

Alexis Morales: Hello, my name is Alexis Morales, and today's date is Monday, July 24, 2017. I'm here today with Donna Krause, an alumna from Indiana University Northwest and other IU institutions who will be sharing her story of her time here for Indiana University's Bicentennial Oral History Project. To begin, can you please state your full name, the years that you graduated, and then your majors if you remember them?

Donna Krause: Okay. Donna Krause. I have an associate's degree in dental hygiene, and that was in 1987. And a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene public health from IUPUI in 1988. And a master's in health administration from IU Northwest in 1992.

AM: And where was your associate's from?

DK: Here at IU Northwest.

AM: IU Northwest, okay. Well, thanks so much for taking time out of your day today. I appreciate it.

DK: You're welcome.

AM: Can you start by telling me a little bit about your family background and where you were born?

DK: Okay, I was actually born and raised in Valparaiso. And I attended Portage High School. I graduated in—a while ago [laughs]. And then, I attended IU Northwest for my first year and went to IU Bloomington my second year. I knew I wanted to go for dental hygiene, but I wanted to experience going away to a big campus.

So, I didn't do the freshman like in a dorm. I actually lived in what was called Park Doral Apartments, which I think are still there. And that was like off of 45/46 in Bloomington. And so, I went there. And then, dental hygiene is only offered off campus. So, it's not at IU Bloomington.

So, at the time, there was only five dental hygiene programs, so I applied to them all because I wanted to make sure I got in. And when I was accepted at—IU Northwest is

one of them that I was accepted in and it made sense to live at home. Save money. And I could work and go to school at the same time. So, I did that.

AM: So, you came back?

DK: I came back, yeah. So, I lived at home. But it was fine. Like I said, I was able to work and go to school full time, which is very common for students that I currently work with as well. Things like that don't change.

AM: And what led you into the dental area?

DK: I think I've known for a long time. I actually—I think I chose my major when I was in middle school.

AM: Did you?

DK: Yeah, so I was always excited about my teeth. So, I think that's how you end up—you have an interest in that. I knew I didn't want to go into something gory or anything. I didn't want to go for like nursing or something. It wasn't what I was into. So, I'd probably cry if I saw anyone bleeding or anything, so I couldn't do that.

So, I decided that teeth was the way to go. And it parallels nursing. You take all the prereqs, the sciences and stuff that are—you know, microbiology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, so those are very similar to what everyone else takes.

AM: Yeah, it's still tough. All of those courses.

DK: Yeah, well, I wouldn't want to go for business, so.

AM: No, I think yours is definitely probably harder.

DK: Oh, I don't know about that. I heard my daughter talk about it.

AM: Really? No, I'm like—something about like sciences, it just doesn't stick with me.

DK: And that's what I mean. You've got to do something you really like. And I always tell my kids that and tell the students that. "You've got to enjoy what you're doing or

you're going to dread going to work every day. And I think your patients or your clients will pick up on that.”

AM: Yeah. Are you a first-generation college student?

DK: Actually am. My mother attended Valparaiso University, but never graduated. So, yes.

AM: Well, congratulations. Was that a tough transition, I guess, going from high school to college?

DK: I didn't think it was. It's just that first year, that freshman year, you don't really know what you're doing. I'm not so sure that in high school if I didn't seek it out or I didn't get the right guidance. And I think, at the time, I didn't know if I was going to be going to Bloomington or IU Northwest. So, that was the hardest.

It's probably your first semester because you're learning about applying for any grants or financial aid, and signing up for classes, and getting the parking permit. It's all that stress that, unfortunately, gets the freshman class. So, and after that semester, then you transition. And you know when to register and everything, so it's not hard then.

AM: Do you have a favorite class or a professor? Someone who motivated you?

DK: I think, before I got in the hygiene program, I took a microbiology class, M-315, in Bloomington. And it was a tough class, but I learned a lot from it. It was real interesting. I enjoyed microorganisms and things like that. That was kind of exciting for me. I enjoyed that.

And then, here, when I was at IU Northwest, there was a professor I had, Sharon Kantor, who was a dental hygiene instructor. And she actually taught radiology classes, but she made it really interesting and kept your attention. So, I would have to give her credit for that.

And actually now, I teach all the radiology classes in the hygiene program. So, I kind of felt like I emulate a little bit of her. Kind of try to keep it light, but yet fun or interesting. So . . .

AM: Did you have a favorite student hang out either here or at . . .

DK: Probably I would say so much here at IU Northwest because, I mean, we were a small group when I went through the dental hygiene program as a student. There was only 13 in my class, so it was very small. And we were always together. So, I would say we got together quite a bit for study sessions or study groups.

But in Bloomington, I remember going to the IU Memorial Union. And I just always remember walking in there, and you could smell popcorn. And so, that was a place like I would study in between classes or whatever. I always enjoyed that.

AM: Because when you were at IU Northwest, did you spend a lot of time on campus or were you mostly working, or . . .

DK: Kind of both, if we were here on campus, there used to be – you're probably not familiar – but there was a dental building across the street. It wasn't here on the main campus. And so, most of our studying was done in the basement of the—

AM: —Really?

DK: Yeah, it was called the Dental Auxiliary Education Building. It's still standing, but it doesn't have that anymore. So, we did a lot of our studying there instead of coming across the street to the library or something.

AM: And, I guess, since you did go to Bloomington versus Northwest or IUPUI, did you notice a difference in your ability to connect with other students? Because we were a commuter campus, did you think that was a barrier to form relationships?

DK: I think, initially, maybe. When you're doing your prereqs, it may be, but I think once I got into the dental hygiene program, I had my little clique of friends because you have all the same goals you're working toward.

Bloomington just made it easier because you're in close quarters with many students and everywhere you go, there's a college student, so you could hang out with people. And, again, I worked when I lived in Bloomington. So, I met more college students through my job in Bloomington.

AM: Where did you work at?

DK: I worked at Rax. It was like a roast beef place. I did that, but I also played on the Mother Bears softball team in the summer. So, that was fun. So, I met other people that way. But I wasn't involved in any organizations that way.

I was involved with the dental hygiene organization here at IU Northwest once I got in the program. And I was a student member of the American Dental Hygienist[s] Association.

AM: That's exciting.

DK: Yeah, so it was fun.

AM: Yeah, so no clubs like outside of that?

DK: No. We didn't have time. And then, working. That always takes up some of your time too.

AM: Yeah, you hardly have time to do personal and family things too. What made you pursue a bachelor's, and then a master's?

DK: I always wanted to do a bachelor's. I guess, initially, when I was thinking of dental hygiene—and back then, even other programs that were health care related were associate's degrees. It's just been in the last decade or so that they're all transitioning to bachelor's degrees. But I always thought I wanted that.

I felt like that would be where I wanted to at least—the minimum education was to get my bachelor's degree. So, that's why I decided I would pursue my bachelor's. And the only one at the time that had any, and it was a full-time program, was IUPUI. So, I went through their program, which was through the dental school there.

AM: Was that right after got your associate's?

DK: Yes, I got my license in July and I started in August. So, I worked in private practice for a few weeks before I even went to IUPUI. And then, while I was a student there, I also worked as a hygienist in Indianapolis. So, that helped.

AM: Busy.

DK: Yeah, so I went to school three days, but I worked three days too.

AM: Could you tell me about an event, either something that was happening in the IU system or globally, when you were taking classes?

DK: At IUN?

AM: Or any. Any IU.

DK: Any IU. Probably I remember that I had to take my national boards on the day that the IU boys' basketball won the NCAA championship. And everyone said, "Well, you know if they win, it's good luck because everyone will pass through national board." And everyone in my class passed that year too. So, we had a 100 percent pass rate, but—

AM: —Is that very unlikely? Probably, yeah—

DK: —Well, no. We've actually had like five years consecutively where we've had a 100 percent pass rate here. So, we have a good track record, but as a student too because the national rate is 10 percent that doesn't pass on their first try. Doesn't mean on the second attempt, they won't pass. So, that was kind of exciting.

I just remember after we take that eight-hour stressful exam that we were watching Bobby Knight—I know, I shouldn't probably say. But that's when they won. And Steve Alford was big back then and stuff. So, that was kind of what we used to do. Follow basketball.

AM: Yeah, a little good luck charm. You need that extra. Do you have any special memories of a chancellor?

DK: Of a chancellor? It would be here at IU Northwest . . . I'm trying to think.

AM: It was Peggy Elliot?

DK: There it is. That's it. It was Peggy Elliot. Yes. I just remember just she was soft spoken, very sweet, very outgoing. And I just remember meeting her at several events. And she's very nice. Very sweet.

AM: Do you remember her being involved with student activities or things on campus?

DK: I think there were some probably alumni type things or events that she was attending that she was always very outgoing with, and made you feel warm. She welcomed everyone. So, that was nice.

AM: And what do you remember about the city of Gary? And, I guess, how have you seen it change since you first started?

DK: Well, I think there's been a lot more involvement. IU Northwest has been out in the community a lot. They're more engaged with the community, I think, than when I was a student. Very welcoming to members of the community. And obviously, with our dental clinic, we see a lot of members of the community as well.

And our students will go to different schools, and they'll . . . visit them to do oral hygiene instructions or that type of thing. So, we try to stay involved with the community. But the transition, I think it's gotten a lot better. I think the campus is prettier. The landscaping is so much nicer than when I went as a student. So, it's grown a lot in the last couple decades.

AM: And this new building. I'm excited to see that too.

DK: Yes, it's always nice to have a new building on campus. And now that it's at the corner, it's more welcoming along Broadway. You can see Marram, and Hawthorn Hall, and the new Arts & Science[s] Building.

AM: Are there special friendships you remember?

DK: Again, mine would have to be through hygiene. Through the close-knit group that we had of 13. So, yeah, we had a good group and we had a lot of reunions that we would do 5-10 years after.

It has actually been a while, now that you bring it up. Yeah, we would get together and find out what was going on with our families. And everyone got married, and had children, and what not.

AM: Yeah, because you guys—it was just 13 of you, so it was like you got to know each other personally. And you kind of already mentioned this, I guess, but what would you say is a big difference in the buildings on campus then to now?

DK: I just—I think they're decorated well. I mean, the inside is a lot better than it used to be. I mean, just registration online, whereas in my day, we stood in a long line in a hall. That's just the way they did it manually, obviously. So, it's a lot easier now.

So, you may not see as many students on off peak times, but there's a lot of classes I think that are online now, which I think better accommodates the students with their family or work responsibilities. So, that's part of it too . . . I think we're more accommodating to the needs of the students than they were 30 years ago.

AM: Did you receive any awards or scholarships?

DK: Prior to getting—I received one from the Portage women's association for getting in . . . I'm just trying to think.

AM: For getting into . . .

DK: Coming to college. Just Indiana University. I got it through high school.

AM: A scholarship?

DK: Right.

AM: Wow, that's awesome.

DK: It's a small one.

AM: Yeah, anything helps though, so . . .

DK: Yeah. You don't realize that it's books. There's a lot of things that you need when you first start out. I'm trying to think. Not as a student. I don't think there was an award.

AM: Or as faculty?

DK: It's in my office. I was part of a scholarship committee for the American Dental Association, so. And I was on that, I think, a few years. And I'd received an award for

kind of helping redevelop this committee. And they give out a lot of scholarships to obviously dental hygiene, dental assistant, dental students. So, I was on the committee.

I kind of gave more of the perspective of the student because . . . I was young at one time. I remember going through that, but also what students currently go through. Some of the members hadn't been in the academic setting in a while, so they had to be familiar with how financial aid works.

AM: That's awesome. You can have your input.

DK: Right. Yeah, so it was nice.

AM: Did you have any internships as a student?

DK: No, our students actually do like externships. So, they actually do—it's kind of like job shadowing. So, when they're in . . . our students are assigned to different offices and they get to actually see what's going on. Our dental assisting students, they actually get to work alongside the dentist. So, that's always nice.

So, they get to really see what they're going to be doing on a day to day basis. So, I did that as a student. And that was great because you got to see all these different offices and how they work. And a lot of times, that kind of help build prospective jobs because they would a lot of times say, "Hey, when you graduate, can you send us a resume?"

So, that kind of helped out as well. So, most of our students, like our dental assisting students, all had positions this year before they even graduated. And we have a waiting list of people looking for dental assistants. So, it's really great right now for them. And we want that to continue, so that's kind of our big drive.

AM: I think that's part of—because they know the reputation of your students. That they're experienced, I guess. That's really cool.

DK: Well, they get a lot of experience here in the dental clinic because as an accredited program, you have to meet minimum requirements. So, our students see—they have to do 65 cleanings just to graduate for the hygiene students.

And the assisting students also have—they have to be out a minimum of 300 hours as their externship. So, they go out and do that. So, each program has minimum requirements they have to meet.

AM: And how did you support yourself as a student?

DK: As a student? Well, I always worked. So . . . when I was in the professional program of dental hygiene, it was five days a week. It was Monday through Friday, 8-5, that we were here. So, it didn't leave a lot of time. Good hours to work.

So, I worked at what was formerly known as Azar's Big Boy in Valparaiso. And they had midnights, so I worked 11-7 on Friday and Saturday nights. So, I had to have Sunday available, so I could get ready for the week . . . laundry, studying, and getting ready for the week again. So, I did that.

And then, usually when the semester ended – because it ended always at the end of April, beginning in May – then I was a substitute teacher in the Portage Township Schools. I kept busy. But that was fun because I always liked teaching, and it kind of gave you that perspective, even though I was a substitute and that's always scary.

Because you always think of the slide projector. Something not working. And I learned that I didn't want to teach little kids because I liked the middle school, high school level, but I did some elementary substitute teaching, and they're needier than I prefer. So, college level's perfect.

AM: How did you balance everything since you were working, and with family and other activities, and school? Did you have to like . . .

DK: I kept telling myself—I learned by working midnights that I never wanted to do that. I knew, long term, I was so happy. I was in a profession because you don't know too many dental offices that are open late, past 8. So, it gave me a sense of “I'm on the right track. I'm doing the right thing.”

And I kept telling myself, “This is going to be over. It's a phase. You have to get through it in order to get your license.” Whatever. I did – my senior year, my last semester – I

did quit working on weekends, so I could focus on studying for my national boards because that's the one I had to take in March. So, I had to make sure.

Because you still have your classes – your full-time classes – but you still had to study for nationals, which covered everything. It wasn't just my dental hygiene curriculum, but also then anatomy and physiology, the microbiology, nutrition. Everything I had prior to getting into the hygiene program. You had to restudy all the chemistry.

You had to restudy that again. So, and it's all worth it at the end because you wanted to pass. You don't have to retake it again because that delays you getting your license. And that was more important to me than the money at the time. So, that only lasted like three months, and then I took the exam. Then, I went back to work.

AM: Nice little break in the meantime.

DK: But once you graduate, that's a unique feeling because then you're like, "What am I going to do in the evenings because I'm not studying?" It's different. So, it's nice to see our graduates. They're always like, "What am I going to do now?" And I go, "Exactly." Find time for yourself more.

AM: Yeah, do something. Did you think the campus was diverse when you first started?

DK: Oh, yeah, it was definitely diverse. And I think it was definitely great for people who needed to balance family and work responsibilities because we're convenient. We're located in a nice area. First, students commute to—they take their classes.

And, again, some may not engage in extracurricular activities or join clubs, but if their goal is to get a certain degree and that's all they can do, we're available for that. And we're also available for people who have more time and like to join clubs, and activities and stuff.

And now, we've got a cross country team, we've got the basketball team. I mean, there's a lot more things going on that didn't happen when I went to school as a student. So, we're seeing a lot of more students kind of—like a student who's going to be in our freshman class for dental hygiene this fall is actually a collegiate sports student as well.

So, this will be our second one that we've had. So, it's kind of nice that they're staying here and they're going to do both. So, she's going to have to learn how to balance her schedule too.

AM: Yeah, that's tough. I guess you do need something that you enjoy. Of course, you enjoy the material, but studying can be tedious. So, it's nice to have something to get your mind off of it. Get some energy out. Help you focus a little bit maybe. Can you tell me about your life and your career after graduation?

DK: Well, I worked in private practice when I graduated. Well, I worked at IUPUI in private practice. And then, I moved back here to northwest Indiana once I graduated and found a full-time position in Hobart. And so, I worked as a full-time hygienist.

And I came here—one of the faculty members was still teaching here and they were looking for someone to teach a specific course. And I've always wanted to teach. I always thought about that because when I was in middle school, they give you that test.

It comes back like what professions you want to be. And mine included a dental hygienist. It included a police officer. It had a social worker, and the fourth one was an educator. So, I kind of feel like my position kind of turned into that because you got to police the students per se. Got to make sure they're ready. I get to teach.

I'm a hygienist, so I can still work in private practice. And a social worker because you have to meet with students, and they all have things that are going on at the same time in their life while they're going to school. So, when I graduated, I did that. I worked full time, and then I was starting to . . . I was going to teach a class.

And then, a faculty member left work to go to the American Dental Association in Chicago and that opened a position. Well, I was already working, starting on my master's degree right away. And they offered me a position here. So, I went from, "Let's try it," one class, to working full time.

So, I kept going to private practice. I worked on Saturdays in private practice. And I stayed with that like 10 or 12 years until I had my daughter. And then, you have to balance life again because you're working full time.

I still enjoy private practice, but it kind of like went aside other than me cleaning family's teeth here in the clinic. So, when you have kids, you feel guilty as a mom when you have to leave and go to work full time.

AM: So, you've been here since?

DK: Yes. Yeah, for a long time.

AM: What would you say is a benefit or a challenge of working at IU Northwest?

DK: A benefit? I think the atmosphere. I think it's a great atmosphere to be in. I like to see the students, their knowledge base, increase while they're here. And they get excited about a profession that they've wanted to do. I think that's nice to see students transition like that. So, I don't really know of any like bad things.

I mean . . . there's not like something that stands out that makes me feel like [sound of frustration]. It used to be parking. Well, they've gotten better at parking, so that's not an issue anymore. No, I don't really see a negative with it. Yeah.

So, there's always stress related with your job, like deadlines and things you have to meet. But I just feel like it's part of the job. I wouldn't—there isn't anything, I think, that stands out. Wants me to find something negative with it, so.

AM: Well, I guess, how would you say your degree from, or degrees, your multiple degrees, influence your career now?

DK: Well, I knew when I got my bachelor's degree, I didn't want it like in general studies. I preferred to have it related to dentistry, so that's why I went to IUPUI. That was why I moved there for a year to get my dental hygiene and public health degree.

And when I decided to go on for my master's degree, I wanted it, again, related, and I went into health administration. So, it's kind of nice because now, as an administrator, I can use that degree. And in public health, our students—I've . . . taken our students to Guatemala. I've gone three times. So, I took over as director in July of 2014.

So, actually, the end of June, I guess, or end June of '14. And I went—I just got back in May of '14 from Guatemala. So, I went with some nursing students that year. So, we've taken our students. I think the first year I went was in like 2011.

Then, I went in '13, or '12 and then '14. So, I'd like to go again. We just finished our accreditation for the school. And so, finally, because students are still asking about that. They want to go back. So, we like doing that. I enjoy that.

AM: What drew you to Guatemala specifically?

DK: Well, another faculty member, a former faculty member, went there with his social work students. And I was told—we were just talking. He came back and—I forget his name, Chris, Chris . . . [whispers] don't tell him that . . . so, he went. He took his social work students.

And we were just talking, and I said – Chris Cotton – and I said, “Chris, if you ever go again, I'd be interested.” He goes, “Absolutely! Because I'm thinking we're going to go again next year.” So, he remembered me. Like nine months later, he said, “Are you still interested?” And I said, “Yes.” So, I went with him and some of our students.

And another faculty member went. And it was great because there is a place called Hearts in Motion and it's in Munster, and they do these kind of these trips. But they have them from all over the country. So, they have dentists, and physicians, different ophthalmologists. They have people donating time. Their services.

So, we went there and provided health screenings, dental health screenings, and like fluoride varnish. So, they were starting a clinic. It didn't finish, of course. I think it's Guatemalan time. But it didn't finish in time, so they were setting up a clinic for us to use. So, that would have been great. We have photos of it that we took.

So, it was a great experience, and I'd like to do that again someday. We just did a veteran's thing probably about 18 months ago. We did it here in our clinic where we had veterans come in along with like the Northwest Dental Society and Northwest Dental Hygienist[s'] Association.

And we all volunteered, and our students volunteered, and we saw veterans come in through our clinic, and then we decided what they needed done. And the students took radiographs on the patients.

And then, if they needed something, if it couldn't be done then, they referred them out to dental offices to do if they were like simple extractions or if they needed their denture partial repaired or something. Then, dentists volunteered to donate their services for these patients. So, we're hoping to do it again next year.

It's a lot of work to put in, but it's a lot of gratification in the end. So, people really enjoy that. So . . . I think we had like 78 patients or 78 veterans that came. And it's just a one-day event. It was six hours. And, like I said, faculty and students, and local hygienists and dentists and assistants donated their time.

AM: I love stories like that. Like going to another country to help them get it organized and everything. It's amazing that you could do that.

DK: Yeah, that was—and again, we work with Hearts in Motion. They kind of organize it. It's kind of nice when someone else does the organizing. We just show up because we know what we're doing, and they just organize where we stay. And we have to do the flights together. So, we fly together, and then we do our work. So, it was—

AM: —How long were your trips?

DK: It's usually about 10 days. So, 10 days each time. The last two days, we usually went to Zacapa, Guatemala. And the last two days, we would actually just . . . it's kind of like R&R. So, we'd have dinners together, and we'd go shopping and stuff. It was kind of like to re-motivate the troops before we sent them home. We'd get them a little excited.

We would go to Antigua, Guatemala. And so . . . it took a while from the airport because . . . Guatemala is their capital. So, we'd fly into Guatemala, and then you take like a 3-and-a-half-hour bumpy bus ride to Zacapa, which it's kind of out there. So, it's a remote area, but obviously they don't have a lot of access to healthcare and stuff.

So, they got to see a lot. It's . . . heartfelt because things that we take for granted, like a floor, running water, refrigeration, a lot of them didn't have any of that. So, it was kind

of humbling in the evening. The first few days, some of the students were kind of emotional because it really is how much they have.

Even our poorest people have a lot more than what they have. So, when we went back the next trip, we took a lot of donations, like clothing and things that we saw. We actually saw even dogs abandoned or really skinny, so some people brought dog food the next time we went to make sure.

So, we didn't do as much as we'd like. You always feel like you could do more, but your time is limited. So, we kind of worked like 8-5, Monday through Friday, and then we left for Antigua. So, it was nice.

AM: I think anything you did too, I'm sure they appreciated it.

DK: Oh, definitely. And they were so grateful . . . they are always so grateful and always dressed up for us in their Sunday best. It was so sweet. They were just so, like you said, so grateful that we came and so happy to see. And we were giving away toothbrushes, and toothpaste, and stuff, and you would've thought we gave them \$1,000 each.

They were so excited. So, and we would do a weekly feed program with Hearts in Motion. And so, we'd help feed—they had it set up where people in the area, the kids would make sure that they got a good meal. And they did that a lot. So, Hearts in Motion does a great job of treating patients, or people in Honduras and Guatemala.

AM: I'm so happy you could go. I hope you can go again. That sounds amazing.

DK: I know. It's not for everyone. I know my husband wouldn't be one to volunteer to go. But it's . . . there's no hot water. It's not like what we're used to. The warmth of the water comes from the heat of the ground because it's hot. But it's just really rewarding.

And I'd like my own kids to go because I think them seeing how other people live and what you can really live without. It was humbling though because when we got there, one of the people, the first thing they asked and said, "Want to be my Facebook friend?" And I'm like, "You have Facebook?"

It was kind of . . . and she's still my Facebook friend, which is kind of sweet that she's—you're thinking they don't have a lot, but you guys have Facebook and you have the internet. So, that's kind of sweet though. But yeah, what we were doing is very beneficial for them. So, yeah, I'd like to go again.

AM: Good for you. That's awesome. My last question is what does IU Northwest mean to you? Or, I guess, Indiana University as a whole?

DK: Well, it obviously—I think it prepares you for your future. And it has the major you want. IU's, obviously, if you prepare yourself, and work hard, and you can basically achieve anything. But the university has opened up a lot of doors for me.

And I would definitely recommend people go to Indiana University. If they have your major then, obviously, it's a great place to start. And especially IU Northwest. It's right here. It's close to your home. You don't have to move away.

I mean, I know some students want to, but financially, some people can't afford that. And it's very cost effective to stay at home like I did when I went through dental hygiene, and work part time if you can. And then, you could be debt free or maybe not owe as much money when you get out, so.