PhD Pioneers:
The Living Experiences of The Open University’s First PhD Graduates

Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: Dr Joan Whitehead
Interviewed by: Elizabeth Currie
Date of interview: 16/06/2021

Important
The content of oral history interviews is personal, experiential and interpretive, relying on the memories, perceptions and opinions of individuals. While all reasonable attempts are made to avoid inaccuracy, interviews should not be understood as statements of fact or opinion endorsed by The Open University.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

In some cases, interviewees may have made changes to the transcript.

Personal/sensitive information regarding individuals who may be living has been removed from transcripts where necessary.

Copyright and Permissions

Rights owned or controlled by The Open University.

All use of this transcript in part or in full requires prior permission from The Open University Archive.

Please contact university-archive@open.ac.uk to discuss possible use of the content.
So you mentioned your school days, what was that like then for you?

Well it was very significant, because I went to one of the first comprehensive schools. The West Riding of Yorkshire was very advanced, and felt that comprehensive education was the answer. And so they built comprehensive schools, and I went to one of the first, Colne Valley High School. I was I think one of the second complete cohort to go through the school, and why it was important is because they were very much a school with a mission, and the mission was taking what were very largely working class children into the school, and to encourage them to go onto higher education and things like that. And it was in my view a wonderful place, I enjoyed it very much, and I think it really did encourage a lot of people, particularly of my generation who probably would not have thought of university as being for them, to actually go to university. So that was why it was actually important.