

Interviewee Name: Althea "Vicki" Silvera

Interviewer Name: Michaela Smolka

Date: April 15, 2022

MS: Vicki thank you for being here again!

VS: My pleasure

MS: Would you like to introduce yourself?

VS: Oh gosh I'm Vicki Silvera and I'm Head of the Special Collections department at FIU. I have been at FIU now 34 years and so I basically watched the university grow. When I started there were about eight buildings on campus, now I've lost track. I used to be able to see and watch the traffic on eighth street and now I'm looking at another building. Things have changed, in some senses they've gotten better and in other senses I think we have lost what we had before, which was that since knowing everyone and caring for everyone, because now I'm finding it interesting that students come in and I will ask the name of their professor and they have no idea who is teaching them which is kind of a shock.

MS: Yup

VS: I hope when I was teaching in the English department, I hope that they remembered my name you know if nothing else, but it's been it's been a pleasure and a joy in a sense because I love what I do hence thirty-four years.

MS: That's unbelievable I can't even wow-

VS: I know you weren't born yet

MS: No, literally I wasn't born yet

MS: Yeah, I can't believe, just thinking about 34 years and you're still in great shape and doing so well at FIU is just intriguing to me. I know you grew up in Jamaica what made you want to come here to the United States? I know you were studying; my dad is from abroad too, so he came to study into the United States. I'm actually enlightened to hear your story too

VS: Well, my final push to come to the United States really wasn't so much for my education because by then I had done my undergraduate in New Jersey at a nice Catholic women's college. You know in the 60s leaving Jamaica, if you were the only girl in her family, and leaving Jamaica to come to the big bad United States you got sent to a Catholic women college, but the good thing about it is that the experience was remarkably in that group of women you found out what as women you could accomplish. There was nothing, I think it wasn't an absolutely positive education. The other good thing about it is that the nuns who run it were the nuns who were involved with very good brothers, so we learned demonstration 101 and you know we were out there demonstrating against the Vietnam War, demonstrating for Civil Rights and demonstrating all those things that my parents didn't think they said you need to learn to do when I was sent there. I returned to Jamaica after doing my undergrad and worked both of the National Archives and at the National Library Actually, reached the point in the National Library where I needed the degree

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because I have been promoted to the point that I need the degree to kind of give me the imprimatur to get the position that was being offered to me. I went to the University of Western Ontario in London Canada, and I did my master's in library science there, which was also another interesting experience because it was a two year masters packed into one so you just got on this treadmill and you kept going on until you completed the degree. Then I returned to Jamaica, at the time I was offered the position of head of research and publications for the National Library of Jamaica and at the same time I was then offered a research position at UCLA to be a research associate on the Caribbean peoples of the Marcus Garvey People's Project. I took that position and worked at UCLA for four years. I worked at Occidental College, Obama's college, which I just missed him. Actually, the professor who he went to Occidental to study under was a very good friend of mine, Mary Jane Hewitt but I missed him at that point and then I came to FIU. That's the project trajectory that I had but so my experience here in the United States has been both education and professional

MS: Yeah- did you enjoy California? It's like a big change!

VS: I loved California- it was great, it was interesting it was it was friendly; it was it just the ethnicities it was it was kind of like you know Jamaica has lots of ethnicities and that was a good thing about California too. The good thing about it is that you learned to identify people not by Black, White, Chinese, but you learned the ethnicities. You knew who was Mexican, who was Nicaraguan, who was Chinese, who was Japanese, who was Korean, because built into all of that you had to have the respect to know who you were speaking with so you could not make the assumption that every person who looked Chinese was Chinese. You had to know the difference between a Chinese or Japanese and a Korean and so there was a built-in sense that you had. You had to go to one step further in a sense not just make this shortcut determination in terms of the culture that you are needing.

MS: Yeah, and honestly that's a perfect segue into what I wanted to mention just a little bit about the FIU culture. So, within the past technically 34 cause it wouldn't just be 20 years, how do you think or how do you believe you saw FIU form and change not only as a community but as the diversity? Of course, it probably didn't start off as diverse as we wanted it to, so how do you feel that it did change over the past 34 years?

VS: I think it's gotten better I don't think it's perfect and I think we still have a lot of learning to do. I think we have a lot of presuppositions to kind of, you know, come to terms but when I started at FIU there was still this subtle kind of thing. I remember walking, I was teaching in the English department, and I taught Caribbean literature and I still remember walking into the classroom and having a young girl, freshman, look at me and asked me to justify my right to be there teaching her the class. You know, very politely I pointed out to her, and I have to admit that I was angry because I resented the fact that I had to play the game and I resented the fact that I had to justify myself to this young girl, but I answered her. I didn't come back with a flippant response I answered her as politely as I could. I'm sure there was a lot of tightness in my jaw when I did it, but I answered her. The interesting thing is that by the end of the class, she was one of the better students I had, she did have the courtesy to apologize later, and you know we kind of went through it. The good thing is that at that time you know I was honest and upfront and so we talked

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about the reality of you don't think the question of reason and gender and within the Caribbean and within the literature of the Caribbean. We used that as a springboard to talk about the fact that FIU was and still is a Caribbean institution. In some sense it was a shock over some students from Cuba to find out that there were Caribbean, there was some kind of, didn't quite think there were, but at the end of it all it was interesting because the stories that we were reading brought back their own culture; because some of this this stuff that was in the stores where the same things their parents were saying to them was that their Caribbean. What was also nice about that is that said we have so many students who are second generation Caribbean, who have never read, they're writers and the stories that I used for writers from the French, Spanish, and English Caribbean so the students who were predominantly Cuban were reading Cuban writers for the first time. One of the things that I always remember and it's kind of sad you know; I had a student who was reading, we were doing the poetry of Nicolás Guillén, and his grandfather saw him reading Guillén. He threatened to kick him out of the house because he was reading Guillén and Guillén was a communist. We had to discuss it, you know, we didn't have to, but we had a discussion on what makes a writer a nationalist writer as against a communist writer and for me Guillén could not more leave Cuba than my grandfather would ever leave Jamaican. There was just a sense of peace and so I think of Guillén more as a nationalist writer than a communist writer and those were the days you could actually talk about things like that. I worry that now we may not be able to.

MS: Right, yeah

VS: So, I don't know if I answered your question

MS: No, you did. Honestly, you enlightened me because you know before I had asked to interview you, I never really heard about the archives before and talking about special collections and that stuff so hearing that you did teach about readings and everything, it kind of brings me into another question. Maybe like a nice question? I don't know silly question? Which special collection do you believe was your favorite or is your favorite now?

VS: Okay, I'm going to answer you mainly in an odd way. The people who gave us those collections have become more than just a donor in some sense they became friends, so I will name 4 collections in no order: the Marvin Dunn Collection because Marvin, when I started at FIU Marvin was teaching at FIU and Marvin started what I think was the most interesting program at FIU, which was multilingual multicultural. It has since disappeared, but that center I think did some of the most vibrant programming and what was nice about it was because it was multilingual multicultural, it went across Negritude one of the best conferences FIU has ever done was a conference on the Negritude I mean can you imagine FIU having the opposing or Nicolás Guillén, Romere Bearden, there was ___ there I mean all of the major writers Maya Angelou, Rex Nettleford, Claudia Mitchell-Kernan from UCLA all of these people in one spot for a conference looking at French Caribbean liberty as it were. You know back to the collection where Marvin Dunn was, years later I was told I was very charming woman to go to her house on Biscayne and she had a collection of Cuban material that she wanted to give us, and she and her husband was by far two of the most gracious people I've met. Elena Kersten and her late

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husband Joe Kersten, Elena had a phenomenal collection of Cuban material. On this site she will tell you that I stole her collection, that I went to her house, and I spoke to her and the next thing she knew her collection had disappeared and that I stole everything that I got from her. She gave me the most very good collection on Cuban memorabilia the kind stuff that, the Cuba of your mind and your memory for those people who left, will remember it's more a memory collection than it is historical collection. Then the next person is in a sad way because she passed away on the weekend is Maggie Herschalla which was Janet Reno's sister. Maggie gave us her parents collection, Janet Reno and her father's collection. Those were two newspaper reporters that looked at Miami when Miami was coming to be, as it were. I think the next person has also passed away last year. That was Bernard Diederich, Bernard Diederich was a New Zealander who moved to Haiti and was a reporter. He started the Haiti Sun. He traveled all over the Caribbean. He was in Grenada when the US moved into Grenada, he was in Cuba, he was in Nicaragua, and he was good friends with Graham Greene. Bernard was just an absolutely charming New Zealander, Haitian British guy you know and so those are those are the collections that, for different reasons each person comes with it and the donor comes with it. Right now, I'm working on a collection which was given to me by a Jamaican; whose father went to, Jackie's father, went to African and started the whole concept of fish farming and Agricole fish, so that's another collection that's becoming, because he has his diaries and its work. *laughs*

MS: So since technically you were an international student, are any of the special collections about international students would you say that, are your favorite?

VS: In a way they all are. In my time I was foreign student and I remember when I was introduced to parents, I mean this was the 60s, and I was maybe one of four or five black students on this campus. I always used to say my last name was from Jamaica because I was always introduced as this is Vicki Silvera, she's from Jamaica. As if from Jamaica meant it's OK she safe, you know when the revolution comes she won't be one of those black ones. So, the foreign student always stayed with me for that reason wherever I have gone. When I was at UCLA, when I was at Occidental, I kind of always invited the foreign students for dinner and to hang out with me and my daughter because I knew what it was like when everybody went home for Christmas, and you were stuck in the dorm. Does my foreign student experience show up in my collection? No, yes and no; not the student, but one of the things that happened when I started at FIU there was no collection focus because there really wasn't a collection, we were just beginning to build the collection. I looked around and alongside all our department was the Latin America collection center and I realized that we needed to build a collection and we needed a collection focus. So, I decided to make the Caribbean my collection, but at the same time I realized that the Caribbean was in Miami as well as in Cuba. I collected on both fronts, and I still continue to collect them both. At the same time, I could not look around at the rest what was around the campus, so I began to collect material on the everglades and one of the things I keep pushing and I keep saying is that FIU needs to look left instead of right on eighth street. It needs to look at the Seminole and Miccosukee as well as what happens on the right side of the campus and so I collect the ethnicities that surround us and now that I'm kind of at the point where I'm acknowledged, I'm retiring so now that

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I'm here; my focus is to build the South Florida collection and to acquire with the South Florida collections. This includes that migrant communities that come into South Florida.

MS: Wow I actually-

VS: As well as those who were here before

MS: Right no that's super interesting especially with everything going on. There are so many people coming to South Florida so that's like a super great next step.

VS: And the reality is that FIU is no longer an active university. At the end of the trail, we've been around long enough that our graduates have now built their own collections and they're reaching the stage where their kids are looking at their collections and asking them, “I don't know what you plan on doing with this, but I don't want it; maybe you better find some place to put it”; which comes in handy for me because you know I'm the “some place that you can put it” so it works out well.

MS: Yeah, it really does, so with that, talking about special collections and your favorite. What do you think was the most or is the most impactful moment you've had at FIU since you have been there for so long?

VS: In an odd way, being with the collections have been fun; meeting the faculty, meeting donors, and going out as I think. The other thing which has also been interesting is using the gallery because I also do the gallery in the Green Library and using that to also show other sides of the history and the culture and what's around. As I tell folks we're the best gallery in town; we're free, open 24 hours, and I don't charge you anything.

MS: Free? That's it best

VS: It's free yeah and so it's been good having artists and people to show various signs of the culture, because we have gone from graffiti artists to one of the earliest exhibitions. We did was a collection of major African American artists and for me to stand up and see a Kara Walker hanging on the wall and a Jacob Lawrence hanging on the wall of the library. This is really something else and you know it's been using the gallery also to open up and to teach. What I've come to realize is that when the walls are empty someone will ask me what's happening if there's something here on the wall. The students themselves appreciate and enjoy the change.

MS: No, I agree especially being a black student it's super powerful to see someone standing up for us as students as well. Do you think that is one of your biggest accomplishments at FIU? Like building the collection? Or what do you believe is your biggest accomplishment since being at FIU?

VS: I think building the collection and making it useful to students because even today I spoke to a group of students. One of the things I say to them is that I shouldn't say “my special collection” it is “our special collections”, it has value and has uniqueness. I don't set out to buy valuable items, I buy items or acquire items that students can use for their research. If I know for instance that there is a student who is working on a project and they cannot get

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access to material that they need and I can find it, I can then purchase it and I will. For me this special collection has to be something that people can use. I don't want a collection that looks pretty that no one ever uses, I want a collection that people will find interesting, and you know sometimes we will purchase something then one student will use it and then three or four months later it will be open which is another use to another student, maybe in a different group. Recently we've been acquiring things the Chinese in the Caribbean. We have things on the Chinese people things, like recently a few years ago we got someone in the Jamaican Chinese community. They allowed us to digitize a magazine or the book order. We digitized and we put it up on the digital library of the Caribbean and who would think that a magazine printed in Jamaica on Chinese community would become one of the top ten items that's used in the digital library of the Caribbean. However, someone found it, and someone told someone else and the rest of the whole now, diaspora of Caribbean Chinese is looking at the digital library of the Caribbean and reading the book order. It comes it goes beyond me and it you know it's for everyone to enjoy

MS: So, what do you what do you feel, even though you're not leaving right now, what sort of changes do you think you would like to see at FIU? Maybe in regard to the special collection? God, forbid you do leave.

VS: I can tell you

MS: OK

VS: When the new Dean came five years ago, my first report to her I titled it “Space the Last Round Here”, I need FIU to realize that that collection is worth paying attention to and we need space. The other thing that we need is staff. I started 34 years ago, and we have acquired over 50 collections. I have less people including me working in the department than I did when I started 34 years ago. So, if you are going and the value of the collection has grown it's a multimillion-dollar collection.

MS: Wow

VS: And so therefore the question I think FIU has to decide is what is the value and if something that has the potential to be of use to your researchers, your students, and the community because one of the things that we do a lot with the communities; we have a large Cuban genealogy collection and we're becoming almost as Center for Cuban genealogy. We work with the Cuban genealogy; we work with the community on genealogy and we're going to continue to do that. We're going to ask people to share their collections with us. The least we can do is treat their work and their material with respect and make it possible for it to be processed and accessed. More than I can do and more than the other two of us because if there are three people in, I mean when you look compare our space and our staff to the rest of the departments in the State University system were you know... I'm sorry-

MS: Do you connect with other people in your position at other universities as well in the state of Florida?

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VS: Yeah, we do, we help each other, we talk to each other, and we share things. So, for instance if someone were to offer me a collection, which I feel or felt would be better at another institution, I will do that, and they will do the same thing for me. Recently we just got some material from another institution which dovetails with our collection and in the same way someone will say to me, "I have this item" and or "I have this collection" and I will say it really does not fit our collection or what's being taught at FIU, but this other university would be a better fit within the state system, and I would recommend that you offered it to them. We share that because it doesn't make sense by having a minuscule piece of something if a better collection and a better fit is it being in Tallahassee.

MS: So, you built a community not only within FIU, but as like the Head of Collections and that's actually inspiring too because not that you're going to go to another university but say that you wanted to get a collection from them; you always could, and I think that's truly inspiring.

VS: What we do is that even with our students because during the pandemic that was the time when we realized, how much we needed, because there are times when we had; for instance, a PhD student who needed access to some of our material and couldn't get access to it, but University of Florida had it and had it digitized so you know you share the information with me.

MS: Wow

VS: You know I call and make arrangements for them to go and do their research there

MS: That's what I was going to ask, if you had helped the student get the arrangement with someone, okay.

VS: Right

MS: So, you're truly involved with the students at FIU as well?

VS: I was talking to this student and I kind of, sometimes, have a warm sense of humor so I said to them, "you know be nice to the librarians because we know where the stuff is" you know and the reality is that we see the collection, you see the collection based on your focus your narrow focus, we see the collection....

MS: As a whole

VS: A broader, and we know where something in a small piece of a collection will be exactly what you need, and you will probably never have thought. The Bernard Dietrich collection is 100 or something boxes. You won't know what's in all 100 something boxes. We will know that Tahitien's spoke to Graham Greene. If you're a literature student studying Graham Greene, would you have thought to go look at a newspaper report on her? So that's the connections that we can make for you and it's our job to do that. As I tell students when you come in and you're doing your research, I ask two things, tell me what you have done so far and tell me what your project is; tell me where you want to end up with your project. My job is to get you from where you started, where

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you are or where you want to be. That's the job and that's what my role is as a librarian, to help you get there without wasting time or money. Also, by pressing prints on things that you will never use after you printed them out and knowing how to select the right article instead of going with who wrote it.

MS: Have you seen an abundance amount of change throughout the student population? Of course, from when you started until now and the diversity of the students.

VS: Yes and no, I still think there needs to be..... It's interesting diversity at FIU has come in waves. I was thinking about when I first started to teach I had quite a contingent of students from China, their English was not their first language. They kind of just disappeared. Then we had a group of Indians students, it's just like waves. I always wondered what happened to the wave, I don't know. I don't see as many international students as I used to, and I think part of it might be the pandemic and part of it is because you can study in so many different ways. You don't need to come here anymore, but I sometimes worry that that we're losing something because they're not as mixed, we were.

MS: Right, I haven't been around FIU as long as you have, but I agree with what you're saying. When I first started back in 2019, it has changed a little bit and that could do with the pandemic. You're not wrong. What do you feel, and this is a like a question I actually learned in admissions, the I in FIU stands for international. International is our middle name. What does that mean to you? The I in international for Florida International University?

VS: I think it's something to aspire to, it's something that there are days when I think we've become close, but I don't think we've got it yet. I think we are, and I don't want to say I worry, but I think what is happening is that as changes come with the technology and as changes come with education, that the "I" is not necessarily coming to us anymore. We are reaching out and so you know there's FIU intengent and there's FIU here and FIU there. It's like we've decided to go out with the international, but I think as we go out, we're not bringing in that international, which would help us learn more and be more understanding of different mindsets and cultures. When I first started, "international"...Florida International University, if you look at the old yearbooks, there was so much international activity.

MS: Not the same yeah

VS: Yeah, it's not clear. I mean Honors College used to march through the campus with the flags of all students, who were represented in the Honors College. Now what happened to that? It's I don't know!

MS: Yeah, it's changed a lot, I agree. Based off of that, what are your hopes and dreams for the future of FIU and the I in international? *laughs*

VS: That we will go back to what our President Perry, if you ever get a chance look at President Perry's essay and the I in international and I think if we could get that...

MS: He was your friend, right? *laughs*

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VS: Yeah, I liked him, you know I never worked with him. I got to know him when we went to pick up his collection. He and his wife were absolutely marvelous. He had a good sense of humor, but what I liked about President Perry, and the only president who I think came as close to that was President Rosenberg. President Perry, when he came for the 25th anniversary, got in the elevator of the library. He was going up to the 8th floor and he got in on the second floor, by the time he made it to the eighth floor, he knew the name of every student in that elevator and where they were from. He introduced himself and spoke to them about their majors, just in seven floors. You know President Rosenberg was that type of a president in terms of reaching out and knowing the students.

MS: And caring yeah

VS: You know President Perry used to just walked into people’s offices and sit down to introduce himself. I mean, we've gotten to big in a sense for that kind of relationship. Sadly, I think we have been, but I will say we've lost our heart. I think we need to come back, and I think maybe the pandemic has made it worse or I don't know. I think there was there was a heart to the campus and I'm not sure it's there anymore.

MS: So, your hopes and dreams are to bring everyone back together as a community?

VS: It’s not a kumbaya moment! We're all so busy... *laughs*

MS: And in the book were reading for class, Beyond the Tower, they had talked about Doctor Perry or President Perry doing that, like with faculty, staff, and students; and going in the classrooms and meeting them. I think truly, I would love that it's inspiring.

VS: Because the thing is I mean, it's bad enough when the students don't know their names of their professors. It’s bad enough when you have students who have no idea who actually, with pride, will say “oh I graduated from FIU, I never once went to the library. That’s sad and it's also sad when you have students who don't know what the President of the university looks like, but who also don't know what half the buildings on campus look like or who even know what the other campuses looks like. Everybody comes in and they're so focused on the degree. I know the excuse and the explanation has always been, “were a commuter campus”, but we have all those stones on campus, and we have all of those things where you're living on campus. There's still that sense of I don't know...

MS: Distance maybe?

VS: Distance yeah whatever it is yeah..

MS: Yeah, I do think the pandemic really did hurt the school because now a lot of people can do fully online or even faculty and staff can work remotely. I do think that hurt us, as well sadly.

VS: And that worries me because I also worry that there are students that were not reaching. I worry that their students that come into the library and there's nobody to ask questions to. I keep saying that we should have a robot at the door.

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MS: Literally

VS: Yeah, literally that says hi my name is ____ *laughs*

MS: To help and greet

VS: Yeah, yeah

MS: Is your office the first floor?

VS: No, I am on the fourth floor; I mean friendly neighborhood rover *laughs*

MS: Welcome in! Did you do a doctorate?

VS: No, and every now and then someone will ask me why I didn't.

MS: Why didn't you?

VS: And I think so many different things interest me. Literature interests, me I collect Caribbean, I am a historian and I fight with people politically. There wasn't one thing I wanted to...I'm gonna throw out a Jamaican thing: When I was at the national library, there was a guy who came in and he was trying to get me into a political argument, and I wouldn't bite. Finally, he got frustrated and said, “you know Miss Silvera, I'm getting a feeling that not breathe fire you know your sword”, so maybe that's what it is, there isn't one thing that I would want to spend...

MS: Four years

VS: My whole life... Because I'm gonna get sidetracked. It's like, I read four books at a time because I get sidetracked. There is always another painting to go look at there. Then maybe I was just lazy or busy. I have a daughter and I'm a single parent so there's always that.

MS: But you still built your way up at FIU, what was your first job, this job?

VS: This one, except actually in an odd way I haven't so much gotten...I kind of jettisoned some positions because, first I was special collections and university articles and then they added records manager. Then I was teaching in the English department and then I took on the gallery. So, I know I've jettisoned the records manager and well I've kind of got less titles than more.

MS: Well, you got a good title and kept it! *laughs*

VS: Yes, basically yeah

MS: Which is perfect. Do you ever think about going back to Jamaica maybe after retiring or something?

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VS: I thought about it, but the reality is that I have no family left on the island and most of my friends are of my age. I'm 72 this year. I have a niche of women who all graduated from my high school, we all graduated the same year in 1965.

MS: That's when my dad was born *laughs*

VS: See what I mean...1965...I will forgive you for that statement. We still get together. They're 12 of us and our kids and our friends are totally fascinated with the fact that we are a group of women, who have known each other for over 50 something years. We have been friends...We go and come...I went to California and some people got married, but in that odd thing I know that we've kind of created this group, we will meet for breakfast, and we'll say goodbye at dinner time because you'll just sit down and you just shoot the breeze, talk and eat. The Jamaica that I left and the Jamaica that is now, are two different Jamaica's. I cannot recapture the Jamaica of my memory; I need to make up my mind. I will go back to see the Jamaica that it is. I think all of us who leave a place hold onto the island of your memory and that is what you hold onto.

MS: I listened to your other interview, and I know Vicki is from your mom, but can you explain more thoroughly for me how you got Vicki. It's Althea, right?

VS: Yes

MS: Ok at least I pronounced it right How did you get Vicki? I know it was your nickname, but now it's your preferred name.

VS:No well no, it's the easier name because the thing was, if someone calls me Althea, I know it's someone who I went to high school with or someone who knew me in Jamaica. When I came to the United States, don't forget as I said, I came to the States in the 60's and this is kind... I may get into trouble *laughs*

MS: OK

VS: Some Americans, let me put it that way, assume that if you're from an island you know everybody. So, “oh you're from Jamaica do you know Tom Jones?”

MS: Right, yes

VS: I introduced myself as Althea, but this was a weird thing, The only black person that Americans knew with the name, Althea, was Althea Gibson, the tennis player who won, and I could count how quickly the question with, “Oh your name Althea? Do you know Althea Gibson?” After a while it bugged me, or I would hear “oh Althea, Althea, Althea. What kind of name is that? Where did you get it from?” Vicki just seems so simple and so easy and no explanations necessary. I just said okay just call me Vicki. Anyone who calls me Vicki is someone who lives in United States. My friends, the group of women, still call me Althea.

MS: Was it your middle name?

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VS: No, if you heard the interview, Vicki was my birthday; which was 24th of May; which is Queen Victoria's birthday. My mother felt I was as miserable as Queen Victoria. Whenever I was miserable, I would get called Vicki and it just kind of was something that I kept in my back of my mind. It was just easier for the name

MS: Yeah, Vicki is pretty simple, but Althea is beautiful.

VS: I like it yeah, I like it and sometimes I think I should go back to it, but then I would just put a whole lot of time on confusion

MS: People would be like who?

VS: Because even at FIU my email is not Silvera A it's Silvera V. That would create and confuse everyone

MS: Well, I think I got through all the questions I had for you, do you have any concluding?

VS: Yes, do you mind me asking you know where would this will this end up, just in case?

MS: Okay, so we are for the History of Higher Education class, I believe it is EDH6061. It will end up in the FIU archives as a live collection for other students, I believe to review and for faculty and staff to review as well. I actually never heard, and this might make you sad, I've never heard of the archives before this class or the special collections I truly didn't. *laughs*

VS: Come by sometime!

MS: I might

VS: We are a fun crazy department

MS: I will before I graduate, I'll come.

VS: Yes, you know we are the best department in the library.

MS: Yes, I'll remember that.

VS: Even the reading room, when you come into the reading room, there's African art on the wall. There is a thing of Picasso's in the corner, there is just all. We have a sign that says for five cents, you can take a picture of yourself with an alligator. We do have a stuffed alligator so you can take a picture with it. *laughs*

MS: I'll donate my five cents to do that, that's so fun.

Interviewee Name: Althea "Vicki" Silvera

Interviewer Name: Michaela Smolka

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VS: It was a gift from someone who had gone out to the Everglades and saw the sign that says, "take your picture with the alligator for five cents" and they brought the sign in, and her friend one of the women who used to work with us, gave us the stuffed alligator so you could take your photograph!

MS: That is hilarious! I will definitely come by; I graduate in April but I'll be there before then. I definitely will right! Any other questions?

VS: So, you said you would be walking for the Doctorate? Let me know I'll come and embarrass you!

MS: Oh yes please come! Masters degree though. I don't think I'm gonna do the doctorate.

VS: Oh, why not?

MS: Every example you used. I'm using lazy to. Maybe too much research, but I'll think about it. I am doing a Masters in Higher Ed

VS: If you get a doctorate....there's a friend of mine and, we've done it now for a few others, once they've gotten the doctorate, we called airport and asked them to page doctors.

MS: Please I would love that. Now I'm inspired Oh my God that's amazing!

VS: So weird

MS: Doctor Michaela Smolka, everyone- I love it.

VS: Come to the curtesy phone

MS: Oh my gosh I'd be so scared Oh my gosh

VS: Are you going to leave this in the interview? Oh God

MS: Dr. Kuntz would love this part but thank you so much Vicki for being here. Thank you so much!

VS: My pleasure, it's been fun! All the best and if you need any help just give us a call or come on by.

MS: I certainly will and class thank you so much, I have Vicki Silvera here, interviewing, and I hope you enjoyed our interview, bye!

[End of interview]

Transcribed by: Michaela Smolka