes having complaints in the meetings, and, "Hey, I needed guys clean it up for the guys, for the students. The students pay my money." "Oh, really?" "Yes." Especially my son is very, very big loan for the students, (inaudible)."

22:02

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CT: You tell people they need to clean?

BS: Yes.

CT: They need to clean. You got to do your job.

BS: Yes. She said, "Looking for the job for cleaning." She's supposed to clean. It's your job.

CT: Oh, wow. Well, thank you. I don't have any more questions. Do you have anything you want to talk about?

BS: No. This question is for the people or for what this question?

CT: Yes, so that people in the public know custodians, they know you because sometimes people don't see custodians. They don't talk to custodians.

BS: Yes, which is the problem is little money for custodian. I'm here almost six years. Yes, six years in February. The salary is \$1590.00.

CT: A month?

BS: A month.

BS: No, no, for hour-- Yes, for hours, cost for hours, for months.

CT: Okay. Wow.

23:00

BS: For hours.

CT: For hours? Okay.

BS: Yes.

CT: \$15.90?

BS: \$15.09. \$15.09

CT: \$15 an hour.

BS: \$15-- yes.

CT: It's not a lot.

BS: For six years.

CT: Wow.

BS: Which is good for benefits. For my son, it's 30% off, the class.

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CT: The tuition.

BS: His tuition.

CT: You're looking for another job that pays more?

BS: Oh, yes. (inaudible) was paying for my son.

CT: Oh, wow.

BS: A different discussion. She's supposed to (inaudible) for more money. In CU, it's for 30 and pay more money for overnight. Overnight is 2:00.

CT: Oh.

BS: It's 3:00 at--

CT: The nightshift?

BS: The nightshift.

24:00

CT: That pays more?

BS: Yes.

CT: Is it worth?

BS: No, because sometimes it's wake up, oh my god, and sleeping. Oh my god, it's wake up 3:00. Oh my god. 2:00, oh, maybe go only [crosstalk]

CT: Oh, that's hard.

BS: Yes. No sleeping.

CT: The day shift is easy, is better.

BS: Yes.

CT: Okay. Your husband, what is he?

BS: Which is my husband no work, is disability.

CT: Okay. Disability.

BS: Disability, yes.

CT: Oh no. Okay.

BS: Only working (inaudible)

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CT: That's a lot-

BS: Yes.

CT: -on you.

BS: Yes.

CT: Wow. Doing it all yourself?

BS: Yes. Which is working, my son. My son lives in Texas and my daughter are helping me for paying the rent.

CT: Okay.

BS: Paying my house.

CT: Okay. You're dad helps?

BS: Yes. My son here says is work.

CT: Okay.

BS: Part time in here.

CT: On campus?

BS: Yes.

CT: Okay. Where on campus?

BS: In MCBBD (science building).

CT: Okay.

BS: Yes. Only four hours or three hours per day.

25:03

CT: It's still, it's something. Yes. Okay. Well, thank you, Beatrice.

BS: You are welcome.

CT: Thank you so much for doing this. Anything else you want to say?

BS: Yes, that's all.

CT: That's okay?

BS: Yes. It's okay.

CT: Okay. Well, thank you so much.

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BS: Oh, you're welcome.