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## Sundee Mullangi

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Homecoming 2010, recorded at The Ames Library

Sundee Mullangi: [Recording begins abruptly] —Sundee Mullangi. I graduated in 1997 with an Accounting major and was a member of the IWU Accounting Society as well as a member of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and was part of a couple of honorary societies as well here on campus. So favorite story and—oh, well, you know what, what I like to actually talk about is—Wesleyan—is that when I came into this university with parents that were physicians with a whole background of physicians and, you know, one of the things I wanted to do was not become a physician.

[Rae Rein laughs]

Mullangi: Wesleyan was this opportunity where you get this liberal arts education and kind of, “Hey you get to pick and choose whatever you want to do for the rest of your life or at least the foundation for it,” which was somewhat of a daunting task, but it was a great task as we—as I look back at it because what I chose was interesting because I chose to become an Accounting major, which, at the end of the day, is probably the next closest thing of being pre-med where there’s a set track and at the end of four years, my parents don’t have to support me because there’s probably a lot of jobs out there and so I think in my way I kind of liked that. My parents liked it and so it was like, “Okay, I have a sense of what I need to do, and after four years, I’ll hopefully have an opportunity in the accounting field.” Funny enough, I was in the field of accounting for three years post-graduation and then changed jobs and fields and went into finance. So, the plan I originally had for school and life lasted for a whopping three years! I guess the big lesson here is that plans change. “What were the best parts of Wesleyan and what are the best classes and so forth?” I can’t say my accounting classes were the best classes. They were good, they were interesting to me, but the classes that always stick in my head are The American Presidency taught by Simeone and Irish Literature taught by McGowan.

Rein: I’m a Political Science major.

Mullangi: Oh you are?

Rein: Yeah.

Mullangi: Wow, that’s awesome!

Rein: Oh, I’m Rae Rein, Class of 2011. I forgot to—but yeah, I love Professor Simeone. He’s—

Mullangi: Simeone’s class was the classic liberal arts experience—it was my sophomore year—the class was comprised of seniors to sophomores, we sat in a big circle in Shaw Hall and discussed American Presidents for 4 hours a day.

[Rein laughs]

Mullangi: —I remember that I could not get through all of this content within, you know, until the next day, but, you know, he threw out, you know, all these things and then you go to class the next day and it wasn’t about, “Hey what’d you read?” It was, you know, “Take that step and what you’ve read is a foundation for these questions I have for you. Let’s explain and let’s talk about them.” And it was like, “My goodness, this is cool. This is awesome.” I was very interested because I really liked politics. He was the first professor to challenge me away from something very comfortable like accounting. So it really gave me that—“Hey, you come to the

liberal arts education to get the foundation for a career or for a job afterwards but you also come here to find out what your interests are, what maybe your hobbies may be when you're thirty, forty, fifty years old that you could actually think about while you read the newspaper everyday." His class really made me interested in politics and I went on my junior year after that and instead of do a—an accounting-based internship, I actually went to Washington D.C. and worked for a representative for three months and began understanding the process of legislation and I thought it was awesome and I've always wanted to go into politics and I always said going into politics is something you need to do after you've gone through life and—meaning I don't want to be a thirty-year-old politician, I want to be a fifty-year-old politician when you have kind of gone through, had a family, and understood what, you know, what people really are interested about those struggles and I don't think you get it until you're forty or fifty years old and it's funny because the American presidency class was that same thing—is that, "Here's the individuals in our history, way back to our founding fathers, who was trying to set a structure in place that would help people throughout time and so far it's lasted," and I think that class was very instrumental in kind of how I think about things, how I analyze things, why politics is something I read everyday, so that was one class. The other class was my senior year and I needed to take an English class and it was a May Term class in Ireland about literature and poetry and—oh, excuse me, that was my—was that my senior year? No, it was my junior year, excuse me—and I loved it.

Rein: Yeah.

Mullangi: You're over there in Ireland learning about stuff. I never would've ever opened—

[Rein laughs]

Mullangi: —those books. Once again, I'll rephrase, I'm an Accounting major—

[Rein laughs]

Mullangi: And this is a class I learned about Irish poetry, Irish authors, Irish literature and on that trip, you know, coincidentally is—I also met my wife on that trip who was also a Wesleyan graduate who majored in pre-med but had the same interest of doing something a little different, outside the norm, and that is another reason—I met my wife, I got a piece of Irish poetry and literature which I probably never would in my life open up, and it opened—

[Rein sneezes]

Mullangi: Bless you.

Rein: Thank you.

Mullangi: —it opened me up to something, once again, a liberal education really does—

Rein: Mhmm.

Mullangi: To things that you're not supposedly—

Rein: Sorry, um—

Mullangi: Do I just hit play here?

Rein: It's already—

Mullangi: Okay, perfect.

[Interviewer leaves]

Mullangi: So the Irish poetry class and the American Presidency were perfect examples of a liberal education. These were classes, teachers and students that opened up my mind. The Wesleyan experience was a game changing event that I believe has changed my life.

[Recording stops]