Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

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Interviewer: Thuy Vo Dang
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TVD: This is Thuy Vo Dang with the Vietnamese American Oral History Project at UC Irvine. Today is Monday, August 13th, 2012 and I will be interviewing Mr. Jack Toan in his office in Irvine, California.

TVD: Can you first introduce yourself, maybe state your full name and date of birth?
JT: My name is Jack Toan; date of birth is February 1st, 1970
TVD: And where were you born?
JT: I was born in Hanoi Vietnam in 1970.
TVD: You were born in Hanoi, did you grow up there?
JT: Up until I was nine I pretty much grew up there. That’s where my family, my grandfather settled there and had their business and where my family lived. I think that’s where my parents were both born there as well. So went to school there and grew up there. My family is Chinese so my grandfather settled there a while back.
TVD: So do you have any memories of Hanoi in those early years?
JT: You know I was sick quite a bit as a kid because I had a bone disease so we would drive, ride the bike really, not bike, scooter, to go back and forth from the hospital. So you know it’s one of the memories that sticks out the most…we would always pass the tomb of Ho Chi Minh there, so that was something that kind of stuck in my mind. It didn’t have that much significance other than the fact that he was entombed there, but we would drive by that area a lot. But most of my childhood memories just as kids is just running down the street, some vague memories playing with other kids there, playing soccer with my younger brother. My uncles were into the Beatles so they had the band thing going. So it was just fond childhood memories.
TVD: Your uncles were into the Beatles?
JT: Apparently…[laughs]

TVD: Can you also talk a little bit about your parents and their occupations and names?

JT: My dad was a machinist and he used to take me to his work occasionally, but my dad’s name is Quan Uy Toan. And my mom is Vy Thuy Ngo. And they’re both ethnic Chinese. My mom still has family in China, so you know our last name is Toan. It’s a little strange because everybody always asks me where did you get that name? And in Vietnamese they would call me Toan because they think that’s my first name, but after I kind of explained it the Vietnamese translation of our Chinese name and they were like “oh ok.”

TVD: Was the Chinese last name originally “Tong”?

JT: Ah no it’s um; well I’m not sure. It’s “siu” It means “all” like Toan so they translate the literal meaning of it.

TVD: That’s neat! What did your mom do?

JT: My mom, as I recall, she used to work in a plastic press factory and she made like plastic tangerines. So I can still remember the machinery they were using for this wheel and it would press the plastic into a tangerine. So that’s what she did there. But my dad was a machinist and he still is a machinist after coming here so he had a trade that was a skill that was translatable.

TVD: If you could characterize the class status of your family in Vietnam, how would you describe it?

JT: From what I understand from talking to my parents, my family was in the upper middle class I guess, more closer to upper class. My grandfather was educated and he was a businessman, so he did really well. And my mom talked about a time where they exited out of China in a certain period in time and she understood that they were carrying tons of jewelry and gold and things like that. So apparently we came from a fairly wealthy background, but when the communist took over, everything was gone. So when my dad’s generation, he was essentially a labor worker having to support the family because my grandfather had passed away. So I guess we were still in the middle class, but after the communists, we kind of just blended in with everyone else.

TVD: So the generation that migrated from China, was that your grandfather’s generation?
JT: Yeah, that was my grandfather’s generation.
TVD: Do you happen to know the reason why they came down to Vietnam?
JT: I understood it was from some war, but I’m not sure of the exact details. I never asked and my parents didn’t really know the whole story behind it. When I asked, so it was just some war they were trying to run from.
TVD: Do you have siblings in your family?
JT: I do, or I did. I had a younger brother, two years younger than me. He passed away when he was seventeen. So I am the only child now.
TVD: So it was just the two of you guys? Was he born in Vietnam too?
JT: Yup we were both born in Vietnam. He was born in '72.
TVD: What was his name?
JT: Tru Toan. He adopted an American name, “Joe” so Joe Tru Dang Toan.
TVD: I’ll ask a little bit more about him later, but why did your family move away from Hanoi?
JT: We escaped after the Vietnam War; there was a period of time where the Chinese and Vietnamese did not agree. So there was a persecution and when I spoke to my parents about it and I did a little bit of research to understand exactly what they were talking about. There was an apparent policy persecution even though they weren’t saying you guys need to leave they made it really hard for Chinese to stay in the country, but they weren’t open about it. It wasn’t like okay, buy your plane ticket and get out of here kind of thing. We escaped by boat in the middle of the night. I remember that night my parents woke me up in the middle of the night and we left. I didn’t know where we were going but I just knew we were just leaving in the middle of the night.
TVD: I hardly ever hear about that particular story because most folks will do the migration down south and leave.
JT: There wasn’t a migration so we actually left from North Vietnam.
TVD: So do you remember anything bout that experience?
JT: As a kid it was more of an adventure. My parents tried to protect us from the hardship of it. But I remember I kind of enjoyed the boat ride. Maybe it’s a memory block, but I don’t remember most of the trauma. But I kind of recounted, hearing my parents recount it, it was a tough time for my brother and my mom was constantly seasick on the boat, so
they weren’t doing so well and everyone was underneath kind of bunkered away underneath the boat and it was very cramped. But I was always up on top enjoying the sailing part of it. There was a period in time where one situation where I guess everyone freaked out quite a bit when part of the boat got damaged and the boat almost sank. But we were able to dock and get it fixed but while we were docked on an island and I'm not sure where exactly it was but I remember laying in the stars and kind of hearing my dad talking about the dreams that we were headed to in America and we were trying to get to a better life and I just remember very clearly laying there looking at the stars on the island my dad was saying you know when you’re older you’re going to go to college and get an engineering degree and you’re going be an engineer or a doctor and something like that. At 9 years old I was having this drilled in my head and this dream of his already of freedom and opportunity.

TVD: So did you have any thoughts of America at that age?

JT: This is probably going to sound kind of bad but because I was from North Vietnam, I was old enough to have gone through the war at a very young age and my parents used to say that as soon as I hear an airplane I’d be the first one to hide underneath the stairs because the fear of bombing and things like that. It never got that far, but there was that tension. But I remember as a kid I used to draw with chalk on the floor. And I would draw US planes flying by and tanks shooting. So it was bad, in the context of where I am now and growing up in North Vietnam.

TVD: In school did you learn a particular history about Vietnam?

JT: I was still pretty young. I was going to Vietnamese and Chinese school. I was actually going to a Chinese school that was private. My parents had a connection with the principal so he allowed my brother and I to go to there. I don’t remember necessarily indoctrinated with anything, I think it was just the by-product of just sort of living in the North with the war going on.

TVD: So since you went to a Chinese school did you learn Chinese mostly?

JT: Yeah, as a child I spoke Vietnamese and Chinese fluently and before we left Vietnam, my Vietnamese was proficient to the point where I was reading the newspaper, but in my Chinese, I got to the point of writing basic Chinese characters. Aside from
being able to speak from a child’s perspective, I never developed a proficiency. Like right now I couldn’t do business in Chinese, but I could have a conversation.

TVD: Did your family come from a religious background?

JT: I don’t recall any kind of religious practice, but I think whatever cultural practice we did, we did the ancestral worship and I think there was some Buddhist influence. But I never saw it practiced openly.

TVD: There wasn’t a frequent …visiting temple?

JT: No, it was more of ancestral type of worship

TVD: So you said that your family’s departure from Vietnam was by boat, did you know how long the journey was and where you ended up?

JT: It was sixty days out at sea and we were, I remember eating a lot of sweet potato. It’s still a favorite food of mine for some reason, but we ate a lot of sweet potato. So we were at sea for sixty days and ended up in Hong Kong.

TVD: Was that the target destination?

JT: I believe so because we had family there. So that was where my parents wanted to get to.

TVD: Do you remember how large the group was that you went with?

JT: Actually you know what? I have some articles that are kind of interesting because I also interviewed my parents way back. Yeah, it was according to my parents, seventy people in the boat. And the house was owned by the communist government because they took everything we had from what my parents told me but they sold everything else and we still had family there and it was fifteen hundred dollars according to this article they did when we first came.

TVD: Fifteen hundred dollars?

JT: Fifteen hundred dollars for the boat trip.

TVD: Wow that was a lot at that time. So this is your father’s article? Being interviewed?

JT: Yeah it was a little community paper where we were at in South Carolina. I actually have a bunch of copies of those. I haven’t had the chance to look through them but they seem pretty interesting.

TVD: So, you ended up in Hong Kong with your family of four. Or did you go with extended family?
JT: No, it was just my family of four, just my immediate family. A lot of the family members that are here now in Orange County, that we reconnected with, at the time were still in Vietnam. So half of my immediate family, we were the first half to leave.

TVD: Do you know where you arrived in Hong Kong? The refugee camp?

JT: There was a camp, but I don’t remember the name of the camp. But I think it was one of the bigger ones but I’m not sure which one it was

TVD: And how long did you stay there?

JT: We ended up in Hong Kong for six months. I remember my dad working so we were there long enough for him to work a little bit.

TVD: Do you have any memories of the time spent there?

JT: Yeah, again it’s really the childhood memories. I couldn’t recount any of the trauma that happened unless I blocked it out somehow. But childhood memories of running around and as a kid not having anything to do. Getting in trouble, stealing stuff just to have as toys and stuff like that. I remember, I…getting hurt one time. That was a big ordeal, the ambulance came in to the camp and I was exiting the camp, so there was a lot of activities going on to just get me out to the hospital because I had to go get stitches and things like that. And my parents couldn’t leave and I was this nine year old and basically stuck in an ambulance. I was freaking about because I didn’t know what was going on. I was afraid I was being taken away and never seeing my parents again. But it was there where my aunt arrived soon after because I remember my younger cousin ended up in refugee camp playing together. So that was one point we reconnected with one of our family members. So it was interesting and that’s where I developed a fear of dog because they had Dobermans that were guarding. And they also had Indian guards as well. Those were kind of the things that stood out to me that I remember from the camps. But no real trauma type of experience but just a nine year old running around playing and finding things to do. I remember my dad cutting down a broom handle into little chess pieces, you know Chinese chess? So that’s how I learned to play chess. And at one point they actually started taking kids to school. And they were teaching English. I remember sitting at the refugee camp in Hong Kong learning basic English like car, apple, yes, and no.

TVD: Did your family always know that they always wanted to go to the United States instead of other countries.
JT: I think that was the ultimate goal, but my dad when we were in the refugee camp he applied for asylum. So I think what he said when I asked him a long time ago was he was trying to apply to Hong Kong, France, and I think to England and the United States. And we ended up here.

TVD: So how did you get to the United States? What was that process? Do you know much about that?

JT: Apparently we applied and Church World Services was involved in resettling all of these refugees. And I recently got reconnected with the pastor of the small church in South Carolina sponsored my family over. He’s eighty something years old now and he was trying to recount some of his memories, but he was able to give me a perspective on the American side while this was happening. So he said he saw a news clip or an article that was on the plight of these refugees and he felt compelled to do something and so he went to his small congregation in his little small town of three to four thousand people and in the middle of South Carolina and said this is something we need to do. And he said everyone voted to do it except for two people and they came back to him later and said “you know what we were wrong and we want to help a family”. He specifically said they were looking for a Chinese family of four and he was very specific. And he said why a Chinese family? And he said “I’m interested in a Chinese family, the Chinese family work very hard”. So that was a interesting response. It was a very specific request to the Church World Service. We didn’t know this at the time. My parents got the news that we got sponsored and we were going to Texas. So we were actually on our way to Texas and apparently the family that originally to go to South Carolina, something fell through. What happened was the sponsor in Texas changed their minds and we ended up getting stuck in limbo and the South Carolina Church Congregation received word from Church World Services said “Hey we got this family you were looking for and they were supposed to go to Texas, but the folks over in Texas changed their minds. And they said yeah we’ll take them” So that’s how we ended up. We landed in San Francisco we were getting ready to go to Texas, so we got re-routed to South Carolina.

TVD: So at this time you were almost ten?

JT: So it was September, no I must have been eight. My birthday is on February 1st. So we came in seventy-seven so yeah I was ten.
TVD: Do you remember South Carolina?

JT: I do, I actually I remember South Carolina more than Vietnam. I have a feeling that there are probably enough activities and traumas going on where it blocked a lot of memories out. But when we arrived in South Carolina it was different because we were in a house right next to a church. Usually the church is where the pastor would live in and so the pastor had his own house so it was an empty house so the church put us in that home. There were no immediate neighbors and the back of our house was the wood. So if you open the back windows at now you would see the deep dark forest. It was scary and it was interesting time because none of us spoke English. “yes, apple, no, car” were the words that I knew and if anyone would talk to me, it was all gibberish and I would say “yes” or “no”. For the longest time I did that. And you get puzzled looks and you had no idea what they were talking about. So we had people take us to school and talk to us while we were in the car and I had no idea what was going on. It was just kind of like a fish out of water you know?

JT: So it was quite interesting, lots of memories and that’s what kind of probably kind of what probably developed a lot of my principles in life and a lot of things I learned from that age on.

TVD: Did your family have to convert or rebaptize or anything like that before coming over?

JT: Yeah we did. So they sponsored us, they didn’t force us to do anything, but my parents attended church out of respect every Sunday. The kids, my brother and I would go to bible study and we would go to Sunday School. Bible study on Wednesday and church service. My life grew up around the church. Even though my parents attended and participated and everything, it was something they were not necessarily bought into. And years later when I was a teenager, I think in middle school, the pastor, a different pastor at this point said “Hey the kids are older at this point and we would like to baptize the kids and we would like to ask your permission to do that” and my parents said “no”. And the way and the terms that my parents used, talking to my brother and I wanted to get baptized because that’s what we grew up with.

JT: But essentially for them, my parents they were thinking if you get baptized you join this cult or a monastery life. You could tell and I’m still not clear on what their
perspective was on the Christian religion, but you know all of our friends were from the church and all of our sponsors. But that religious thing they never crossed that barrier. They didn’t allow my brother and I either

TVD: What was the name of the church?

JT: It was the Bethel Presbyterian Church. And my dad even out of gratefulness of the church and one of the elders there, he was very involved in supporting my family and helping us along. I remember every Thursday he would use to drive me and pick me up from art classes and drive me home. So I had someone driving me to art class. So this was rural South Carolina, it's not a couple of blocks. It’s a long drive. And so he would take us to art class after school and he would pick us up from art class. He would pick me up from art class, take me home and my parents would have Chinese and Vietnamese food. A big spread and they would have him sit and every Thursday was like a big meal celebration. Just having guests over, you know how it is with Asians . His name was Joe Macalaster. At the time people had trouble remembering our Vietnamese name. So our parents decided that we should have English names, making it easier on everybody too. So he was named after the Joe Macalaster. And I was named after Jack Stevenson, a pastor that initiated this whole thing with the church.

TVD: Oh wow so your American names came from the Church?

JT: Yeah, so…

TVD: So did your parents go through formal naturalization with the name change? Or did they just go ahead and change their names?

JT: My parents went through the naturalization process. So we got our green cards. And for some reason they never finished their citizenship portion of it until years later and that was after my brother passed away. It wasn’t like they didn’t want to do that, there were just circumstances that happened that we had to go to Atlanta, three hours away. We actually didn’t get our citizenship until we moved California.

TVD: So when they did it you were already over eighteen?

JT: I was over eighteen, I had to apply. Yeah it wasn’t the automatic qualification. I had to go through the process. And I think they were trying to meet that deadline having moving across country and having other issues, they never managed to do it until later.

TVD: How long did live in South Carolina.
JT: We got there in September 28th 1979; we left in the summer of 1987. We moved around in July. It was interesting because my parents would always talk about moving. We lived there for so long and no one would come and visit us. We were in such a rural area and access to things that my parents were used to wasn’t easy and so at this time a lot of families had come over and resettled in Orange County. And some in Sacramento and San Francisco. Everyone was in California. So my parents decided that we needed to move. We hadn’t been reunited with my aunts and uncles in a while. So it was kind of strange, because they couldn’t speak directly to the people at church for some reason “hey we’re moving” because they felt indebted to these people that had surrounded us and given us support. And so my mom and my brother and I were taking a “vacation” to California. And so we were in California and my mom decided that we wanted to stay here. And so we ended up staying here. So my dad was back in South Carolina, sold everything and gave whatever away and he and another guy who was a GI who was married to a Vietnamese woman. She was acting as our translator.

TVD: Were there other Asians?

There were two other women who were Vietnamese who was married to American GI’s.

TVD: Oh okay that was in terms of the Vietnamese population?

JT: Yeah, there was one Amerasian that was born in the US, she doesn’t really have any Vietnamese ties other than her mom and the other lady that was married to the GI had a daughter that basically grew up in the South Carolina and so that wasn’t really connected to her Vietnamese heritage and the stepson was half Thai from the Gi’s previous marriage. Because their father was an American so all of their last names were American last names so they sort of just American kids.

TVD: Yeah and demographically it doesn’t show.

JT: Yeah it doesn’t, and they could pass. They just looked a little different but my brother and I stuck out like a sore thumb.

TVD: So what was the experience like being like the two Asian kids around town?

JT: Growing up was really difficult for me. My brother was younger so it was a little bit easier for him. I think he had the same similar problems. Fitting in was hard even though people were very interested in our culture and background it was you know people were nice they were very interested especially the adults who understood the context of it.
They were very interested in our culture and what we do things and what we wear and those type of things. With kids it’s a little bit different. You know I got called a wetback when I was in school there at the time I was like what’s a wetback? But I personally never fit in one because growing up in Southern California because you see so many different people and ethnicities. There, my brother and I were the only Vietnamese-Chinese kids that were around and our hair was different. I had that bold haircut that my dad had given us at home because we don’t go to a barber. And I think as kids, the way we dress, immigrant, got all the hand me downs and of course we were in South Carolina so we were wearing cowboy shorts and boots and stuff so it was just Asian cowboys. It just made it look even weirder. And whenever we played cowboys and Indian I was always the Indian.

TVD: How about language?

JT: I learned English pretty quickly; I was pretty resilient in that way. We both started in first grade together, I was nine and he was seven and we both started in first grade. And even though we were trying to fit in we knew we were different so there was also that piece that was kind of holding us back. I’m not saying all the kids were mean it was just more of a personal issue. You know I’m different I could never fit in I don’t have blue eyes and blonde hair like everyone else. And what made it worse was when my dad never let me play football or the American sports because academics were more important and that takes away from academics. And as I mentioned when I was growing up I had a bone disease and so he didn’t want me to get from that so I never played any of the American sports growing up. SO I never had that chance, living in a rural area to really mingle with a lot of people. So that made us even more isolated.

JT: We were both in the top of our class, straight A’s all the time and so in the eighties we were into the revenge of the nerds image stereotype Asian Americans are straight a students, very academically focused, good at chess, but not necessarily good at athletics even though I was quite athletic. So I felt growing up there that I always had something to prove.

TVD: The thing about that time too in the eighties was when all of it the US world news report and Time magazine had features of Asians as the new academic model minorities.
JT: And of course everybody expected me to be Bruce Lee like and know karate and kung fu and all of that stuff, even though it was an interest not every Asian knows kung fu right? Because that’s when the ninja stuff got big and it was just growing up with a lot of stereotypes. But you know on the other hand there was a lot of really nice people too it was just the sign of the time. One interesting thing that pastor Stevenson recently recounted to me which I didn’t know was when they decided to sponsored families they informed the community around us, around the church.

TVD: So there was some educating going on.

JT: Yeah because they knew that there would be problems. There was actually a group that didn’t want us there. So what he said was, it was last month, he said I don’t think you guys knew this but the congregation took turns patrolling your house in the neighborhood when you guys first came because it was an isolated home so they were patrolling to make sure that we didn’t have any problems from racist groups that were there. That actually helped me understand why my parents, because when I was younger my parents would always tell me if anyone asks you what you are, tell them you’re Chinese. And so they almost tried to focus more on our Chinese heritage instead of our Vietnamese. So they spoke more to me in Chinese at home instead of Vietnamese. So my Vietnamese got really bad, even though it was better than my Chinese. Now after all of these years I finally know why it was because of all of the animosity towards Vietnamese-Americans probably because of the war. Because you know we’re from the south so there were a lot of military guys that came down there as well.

TVD: Well talk about ignorance being bliss. Not knowing that that was the claim and not knowing folks were patrolling your home.

JT: Yeah, ignorance is bliss. As a child you grow up not wanting to know these things.

TVD: So your family lived there for about eight years then your family moved to California. Which part of California?

JT: Garden Grove. Right in the middle.

TVD: As Vietnamese as it gets right.

JT: We had taken a vacation here prior in eighty-four. At the time my dad’s cousins lived in Santa Ana right by Santa Ana college. And so I had a taste of Southern California. I knew there was the little Saigon area. There were signs in Vietnamese and Chinese. So
for me, sometimes kids have trouble moving, but I think in terms of what I already mentioned to you about not feeling like I could fit in, fully fit in and also being placed in a stereotype with that. Well if I move to California it wouldn’t be so bad because I can change my stereotype now because no one knew my past and there were other people like me. That was a big shift for me in my growth and growing up in terms of growing up and moving from one side of the country to the other. And finally feeling like hey I kind of fit in a little bit.

TVD: You were in high school already?

JT: Yeah I was already in high school, going into my junior year. We moved here in the summer time and then enrolled in school. Even though we were just “vacationing”

TVD: What high school did you go to?

JT: Bolsa Grande. A lot of Vietnamese and at the time my cousin said no “we need to enroll you in La Quinta high school” for some reason. And we went there and they said you’re in the wrong area, you have to go to Bolsa, and so that’s how I ended up in Bolsa. It was really strange because when we went to school, all of these Asian faces and it was not something I was used to. But I felt more comfortable still even though I wasn’t used to it. So it was an interesting move, having access to food that we’d normally get once in a while because my parents would have to drive to Atlanta Georgia to pick up Chinese products to make food and all at home. So my mom and dad’s pastime was cooking in South Carolina. Because that’s the only way we would get our traditional Chinese food or Vietnamese food. So Ban Cuon is something my mom is really good at now so making that. She used to make Pho and all that stuff too. She finally came out here and she stopped cooking all of that stuff because it was such easy access. But ban cuon is something she still does.

TVD: So where did they move to? Did they find a home did they buy a home? What was their occupation?

JT:

JT: Yeah we stayed with my uncle, my dad’s younger brother was here. He was living the traditional Vietnamese thing where there was a bunch of people living in the same house. So it was my uncle, my dad’s three or four cousins, my great aunt and my aunt all living in this home in Santa Ana. And so we stayed there for a little while and everyone just
crashed all over the place and my uncle and my mom got an apartment. A three bedroom apartment so my uncle his own room, my mom had a room and my brother and I shared a room. So we stayed there for a little while until my dad made his way out here a few months later. So when he moved out here my uncle moved out and found his own place. So it was just my family in the apartments. So we were in the apartments in Garden Grove right by the Brookhurst and Westminster. So right around that area, right in the middle of everything. So I remember the other places and all of the changes that went on in the Little Saigon community. A lot more American companies and business in there and eventually just got kind of pushed out and the community changed quite a bit. And then eventually my dad saved up a lot of money. He was coming to America; he started in South Carolina in the construction job. One of the congregation members in the church had a construction company. So he had worked for them and I just got this little bit of the story, he worked so hard that he kind of pissed off all of the other employees because he wouldn’t take breaks. So he kept working through breaks. So anyways he transitioned into being able to find a machinist job for him when he was able to pick up enough English. And so he was able to keep his trade from Vietnam all the way to the U.S. so moving out here and finding a machinist job, he was able to save up. You know a machinist, even though he wasn’t a good English speaker, living in South Carolina helped him develop his English skill. So he’s very good at understanding English and making decent money as a machinist and so he saved up and bought a house in Westminster, so just a few streets down from our apartment. So we settled in a house there and lived there all the way until about seven years ago and then that’s when I moved everyone to Irvine.

TVD: So in high school in Orange County what was that like? Who were your friends and what did you do for leisure?

JT: So there was a different exposure. There was a different change and shift in not being stereotyped in this pre-past hole that I got pegged into, so I convinced my parents before the Monday that I came out, I convinced my mom to let me play tennis. So I picked up tennis over the summer and I ended up joining the tennis team. The only reason for that was because my brother and I grew up playing soccer, but in South Carolina there wasn’t really a soccer venue to play soccer. Before we left the coach recruited us to play soccer,
because my bone issue in my leg my dad wouldn’t let me play. Football had to much contact. But I was able to convince tennis had no contact, kind of like ping pong right? Except you’re on the court and you just play for yourself. So there was no physical contact, which they were concerned about. And I was finally able to get into sports for my junior year and senior year and then it was a lot different. It was much more social because I wasn’t social in South Carolina and when it was social I was going to my friend’s house or people were kind of already outcasted, that wasn’t with football. Football is huge there. If you’re not lettered in football or anyone that played major sports, you were kind of on the outskirts. But here it didn’t have that feel and so I just wanted to make friends with everybody. I grew up socially different, it was really interesting. But it was kind of interesting because I had a southern accent when I came out here, so imagine this Vietnamese guy with a major southern accent and so it was different—ish exactly and a different issue when I came out here so now I can be more social, hanging out with girls and this and that. And so then I got made fun of my accent. You know? Normally Americans would make fun of your Vietnamese accent, now I got people making fun of my Southern accent right? So it was interesting and also because I was very American. People couldn’t figure out if I was Amerasian, if I looked fully Vietnamese either and I don’t look fully Chinese. And they thought I was Filipino and it was plus and minus. I kind of lost a sense of identity. But eventually because of the large Vietnamese population out here I kind of recaptured some of the Vietnamese side of me. So Vietnamese, I was starting to hear it more often and getting used to it. One of my early friends when I went to Bolsa high school, his name was Daniel he was in my class and he had just transferred in the school too and he went elementary school with a lot of people over there so he knew a lot of people there, but he and I connected and so we kind of grew up in high school together. Among many other people, it was different. Socially different. I was participating in sports, my academics dropped a little bit, but you know at that time there was another transfer from Texas, with some of the same model minority. And her GPA was like out of the roof. But I ended up graduating second in my class, so I wasn’t number one.

TVD: Not too bad!

JT: But I was number two.
TVD: So you mentioned you know meeting girls, did you date in high school, was that okay to your family?
JT: Ah, not till later. And girls I did date were blonder. So it was what was familiar to me.
TVD: So you dated in college?
JT: No I dated my senior year in high school
TVD: And were your parents okay with that?
JT: Yeah because I think they were used to being in South Carolina. Even though they’re very traditional people I think they understood the American way. Because I grew up basically American in South Carolina until I came out here in high school and so I think they knew that. And I wasn’t the type that you couldn’t say no, and so I always listened, so they didn’t have any problems and I went to prom with her and they took pictures and all that stuff, so it wasn’t a big deal to them. They never had a problem with me dating outside our culture.
TVD: In that time you moved to orange county in the late eighties and early nineties in orange county the way a lot of folks characterized the Vietnamese that it become a complicated place, you know violence gangs and there, at least that was how the youth remember it. Was there a time where you recalled some of that?
JT: yeah that’s how I remember it as well. My first experience in the summer before school started and here was my brother and I went to the playground by one of the elementary schools that was close to where we were living, we were playing and a lot of Vietnamese kids running around. One kid just walked up to another kid, yanked his gold chain off his neck and just walked away. And the other kid couldn’t do anything about it. It was very aggressive it was like wow. Normally where I came from that would’ve been a big fight and I couldn’t figure out why, nobody did anything? And so we lived here long there was a lot of gangs and a lot of kids that were lost with their nothing to lose attitudes decided to join gangs and they roll with the bad crowd. Even though you weren’t in a gang you would probably want to have friends who can protect you and kind of avoid some of those things. So growing up here we ended up hanging out with people who were just you know when you go to party and things you tend to run into people that are gang bangers and stuff so we saw a lot of it. It’s a lot different now they cleaned it up
pretty good. I used to know the street gangs Natoma Boyz and this and that it was so ridiculous at the time. And I remember at that age when we were driving around you don’t look out your window and stare at the other guy in the car because you would get shot at.

TVD: Street etiquette

JT: Yeah I mean it was kind of that bad. And actually right after high school I went back to Bolsa as a tennis coach. I was coaching the girls tennis team at the time and some kids came into the tennis courts and was bothering one of the girls and I was like what eighteen or nineteen at the times and I was like “hey guys you know were having a tennis practice here and I need to ask you guys to leave” and then one of the guys started getting belligerent and all of a sudden it became this guy disrespected us so they came back with all the gang looking for me. And it almost turned into a big huge fight over there and somebody went to get the other coaches and the whole football team came out. It was just – that’s just the way it was.

TVD: So after you graduated high school where did you go?

JT: After high school it was interesting because my brother was still around then so in my mind there was a lot of pressure from my parents to you know be successful and all of that and I grew up a little bit to be a rebel at this point and you know I wanted to find my own way and I still had the American mentality of finding my own way. My brother was already “I'm going to Berkeley” I'm going to study business”, so he was already planned out. So I’m thinking “okay well he knows what he was doing, he’ll take care of my parents so was going to join the marines and try to see the world and go on an adventure before I went to college. And I told I told my parents that because also, Joe Mccalaster the close family friend he was a navy guy. And he used to say “hey have you ever thought about joining the services?” Growing up in the south there were a lot of military people and there was a college the Citadel where they had summer programs, so the military was a huge presence there at the time.

JT: So I wanted to find adventure, so one of the things I remember Joe Mccalaster saying to was you know what JFK said “It’s not about what your country can do for you, its what you can do for your country.” And so that always stuck with me from my youth and so I wanted to join the marines and I talked to my parents about it and got this huge guilt
trip, you know we escaped from this situation and why would you want to go back in and this and that. And I finally relented and I said “okay” and the only place I could apply to at the time in order to meet the deadline was Cal State Fullerton. It was just one last thing I applied. My GPA was good and my SAT's were good so I knew I didn’t have a problem getting into college. I went there for a year and a half, three semesters. During that period of time, my brother was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in three months. So it was very sudden and everything changed. So when I went to Cal State Fullerton at the time, Daniel was going to UC Irvine. So I was still hanging out with him anyways and a lot of friends still ended up in UC Irvine as well. I was still hanging out with him and I said “I need to change” because I was going to Cal State Fullerton and I wasn’t making any friends. I knew one guy that I hung out with there and that was it. And I wasn’t really engaged in anything. I was depressed after my brother passed away and being in that environment made it worse. I think I made my parents really happy because for them, a UC is better than a Cal State right? So I transferred to UC Irvine and I ended up graduating from there with a biology degree because you know my parents took the opportunity and my brother passing away is to connect with the physician that helped him as an importance for him at the time, maybe I could be a doctor and do something about this. So I studied biology, but his death affected me tremendously it was another huge transition, this time it was a huge mental transition. Do you do the traditional Asian thing and work and make money and have a nice house or just be a doctor. And my heart wasn’t into school anymore and without joining the military of did my soul searching. My grades dropped pretty badly and it wasn’t a priority for me. My priority at the time was having adventures, doing things that were fun, and being social, hanging out with friends. So I spent college the way it should’ve been spent which was enjoying my life. Because I came to that realization later in life my focus on academics wasn’t there anymore. I still took the MCATS and applied for med school and all of that. It was just that attitude of medicine or nothing. Instead of having a backup or something most people would be dentist or pharmacist. I said I’m not going to do either if I’m not going to make it into med school. While I was studying for the MCATs, Daniel and his girlfriend, his wife now, said “hey do you want to go to Hawaii?” and I said “okay” so I went to Hawaii with them and some other people. So I knew I wasn’t really into it, so I went
ahead and went into the motion of applying because I had to answer to my parents saying you know I tried. But deep down inside I knew I was sabotaging myself because I wasn’t doing what I was supposed to do in order to be competitive. And I graduating with a 3.4 so it wasn’t bad, but its not medical school material. So after that I worked at UCI, I worked at the library as a student there and I stayed there because they had a staff job and I worked for a little while. So after I graduated from college they gave me a staff job as the interlibrary loan supervisor so I manage a portion of the inter library loan and they had another position that was hiring and I moved into that management position so I managed what is the study center and the electronic reserves systems, essentially all of the reserve parts of the library, which is apart of the circulations department. So what was in my collection of stuff that was under my care was the critical theory collection and all of the reserve materials that professors put up. So what I learned from that was I had a really good relationship skills because before I came in, they hired someone else in that position before me. They did a good job, but it wasn’t where it was supposed to be and what I did was I came in and I kind of – in my perspective I took it a step forward and a step up, by working in that system and had a really good learning process in the sense that I was really good in working with people. And UCI faculties are sometimes pretty demanding when it comes to research, but I was able to manage those expectations from a service perspective. If there was a complaint I could handle it really well, to the point where the faculty member wasn’t getting upset. So we had an agreement “this is how we’re going to fix it and this is what were doing so” I realized that “hey I was really good at that”, and just talking to people and hanging out. So I said “you know maybe I should be a business guy” because I’ve always had this entrepreneur able bug like I guess most Asians have, they don’t pursue or only a few pursue. So I said “well why don’t I try that out and get my MBA” there’s an MBA program here I mean ill just go to school here since I work here and try it out and see what that’s all about because I think business can be done through relationships right? And that’s something I’m good at and I enjoy the operational part of it because I thought I did a great job of putting the operations into the department and I just finally discovered where one of my strengths lied and so I went to MBA school and graduated from there and at that time the dot coms were big so thinking that I would move into the dot coms and as soon as I graduated that burst because there
was no jobs in dot coms and nobody wanted to touch it anymore and so I put a filler out there and at the time this was going on I had developed a youth program for OCAPICA and then Mary Ann and all the people were there, I had developed the program with another friend of mine from college David Choi and Daniel who helped me with it, so the three of us put it together and pitched it to OCAPICA and they said they liked it and we basically created a martial arts safety awareness/self defense awareness program for kids. And so we were running that for a while, so Armando De La Libertad who was a board member of OCAPICA, he’s now the dell high center executive director, he was on the board of OCAPICA and so through different networks I got connected and he was growing his department at Wells Fargo for a while and it was a right fit so that’s how I came to Wells Fargo. And partly because I think he has in our job in community development, We work with a lot of ethnic groups and he needed someone who could fit well into the Vietnamese community and so in hindsight looking at the weird diverse background I could fit into the Vietnamese community or Chinese community because I could understand and speak sufficient enough to people who felt comfortably with me. And since I like talking to people its worked out very well for me it has been very interesting.

TVD: So what position did you start at in Wells Fargo?

JT: I came in as an assistant in the community development team and so I canvassed it, I have an MBA and I think I was little overqualified for that, but at the time they said they were trying to grow the department and hopefully you stay with us for a year and that will grow into something and something opens up. And so I did it for a year and I left the library because there was no growth opportunity for me and that’s why I went to go get my MBA because I wanted growth opportunity and I wanted to know if I work hard at something that you know you would be rewarded with promotions or whatever. At least there was career path I could chose. I guess my ambition, my avian ambition came out and I did work hard for the first year and I finally said “well what do we have?” and they finally made me a community development officer after that year and that kept going into what my job is now.

TVD: Which is?
JT: Community relations/affairs manager is my title for the community relations department so I managed the charitable giving to the community and my area covers Orange County all the way to San Diego and out to San Bernardino and Riverside county. And so I work with non profit organizations to support their work and making sure that having relationships with key community stake holders, key leaders and the different community leaders that we work with and making sure that our brand is well managed and known for doing all of these great things within the community, so that is essentially what I do now.

TVD: So I’m going to go back a little bit. Since we talked a bit about your work to ask you about your personal life you said that when your brother passed away he was seventeen? & he died of what kind of cancer?

JT: It was testicular cancer. It was metastasized in his chest so we weren’t able to detect it early because that type of cancer is curable if caught early on but it was late and it had covered around his heart and his lungs and they couldn’t operate on it and kimo could along do so much because it was so advanced already. And the only reason we knew about it when new were playing tennis because he complained about chest pain so we finally went and got it checked out. They thought it was pneumonia at first but it turned out to be cancer but it was too far along and so like I said it was very quick and three months later he passed away.

TVD: Wow, that’s one of the really under diagnosed issues within our community.

JT: Cancer?

TVD: Yeah cancer and hepatitis, it has this taboo of the doctor and what not. So during the time that you were finishing up school MBA and working, did you continue to date? Obviously you were very social, so whom did you meet and eventually marry?

JT: I’m trying to remember back, I was doing the very social thing with my college buddies, so finished graduating from college already and I was up in LA with some friends and remember being up in Pasadena and you know wee were at a bar and we were drinking and we were leaving. One of my friends was the designated driver and I was in the back passed out sleeping and next thing I know I woke up and we were at another club. So we went to this club and that was where I met my current wife. So we became friends because we were both in LA at the time meeting each other and we realized that
we only lived a mile away from each other at the time in Costa Mesa because I rented an apartment there with another guy and Daniel so we were roommates for a little while. A very short period of time because what ended up happening was I met my wife at the time and we got to know each other and we were hanging out as friends and soon after that very shortly after that she sold her house and she was going through some issues and wanted to get away and move to Mexico. Why run away from your issue? Deal with it right? I convinced her to stick around and we ended up moving in together. So I was roommates with Daniel he’s one of my best friends and my girl friend at the time and I moved in together we found an apartment in Irvine so that’s where we lived for a while and I took her home to her mom and she’s Mexican and that was interesting because – part of that I dated mostly Caucasian girls and a Thai girl and a Vietnamese girl. But my parents never said anything about of them at least to me and I would image they wouldn’t say anything to me but my wife and my mom got along fine.

TVD: What was her name?

JT: Marybell, So Marybell and my mom got along fine. My dad usually doesn’t have an opinion so that’s fine.

TVD: What did he think about you guys moving in together?

JT: they didn’t really say anything about that either I think they knew I was going to do what I was going to do at this point. I think it affected them as well, they weren’t as open as saying you need to do this and you need to do that. And from that perspective I think it kind of took them off from their blinders and said you know “hey we want him to be happy” and I think that helped even though they wanted me to I wish you should of stayed in the medical path. But when I went to get my MBA they were really happy because it was my masters’ right? And they never pushed me --- With my wife being Mexican, it wasn’t really a problem because my wife tried very hard to connect with my mom because of the language barriers, but it was fine. They never had a problem so I think her parents were fine with me. She had dated a lot of Asians as well and it wasn’t something that was new to them and actually one of her cousins married to a Samoan guy you know? So it wasn’t completely new and I think also their perceptions of Asians were that they’re educated, and have a good job and everything is fine.

TVD: Like an engineer?
JT: Yeah I guess some of the stereotypes actually worked but so I never had any problems with her parents either and then finally some time went by I said you know we’re going to get married and what they said to me was yeah it was about time. I was thirty-two I think? Eleven years

JT: Yeah so we actually celebrated our eleventh anniversary earlier this month so eleven years together married and I actually my daughter was born right before we got married. So she got pregnant before we got married. And I actually told my parents we were going to get married and I actually found out before we were going to get married that she was pregnant so none of these issues were ever a problem. My brother’s passing I think broke a lot of the traditional mentalities of what should be right? And so we got married and we lived in a condo in Tustin and lived there for al little while and the owner decided to sell the condo and so we weren’t ready to buy at the time so we told our parents, who were living in Westminster home that they bought, hey we’re bringing the baby over for you guys to take care of to help us take care of it anyways. You know would you mind if we just moved back in because you know it was a three-bedroom house and my parents were just there by themselves. So if we moved back in and saved some money and buy a house later. SO we ended up moving in my parents house together and so that’s when all the trouble started happening.

JT: I think its already difficult for in laws to live with each other but when there is the cultural difference you know of my mom and my wife. Even though if you look generally at the Asian culture and the Hispanic culture they’re family values are all the same its very important but food is different, things my wife and her eating habits, she doesn’t eat meat a lot of meat. So she doesn’t eat pork and we like pork so it makes it very difficult. The good thing was that she likes nuoc mam. So there were just cultural nuisances and things like that and the inability to communicate at a deep level between my her and my mom made the relationship really difficult and I think when you’re not living together that’s okay because you come over for a visit and you can leave. But when you’re living together, the things that you say you kind of drop your guard a little bit and for me I understand the cultural differences of both sides so I have to play referee. So it was a hard process.

TVD: How long did you and Maryann stay when you moved in?
JT: Well ever since, I don’t remember the year now but we moved in with them when we had my second boy, so he’s nine now. It’s been almost nine years so we had him in our convo. No we had him when we were already moved in. So it was about nine years. After we moved in with my parents. And then from there that was when the market went all crazy and the housing boom started happening and prices kept getting out of reach. Well we need to take care of our debts, save some money and buy a home. And it wasn’t happening because the prices were going up at the time. The guy that owned the condo sold the condo for a hundred and twenty five thousand dollars. So in hindsight it was really affordable right? We didn’t jump at the opportunity. But the house price skyrocketed and so we kind of talked to my parents. You know right now the home values are high and we want work in Irvine. I was wondering if we could move closer to Irvine if we sold this house we can buy a house In Irvine and that would be a good school district for the kids to go to school at because its one of the best in the country. And so I’m kind of like my dad now having to think about the education of my children and things that we don’t think about when we become parents, so we criticize our parents but then we become like our parents.

TVD: And they’re retired by now?

JT: No my dad still works, he works part time and my mom hasn’t worked in a while. And for year she did probably what most Asian families do. She has her specialty the ban cuon she developed over years, being not able to get access to it and she was selling to people out of the house. And she started with friends and friends would refer friends and they would call and order stuff and she would do it out of the house.

TVD: The Vietnamese woman thing ____ has specialty egg rolls and you know she talks about I should sell this!

JT: and her egg rolls are really good. And those are the two things she sells and people would order. At the time my dentist would have a office party and he would order a bunch of stuff. So that’s what she was doing and she made a little extra money doing that and my dad continued to be a machinist and then we moved to and found a house in Irvine and I was still working at Wells Fargo already. And we able to do it but we bought it when it was at it’s peak as well. Despite the fact that my parents were almost paid off in their home the typical saver they own and they paid as much as they can to sell their
home and so they sold their property and move into this because they said well if we’re going to move into together we should get a little bigger place with some space as well and so we have a little more space now and also for the kids. And my wife was pregnant with our third child. And he was born in Irvine. As we moved we had a kid in each different location. And it kind of accommodated for family size and now we have a family of seven together. And you know it was a process, Marybell and my mom still don’t communicate very well.

TVD: And were you expecting

JT: And then now I’m expecting another one, so fourth probably a boy. So our family is growing to be really big and you know we still work on the communication issue. Even I have a trouble with my parents because when I’m able to speak in Chinese, it’s very childlike right and so when you talk about deeper issues to resolve problems its difficult to express and if they don’t speak English well and so it has been an interesting process living together. And after my brother passed away my parents adopted. And when we lived in South Carolina I think out of respect for the church, Daniel was put in the ancestral alter but they put one in after my brother passed away they bought their first house in California they put that in and it was never a problem until recently my wife became “born again” so she grew up Catholic and left that as well on the wayside. And after my brothers passing I kind of left Christianity part out of my life and kind of explored other things. And recently, maybe three years ago we do different experiences of ours. We came back to our Christian religion so now that’s a big contention in our home now. So very interesting mixing of cultures to one home.

TVD: And generations, how do your kids communicate with your parents?

JT: My kids understand Chinese. So my parents don’t speak to them in Chinese, but they would speak Vietnamese to each other. So they would go back between Vietnamese and Chinese to each other. I have the opportunity to understand both but my kids only understand English and Chinese.

TVD: Are they the primary care givers for your kids?

JT: They helped with my kids whenever I was working so my dad is now working part time because of the economy, so he works three days a week and he’s off Mondays and
Friday’s so he is helping out Monday and Friday’s. We try not to burden them because they’re getting a little bit older.

TVD: Do you know why they make the choice to speak to your kids in Chinese?

JT: Probably that was kind of something left over from the maybe when the first time we moved here when they just kind of used to identifying themselves as Chinese ethnicity. And because they already talk to me mostly in Chinese I think it was just easier and natural for them to speak to their kids in Chinese as well. They don’t speak to me in Vietnamese anymore they used to when I was young. One of the reasons my dad would said was he thought that Chinese would be more useful for me. And I guess if I didn’t live in Orange County I would say maybe. But now that I do live here I it would’ve been nice if they would obtain more Vietnamese.

TVD: Does Marybell speak Spanish?

JT: She’s fluent in Spanish

TVD: Does she teach the other kids Spanish?

JT: She attempts to but I think they identify themselves when they were young as we’re American and we don’t speak Spanish. And I tried to get them to speak Chinese and they don’t want to do that either. So I would speak to them in Chinese and they would say daddy stop. So they understand me but they don’t want me to speak to them. It sounds weird to them if it comes from their grandparents its okay. So they know words, you know like kids will speak English and all of a sudden they’ll throw in a Vietnamese word or a Chinese word whenever they speak to their grandparents. And so they would talk back to my parents in English.

TVD: Yeah but that oral bilingualism will help them if they choose to pursue a language later.

JT: Yeah I wish my parents would have spoken to them in Vietnamese but I guess its hard because it would confuse the kids because we’re trying to influence them with their Spanish side and their English side and their Chinese side, I think they would get confused.

TVD: So now your family is growing and you’re living in what would be a traditional three generational household that a lot of immigrants start out in, but you and your mother are making this choice to. And it sounds like a lot of the issues that I am
fascinated by is how you negotiate cultures and languages and generations even. Do you find yourself really kind of aware and conscious of all of the challenges in being a hybrid family?

JT: Yeah I wouldn’t recommend it. It is very hard. Especially language. Language is one thing, but culture is one thing you cannot change. Culture can come off as disrespectful because you have different perspectives of it and language I think you can let go of but behavior is hard. It is very difficult because my kids torn between what is the right way to behave and last night I was having a conversation with my daughter about why her grandmother may act a certain way because she didn’t understand the Asian side of it. One of the thing I explained to her was you know in America we’re very direct we feel something we say it and when we want something we say it and we have this very direct conversation. But with your grandmother its not going to be very direct and she goes around in circles and she may say one thing and mean something else and you have to watch her behavior and really understand what she wants. So that was something I explained to my daughter but also my wife. But its hard, when you grow up learning that hey if you want something you say it versus having to interpret that from someone. So very generational difference as well as cultural difference so when you throw that together it makes for a very lively mix. The language we made it work, but unfortunately like I said earlier, its difficult unless you’re able to speak the language very fluently. You don’t get the nuances of emotions and things if you have to explain it at a deep way. You have to have a command of the language. You cant have a deep conversation. You cant resolve issues easily.

TVD: In Chinese what dialect do you use?

JT: Cantonese. My dad speaks mandarin and Cantonese. My mom understand mandarin but I never had any mandarin exposure so I speak all Cantonese and I was able to retain my Chinese more because when I lived in South Carolina, when the first came out with the VCR my aunt would send me all the kung fu movies and stuff so I was able to watch the Hong Kong films.

TVD: Have you ever watched the Hong Kong films dubbed in Vietnamese?

JT: No they didn’t send me those.
TVD: So I think I have one last question for you. And that is about thinking about ahead and the future when your kids are grown. They might be to young to know now, but if they ever come across this interview and you want them to know something about you, the legacy that you want to leave your family and kids especially and grandkids, what would that be?

JT: Hm, that’s a good question.

TVD: Big

JT: Yeah, I think when you go deeper in to the generations, I’ve talked to Japanese Americans who were born here like two or three generations down and even though they’re kind of connected, they don’t have that cultural tie back unless they actively take a step in that direction to hold onto that direction to hold onto those cultures traditions and family history right? And for me I think one of the reasons why I want to support what you guys are doing and the Southeast Asian Archives and all of the projects because it is a preservation of a story of a generation. For me I grew up American trying not to be Asian when I was in South Carolina. But realizing when I age now and being a father, imagining what my dad must’ve gone through and he’s a pretty conservative guy, he doesn’t take a lot of risks. To take the risk of taking his family and escaping the country in the middle of the night and risk their whole entire family on this trips to the dream of opportunity in this other country. As a father now that it think about it’s a very hard decision to make and I think a lot of us immigrant families who escaped from war whether its from Vietnam, Africa or whatever else they are escaping from war, refugees those are risks and if you have kids it’s a very difficult decision to make to leave our home. I share this a lot with my generation of Vietnamese Americans who escaped. You give up everything you have to escape for new opportunities. So I want my kids to have the opportunity to have a piece of that with them or at least recorded somewhere or be able to do the research my great great grandchildren one day will have that connection back and say we had that connection to Vietnam we had that connection to China in this way and this is how my family came to the U.S. and this is the reason why and here is what our great great grandfather and his dad and the decisions that he made to change his family and how that first generation is the most interesting because that’s the biggest transition. Because you’re taking that culture and putting it into a different culture and
now you’re surrounded in the big melting pot of Southern California here and how it all worked out. And a piece of the bigger story in the refugee community. And so I want them to be able to hold onto that heritage and have a piece of that story that they can refer back to. I think that that is important

TVD: How about you personally and the work that you do here in making communities and providing them with resources?

JT: What I do for my work, this is a job that I love. This wasn’t a job that I was looking for when I was thinking about my career, So I think I was put here for I guess the right purpose and what I am able to do is very rewarding because it was a small group/congregation of people that didn’t know this family and they were going to help and reach across the world and say we’re going to help you guys and we were a beneficiary of that and because of the kindness and support that they gave us around my family. Because they spent time taking care of us in summer and putting us in programs and my brother learned piano and I learned art and all these extra things that we probably would not have the opportunity to do, they just kind of dropped us here and they gave us all of that and they taught us the importance of hard work and how to get ahead in America, but always giving back. Now I have an opportunity from my job and I know its that little bit of helping hand that can elevate a family and an individual towards greater success and I'm just glad that I can be apart of the circle of life that gives back in a small part of what we’re able to do from my company at Wells Fargo. So I’m glad I can just be apart of that since it’s not my money right? At least I have the opportunity to support lots of causes that support the Vietnamese community that is here. Along with many other communities.

TVD: Okay that is everything I wanted to ask today Jack. So thank you so much.

JT: Yeah great conversation.