

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series

Mary D' Souza Sequeira interview

Conducted by James Newberry

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Transcribed by Caitlin O'Grady

Born in 1933, Mary D' Souza Sequeira grew up under British rule in India. A prodigious track and field athlete from childhood, she competed in the First and Second Asian Games and was part of the first group of Indian women to compete in the Olympics, at Helsinki in 1952. She later represented India's National Railways system before immigrating to the United States to live with her daughter in 1984. She recorded her oral history interview at Kennesaw State University in November 2017.

Full Transcript

Interviewer: Alright. Well this is James Newberry, and I'm here with Mary D' Souza Sequeira on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, and we're at the Sturgis Library at Kennesaw State University. So, to start with, do you agree to this interview, Ms. Sequeira?

Sequeira: Oh, sure.

Interviewer: Thank you So much. I really appreciate you sitting down with me. So, if, if we could, we're gonna start at the beginning. And could you state your full name for me?

Sequeira: My name is Mary D' Souza Sequeira.

Interviewer: And what's your birthday?

Sequeira: My birthday is eighteen July 1933

Interviewer: Wonderful. Can you tell me where you were born?

Sequeira: I was born in Bombay. It's called now Mumbai. I'm one of twelve children, and I'm number seven. Number six was born in Goa, and after that my dad came to Bombay and I was the seventh. First child born in Bombay.

Interviewer: So, tell me about Goa and Bombay, and why your family made the move.

Sequeira: We come from Goa, which is just off Bombay—an island like Bombay, but which belonged to the Portuguese at that time. And there was not much jobs available. My parents—my grandparents—were farmers. So, when my father finished high school there was no, no—not even any colleges that mattered there. Maybe one in that whole area or whatever. So, he had to come to Bombay to look for a job. So, he came across alone to Bombay at that time. And first job he got was in the

railways. It was the British railways at that time. And he stuck with it till he retired. He was in a driver for the local trains. He was offered a promotion for the—to drive the outside trains going out, out of Bombay, but he didn't want to leave the family and go out. So, he just carried on local, local trains.

Interviewer: So, you, you mentioned that the family moved into Bombay about the time you were born.

Sequeira: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: And where did you live? What Sort of home did you have?

Sequeira: At that time we all had rental homes. All the places were there for rent. So, we just rented, and we changed place from—I remember two, three—when I was living, we change at least three places renting. But all in Bandra. A place called Bandra, which was in the suburbs. No one wanted to go to Bandra at that time; that was very cheap. But at the moment, it is the hottest place to live. All the actors, cricketers—everyone wants to come, especially Bollywood, half of Bollywood is in Bandra.

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

Sequeira: So the, the—it skyrocketed. The real estate has really boomed there. So now everyone wants to come to Bandra. But in those days it was—Like you're going for a picnic it was So far from, you know, it was just out of Bombay Sort of. It was first suburb in Bombay.

Interviewer: Well—.

Film crew: Would you mind setting the paper towel down? We can just hear it rustling.

Sequeira: Oh, oh, Sorry.

Interviewer: Oh, sure.

Sequeira: Sorry.

Interviewer: Thank you. So tell me, what were your parents' names?

Sequeira: My dad's name was Daigo Francis D' Souza, and my mother's name was Milla Greena D' Souza (3:40). Big long names. She was a D'Ganeave she became a D' Souza. Her name was Milla Greena.

Interviewer: I see. And you mentioned you had eleven siblings.

Sequeira: Twelve altogether.

Interviewer: Twelve altogether.

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was it like growing up in such a big family?

Sequeira: We had such fun. We had—we used to go for yearly vacation, mostly to Goa. My dad was in the railways, So we had a free railway pass for the full family. So we had free travel. And we had a house in Goa—ancestral house. So we used to move from one house to the other. We didn't have much expense—free travel. And what we cooked, would've cooked normally. We used to have—almost a free holiday. And we enjoyed that. We didn't need anyone else. There was So many of us. We used to play and fight, and whatever. But we got along very well.

Interviewer: So your brothers and sisters were your friends?

Sequeira: Yes, mostly. We did go out in the evenings to the church where everyone used to come in the evenings. Of course, we used to go on holidays. So everyone else used to be there on holiday too—whoever came to Goa. Mostly they came from Bombay because all the Goans came to Bombay for jobs, looking for a living. And so they all longed to come to Goa, and they had family. Most of them who came had family in Goa. So they used to all come to Goa in May. We used to meet a lot of people and make a lot of friends.

Interviewer: Wow. Well, what kind of a kid were you? What were your hobbies, and what did you get into?

Sequeira: I know from, from the beginning, I loved sports. Whatever sports it was there, I was always in the evening, I wanted to go out and play. And then I used to—there was another lady, a young girl rather, with me, and we used to play with the boys because no one—none of the girls used to come out to play. So we two used to play, and then I continued playing with the boys. I should play jack-in-the-monkey. You know what that is?

Interviewer: No.

Sequeira: We had a huge tree in the compound where I used to go to play, and we, we used to swing from branch to branch catching [indecipherable] (06:19)—catch the person. And we used to literally like moneys. So we used to call jack-in-the-monkey. So whoever is caught first had to catch the others. And what you think one day, when I went to catch the branch, my brother pulled the branch. So from way up, like a first floor—how many feet? Fifteen, fifteen feet at least, I went crashing to the ground. I, I, I couldn't move. I thought that was the end. I was so lifeless. But fortunately, I don't know, nothing happened to me. I was just shaken up, and my body was aching for two, three days. I was back again.

Interviewer: Doing it again.

Sequeira: But I didn't, I didn't play catching [indecipherable] anymore after that.

Interviewer: So it was like chase, but up in the tree?

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: I see.

Sequeira: We used to go from branch to branch.

Interviewer: Well, tell me about your education. Where'd you go to school?

Sequeira: Well, I, I walked to a convent. There, there were two sections. One was known as the English section, which was only for Anglo-Indians—and the rich used to— 'cause the fees were very high. And there was an Indian section that was ICSE, and this was matriculation.¹ So I used to go to the Indian section. And I, I didn't like the idea of this growing up because like we were not allowed to mix with the other side. Or talk to them. Or they were not allowed to talk to us. It was so funny. I, I didn't like that growing up. But that's how I went to the convent school. All of us were—walked—that was the nearest school. And opposite was a Saint Stanislaus school for boys. It is just five minutes walk from my house. So we used to walk, then come home for lunch, and go back to school.

Interviewer: So these rules about not mixing—.

Sequeira: I don't know why.

Interviewer: —with the other students. Who enforced those rules?

Sequeira: I think the principal must have enforced it because we, we were told not to have anything to do with the other section. It, it, it was so cruel that I was young. I said, "What is this?" I didn't understand why they said like that.

Interviewer: How did that play out in other parts of society?

Sequeira: I don't know. There was a—the Anglo-Indians were privileged side. They were— Anglo-Indians means the Indians who married, married to English, to the British. So, they were known as Anglo-Indians. So, they were given special preferences. So, they were given almost free education in that side of the school—almost. But as the others were not Anglo-Indians—like Indians like us—we had to pay double to what we were paying here. So of course, my parents couldn't afford to send us to other side. We very happy where we were.

¹ ICSE (Indian Certificate of Education)

Interviewer: Were there people sort of protesting against these differences? Or—.

Sequeira: No, no, they, they took it in their stride as much as they—It's done so why, you know, you want to choose wherever you want to go to school.

Interviewer: I see.

Sequeira: But not in all the other convents, all the other schools in Bandra, it was not the only this convent, where I went which was nearest my home. It was a very prestigious convent like everyone wanted to be in that convent. But this division, I didn't like so much.

Interviewer: Were your teachers nuns?

Sequeira: Yes, most. The principal was always a nun, but the teachers were hired. They were paid teachers from the vicinity, mostly from Bandra they were. And—.

Interviewer: Were they Anglo-Indians or Indians?

Sequeira: Indians. All—the teachers were all Indians. The Anglo-Indian teachers mostly were teaching—Indians also were teaching on the other side.

Interviewer: I see.

Sequeira: But the students were mostly Anglos, and the rich Indians who could afford paying high fees.

Interviewer: I see. That's very interesting. So, tell me, at that time, how did your family get news of the world? Did you have a radio? Or newspaper? How did that work?

Sequeira: Actually, we were too poor even to have a radio at that time. We used to only get the papers, and we used to read all about it in the papers.

Interviewer: And was that something that you kept up with? Or were you not interested?

Sequeira: At that time, I was young. All I would've thought of was going out to play, and as long as I got my three meals, I was quite happy. [laughs] I didn't care what happened in the world at that time. You know.

Interviewer: Well so the, the next question is—how much did you know about World War II? The Second World War—it started in 1939. So you were young.

Sequeira: Yeah, I was, yeah, I was six, seven years old. It was—I was too young to know anything about what that was. But I know that—I—we had to go for rations. The rations was started at that time of the war because of prices of food, food stuff, rose tremendously. And common people, average people, could not afford the, the

prices. So, they—the government started rations. You, you're so many units per family member. So they—every week you had to go, and whatever you're allotted we used to, we used to buy. So that's how we used to get the rations. We used to look forward to it because that was affordable. And we were big family, so that was—meant a lot to us.

Interviewer: And by this rationing, I mean, what amounts of food were you getting?

Sequeira: Only this foods—dry foods like rice and lentils. Different kinds of lentils and rice. That's all we got in the ration. Not, not the vegetables and meat, or anything like that.

Interviewer: Where did you get that from?

Sequeira: That we had to buy separately. So that was whatever you could afford to buy, you bought.

Interviewer: I see.

Sequeira: But my, my parents were very sure that they give us good diet. That one thing we all—we were so many, but we all healthy because my mom made sure that we had a good diet. So we grew up eating well, and she was a good cook so we, we never complained.

Interviewer: Well I assume it's the British authorities sort of controlling these, this food coming in and out of—

Sequeira: Yeah. I guess naturally, yes. They were doing everything at that time.

Interviewer: So, with the British being at war—

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: —that may have affected conditions for people in India because of the British.

Sequeira: Exactly. That's how they decided, I think, to give us our independence when we asked for it because they were so busy after war. '47, or something like that, we got our independence. And they were still getting over the war. And they must have thought, "We better give India their independence. The less people—less to look after."

Interviewer: Really?

Sequeira: That's what I think.

Interviewer: Well did you, did you interact with British people who were in India?

Sequeira: Not really. We never had a chance to interact with any British people. But those who had must've been many because that's how the Anglo-Indian society started because the, the cross—intermarried. All the British who were coming to India must have interacted with the Indians and intermarried. That's how we got this Anglo-Indian. At that time, the Anglo-Indians were very privileged. In fact, they asked my dad—he was in the British railways—they asked him to change his name from D' Souza to an, an English sounding name. For that they would give him more benefits. He would get a higher salary, and more perks. But my dad was a staunch Goan. He said, "No way I'm going to change my name. You can pay me what you want, but—" The many who, the very many, who did change, and they went higher than my dad in where they were working. So many with him were, were, were working with him. But they changed their names to Anglo, to British sounding names. Like Smith and Fernandez they made Ferns, and D' Souza they made—they just change a little as they could make it sound more Anglo. And then they were given an extra salary and perks. But my dad refused to change his name. He said, "I'm start a Goan, and I'll always be a Goan."

Interviewer: Wow. So did you know about the independence movement? And were you, I mean, did you have any friends or family members involved in that?

Sequeira: Yeah. My, my mom's brother was in the army—British army. And my sister worked for the [unknown Indian word] they called it. Like a women's section, an auxiliary, to help the, the soldiers what they—she was working in the office of course. But I don't know, supplies or whatever she was working towards the army sort of thing. For the army, you know. She took this job because she needed a job, but it happened to be working towards helping the army. It's an auxiliary thing.

Interviewer: And this was the British army.

Sequeira: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: And you said your mother's brother was in the British army.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: Did he serve in the war?

Sequeira: I don't know whether he served in the war because he, he, he retired when he was forty. But he, I know he served in Burma. What exactly he did I don't rem—I don't remember. But I know he served in the war. What, what we—he served, I don't know.

Interviewer: Did you know anything about the battles going on? Or the countries involved in the, the war?

Sequeira: Yeah, I heard all about it, read about it. But I didn't, it didn't sink in like exactly what was happening. 'Cause I was too young to, to, to find out what was actually happening.

Interviewer: And much of it is happening miles and miles away.

Sequeira: Way. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So, I do want to talk a little bit more about the rationing.

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned that it was staples like rice and lentils.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: And the other foods you would have gotten locally.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: But tell me about the incident in which you had to choose between picking up the rations and going to play in a field hockey tournament.

Sequeira: As I told you, we were so many first. It just so happened that day, it was a Saturday, and there was no one but me at home. And I stayed home that day because I had a match—hockey match—field hockey match in town. It takes an hour to go from my house to town to play. And my dad said, "Oh, today is ration day. Is last day. You will have to go and buy the rations." So, my dad was very strict. I dare not tell him that I have a game. Whole day I was debating what to do. Should I go and buy the ration because it's last day? There was no one else to go. And whether I should go and play because my team was depending on me. I was their star player. And they—And I had no phone. We had no phones that day to contact them to say, "I'm not coming." And I was feeling, "How will I let them down? They'll be waiting for me, expecting me, and I'm a no show. I can't inform them, and my dad says to bring the rations." So I debated. So that got the better of me. I sneaked off to, to play the game. I played well, of course, that day, I did. They were very happy I was there. But I came back, and my dad waiting for me at the door. And I've never forgotten till today, the thrashing of my life. Oh my gosh, he was so mad, So mad. I never found out till today who brought the rations. I think he did, but I dared not ask. I dare not. He got so mad with me, I think, because he must have had to go. Because we couldn't afford to lose the ration, and that was the last day. So that—.

Interviewer: So, if, if you didn't pick up the rations on that day, you wouldn't have them for the week?

Sequeira: Yes, exactly. But I knew if someone other, Someone or the other, the rations we would have to get. I didn't care who, who had to get it, but it wasn't me.

Interviewer: So, did you and your siblings—your brothers and sisters— sort of take turns?

Sequeira: Yes, we did take turns.

Interviewer: I see. So—field hockey, you mentioned field hockey. You were playing that as a, as a child.

Sequeira: Not as a child.

Interviewer: Or as a teenager.

Sequeira: Yes, yes. It so happened, you know, we, we never used to have sports meets in the convent. We didn't have a ground. And the girls were not allowed to run in the men's school boy—the boy's school grounds. Girls were not permitted. And we had only a, a net ball court. This was as big as a basketball court, I think. We used to play net ball, not even basketball. And the other side was just like a field. It was very stony. It wasn't a ground, and such. So, we never had sports, and such. But one day the teacher—the sport's teacher—said we going to have a sport's meet. So, we were very excited. I was in the juniors that time. My sister was in the seniors. So, we, we—you know what races we had? Marble and spoon, sack race, book balancing—all events like that. No, no sprints or—'cause we didn't have the ground. So, no sprints, or high jump, or whatever. I was slow, slow cycling. Something like that we had. Anyway, two events per section. So I some—I don't remember what it was—if it was the jumping shoes or marble and spoon, or what I had. I won both my races. And so happened, my sister won both her races. So, we were known in school as a senior and a junior champions. It was so funny. At that time I was quite happy because I was known as a champion. I was little. But this was, this was how we became champions. And it just so happened that Somebody heard. There, there was a hockey manager who had started a team called Suburbanettes; a women's team. He had three sisters who were—who he coached. And he started a team. He wanted to make a women's team. So, someone told him, "There are two champions in this convent. Why don't you go and ask them?" So, they came to my house, and they said, "We want to start a team. And would you like to play for us?" So, we said, "We'd like to learn. We've never handled a stick. We have never seen a hockey match. We don't know anything about hockey." He said, "Don't worry. If you come, we'll teach you." So, we both started going for hockey. And the first match we played was a month, a month and a half later. He said, "We are going to play a match." I barely learned how to hold and move the stick and hit and all. We were like beginners, and we are playing a match? I said, "I had no idea what the rules, or anything of the match." So, he says, "Yes, we are playing a match." So, I said, "Ok. You put me as the right wing." So, I, I had no skills at all. So, what I did, I paralyzed three players: the left—I was right wing— So the left half, whenever she got the

ball, I whacked it. There, there, one of the right—the left wing—was next to me, so whenever she got the ball I chased her and got it off, and the other half. So, three players are paralyzed, which half my team. Although I was not constructive, I was destructive. That's how I started my hockey career. And then of course I went, I found that they all praised me, "Oh you played well," you know. So, I said, "Ok." Then I started picking up, you know. Then I start playing the boys in my neighborhood. That's how I started playing the boys. I was only girl playing with the full boys' team. To which dad didn't like at all. He said, "You are like a tomboy. You're the only playing there. You—" But I, I didn't stop. I said, "No, I'm, I'm playing." I used to go every evening. He didn't stop me, but he just advised me that "You should be more at home helping your mother than running after the boys."

Interviewer: So, did he ever put up serious resistance?

Sequeira: Not very much. But he did put up a resistance. He never encouraged me. Put it that way. He never ever encouraged me. But when I came to the top, he'd take a paper cutting in his pocket and show all his buddies. He used to go to the—we had a beach close by—and he had retired. And every evening he used to go to the beach to meet his buddies. And with the paper in his pocket saying, "This is my daughter. This is my daughter." And whenever I passed and he was with his friends, "That's my daughter. That's my daughter." But that was too late, you know, when I came to the top. I struggled all the way. I had no support from my family, at all. Even my siblings. They feel very bad when I tell them that not one of them came to see me run. My sister played hockey with me, so she was there for hockey. Not one of them came—ever came to see me run.

Interviewer: Did your mother sort of agree with your father?

Sequeira: My mother was very mild, very mild. My father was the domineering one. My, my mother just take, loved us, take care of us, and fed us. She never interfered in our lives as such—told us what to do or not to do. My father was a dominating figure.

Interviewer: So, I just want to clarify this suburban group, this sport's team, you were—Someone came to your house to ask you to join. And this is the field hockey team—.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: —you were on when you chose between picking up the rations and going—

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok. So, tell me about sort of moving from field hockey into track.

Sequeira: You know what happened? I, I, I didn't know I was fast. I mean, as I said, I never took part in any sports in the convent. And I didn't know I could, but I was on the right wing. So, I was moving the ball very fast. And when the ball was ahead, I should run to get it. So, one relation of mine, he told me, "You, you seem very fast. Why don't you, you run for athletics?" So, I had no idea I was. Although I was, I was in suburbs, I come to Bombay. I was like a country, country bumpkin if you call it. I didn't know, I said, "I've never seen anyone run, or any sports. I've never been to any sports. Only the silly—" even as I told you. So, so he says, "no, no, no. You, you come, you, you run. I'll put your name down." So, I took my sister with me. She was doing the high jump. So we both went quite happily there, and we were so disappointed because he forgot to register our names. And they wouldn't let us participate. So that full season went by because I said, "I'm not going again," you know. We went out of our way. We had to go by train, then walk, and whatever. And, and we were so disappointed, we said, "Never again." So when that full season passed the next season, another cousin of mine, he said, "You, you—why, why didn't you." I told him what happened. I said, "No." He said, "No, I promise you, I'll make sure I come with you. You come." So he encouraged us, So we went again. And there, they were all running. I mean, not running, they were all warming up. And I'm standing like this [arms crossed] watching them. And they were sweating. I said, "My gosh, they're sweating and I'm fresh." See how much—how little I knew about sports. I said, "I'm fresh. I'm sure I'll beat them. How can they beat me when they're sweating like this? And they're tired. They must be tired because they're sweating. And I'm so fresh. I'm sure I've got a better chance." So when we ran, and when they beat me, I said something, "There must be something to it. It can't be that they beat me when I'm so fresh and they are—" So I found out where they train. The three top ladies were running there. So I asked them where they train. "Oh, we're training in the same place called Rebel Stadium in town." So, I got the address from them, and the next day—I, I just joined them. What—whatever they were doing—they were doing ten starts, twenty starts—I did. If they took laps—if they took four or five laps, ten laps—whatever they did, I just followed them. Whatever they were doing. And that, that, that first season I came second or third. So I said, "There is something to it." I warmed up and everything. I said, "The very first year they were saying, 'Who's this one on the rise and now? Who's this one? From nowhere she's come, she's come second, third.'" So, and then I never looked back. And that was in '49 or '50, I don't know.

[pause in video]

Interviewer: Alright. This is James Newberry still here with Mary D' Souza Sequeira. So, I want to pick up—we were talking about 1949, 1950. You were starting to place second and third after doing the training—

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: —and the warmups—

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: —things like this.

Sequeira: I had no coach at that time. I just followed whatever the others were doing because they were first, second, third. And I said, “Whatever they’re doing, they’re doing right.” So, I just followed whatever they were doing. And the coach, their coach was, the same coach the three of them had. So, he, he used to give starts for them, used to be there always there. So, when they should take the starts, I should take with them. So that’s how I started warming up and training.

Interviewer: Did you have to pay anyone?

Sequeira: No, I didn’t have to pay anybody. Even the coach, they didn’t have to pay. He was doing it voluntary. He was very good. His name was Jall Patiola? and he devoted himself to sports like, you know. It was day in and day out. Only after sports—I think he was teaching sports in some school and so. So he was into it. And he was very happy when his girl’s doing so well.

Interviewer: So, as you began to compete and, and, and place and do better and better, what were—was motivating you? And what were your goals at that point?

Sequeira: At that time, you know, I didn’t really know about the Olympics, or the Asian Games were, were not thought of at that time when I was—And then in ’49 and ’50, I started coming second, third.² Second, third to them. The three of them were [name of people]. It was first, second, third between the three of them. So, then I came in. When I came in, two dropped off. I don’t know which two dropped off. And then the third one dropped off because I, I started beating them. And they, they didn’t drop off immediately, no. It was ’51 they, they—Nehru announced—the Prime Minister at that time—that we were going to have the first Asian Games at Delhi.³ And, so I was competing. I came second. You know the first, second—first, second, third were taken too, I think. And I know I came second or third in the 200. So, I was selected for the 200 meters. 100, 100 and 200, I think. I’m not sure about the 100. But the 200 meters, I know I participated. I got third place at the Asian Games. And so that was how it happened. What did I say again?

Interviewer: So, you, you competed in the, the 200 meter at the Asian Games, and got third place.

Sequeira: Yes.

² The Asian Games were first held in New Delhi, India in 1950. During the post-war period, many Asian countries gained independence. This new independence inspired many Asian countries to seek a new type of athletic competition that created unity amongst the Asian nations.

³ Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India after the country gained independence.

Interviewer: This was in Delhi. What sort of—was there excitement? Was it a huge—

Sequeira: Yes. It was so thrilling for me. First time I'm going, I think. And we were three—those three first, second, third, and me. We ran the relay, and we came second place for the relay. And this Jal Patiola? was training us for the relay. And he also trained us for the Second Asian Games relay where we got first place. So, because we were all from Bombay, it was easy for us to practice together, and, and, and make sure the baton exchange was right. It was only the baton exchange that made us win that race because we were just faultless. That's how we won in Second Asian Game. The First Asian Games, we came second place.

Interviewer: So, this was a new sporting event, the Asian Games?

Sequeira: Yes. First Asian Games it was held in Delhi. We just got our independence, and Mr. Nehru must have thought, "Let's have an Asian Games." So, he volunteered to hold it, and that's how the Asian Games started.

Interviewer: So, a lot of that was mixed with patriotism and, and like being independent?

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: The idea of the Asian Games.

Sequeira: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: Was there press around your, your second-place finish? I mean—

Sequeira: No, I don't remember at all any press or anyone. No one ever talked to me, or interviewed me, or said anything anytime.

Interviewer: What was your family's response?

Sequeira: They were just happy that, "Oh, you won, good, "sort of thing, you know." No—

Interviewer: So, they didn't attend?

Sequeira: No, no, no. No way. I told you, they never attended even once, even my local. That was Delhi because we had a free pass. All of, all of them could have come. But no one, no one came, of course.

Interviewer: How far was Delhi from Bombay?

Sequeira: It's—how many miles, I don't know. Bombay's down south, and this is right up north. By train—I always go by train—because the train was like full days ride in the train. That time it was like one and a half day.

Interviewer: So, it was a long trip?

Sequeira: Very long trip.

Interviewer: I see. So—you, you were mentioning that, sort of, in relation to your family's attitude, that things were backward for women at that time. Can you, can you talk about that a little bit more? In other areas besides sports as well.

Sequeira: You know, those days, I don't know, we—the women were—I don't know how to describe it. They were—boys were allowed to play and do everything. And the girls were supposed to be ladylike from the very beginning. And they could do, shouldn't be, running around and playing, I don't know why because children are children. I remember that my—I was the only one in the family at that time, and my sister, she do the high jump. We took part in the sports. And later on all my other sisters started playing hockey. But nobody ran. My daughter was a natural al So. She started running and she won the Nationals junior level, under seventeen. And then as she always says, I told her, "You can't eat your fame. And you have to—." She was very bright, so I said, "You have to study. Do well." And she see I've, I've got so much fame, but no, no cash. No cash in my pocket. I had this railway job, but at that time government was not paying too well. Private companies were paying better. But this was good for me, I liked sports. So it gave me something to do what I liked. And so I continued. I said, "You are such a bright student. You can do so much better." The last year for college I made her give up sports to get a high ranking in the university. And immediately after that she run the airlines. So, she, she couldn't combine her sports with the, with the airline work. They had different timings like sort of, you know. And she used to travel to Saudi and back. So, she couldn't participate. So that, that was the end of her sport's career.

Interviewer: I see.

Sequeira: I felt bad because she was good in athletics, good in basketball, and hockey. She played three for the state. Maybe not representing India, but she played three, three disciplines. And she was good in all three. But I, I didn't let her continue. And she happened to join the airlines, which was at that time, very highly paid. It was like ten times the salary you were getting for any job in India. There was Saudi's riyal they were paid.⁴ So she continued there. And that's how she, she got—she asked for a posting to America because she wanted to go further studies. After she graduated, she went to New York University Baruch. And that's how I, I start—I started traveling to meet her. All my vacations from the railways I used to take to come and visit her. And then when I retired, I join her. About that time, '91, she got married. So, I been more with her than Bombay.

⁴ The riyal is the primary currency of Saudi Arabia.

Interviewer: I see. Well, well let's return. And, and I want to ask you when you started to emerge as *the* champion. And, and, and then qualifying for the Olympics in 1952.

Sequeira: Yeah, 1952 we had the Nationals. Nationals is called interstate. So, for that you have—each state sends their best player—best athletes. And we met that year in Madras, it's called Chennai. So, this was Nationals as we call it—interstate. They—I didn't know they were going to send any women's team to the Olympics, or anything of the sort. There, we had a meet there. And as I said, I participated 100, 200. I was best at that time. And 200, I broke the all India record at 25.7. And I took it in my stride. "Oh, I broke the record. So, ok." Then I was shocked to learn that they're sending a team. And my name was enclosed to go to Helsinki because I'd broken the India record. And there was another, [Nema Golsh?] who broke the hurdles record. So, we two were selected as the best athletes to represent at the Olympics. So, we were the first two women. And there were two swimmers. First time they ever sent women to the Olympics.

Interviewer: How did you feel finding out?

Sequeira: I was, I was thrilled because I had, I had not heard about the Olympics as such. I didn't know that they had a—I had a vague idea of course that they had this, like this interstate meet, they have this interworld meet, or whatever it's called. But I, I never thought that I'd be selected to represent there—And I was of course very thrilled. And the first time me getting out of India, going abroad. And then they took us to Denmark. It was the first place I—abroad I went. First time I flew. Everything was first for me. It was so exciting, so new. And I was just so thrilled about everything.

Interviewer: Who took you to Denmark? Who made that possible? Who paid?

Sequeira: The government paid for that. They just paid for the whole team. There was like—First they were saying they selected me—selected us—then they said they didn't have funds. So, they had a dance in my honor at—I belonged to the local club there. And there was one councilor who he organized a dinner dance. No, not a dinner dance. It was a [00:42:20] we call it, and a, a dance. We had a—I still have that invitation card. And they collected Some funds, and the, and the others I don't know how they collected funds, and we all went. They, they—I don't know how they, they selected Denmark. They must have invited us there because we had a training camp there.

Interviewer: Where was it?

Sequeira: In Denmark, Copenhagen. And we had a couple of meets there before we went to Helsinki.

Interviewer: So you, you were talking about a couple of meets. Can you talk about the preparation for the games?

Sequeira: We were like, it was more a training camp. We used to train everyday with the athletes from there. And they had—they used to have very often in Denmark—like we had very few events where we all competed. There they used to have every Sunday or every twice a month or something. So we, we were there for fifteen days. I think we had only one event we, we, I participated in. And then they—we had our usual training, you know. What we would do, practice in, in India I guess we, we did there. We could get more acclimatized al So because the weather. And then we flew to Helsinki.

Interviewer: And, and what did you think arriving in Helsinki? I mean that's Finland, it's— Was it cold? And what was the, what was the—

Sequeira: The weather was not cold as such. Of course I, I used stockings or whatever. But it wasn't cold, cold because it was summer, and the weather was very pleasant. And I was So thrilled to meet people from different countries. And I was training. And I have a nice photograph of Marjorie Jack Son.⁵ At that time I didn't know who she was, a world class runner. She was training, and I was training with her. She was very simple per Son—I remember—and we were talking. And she said, "I'm from Australia." And I said, "I'm from India." And we were jogging across. And then I was taking starts, and Harri Son Dillard was there.⁶ And he came, and he said, "Where are your blocks?" So I said, "No, I, I don't have any blocks." We, I couldn't afford to work with running blocks. I don't know if they had blocks at that time because we used to dig the ground, and, and then take starts, you see. So I said, "No, I don't have any blocks." So he brought me a big pair of blocks. They were So heavy. But I was So proud to have—to own blocks. Of course I don't know, I don't know, I don't know whether—I was forced to use them at the Olympics because they were not allowed to dig the ground. So it came in handy that I could use them, but I had not practiced with them as such—much. Just the two, three days before the Olympics. I just practiced with them. But we are not allowed to dig the ground, So that was useful. And I carried them to India, and I was So happy that my daughter was able to use them after I gave up. And then we left it. Someone asked her for it when she gave up. Someone asked her if they could borrow it, and she said "Sure." But we never heard about that after this. We don't know what happened to them.

Interviewer: Well, this athlete that gave them to you, can you, can you spell his name for me?

Sequeira: Harri Son Dillard. H-A-R-I-S-S-O-N D-I-L-L-A-R-D. He was the winner: 100, 200, hurdles, and relay.

Interviewer: And where was he from?

⁵ Marjorie Jack Son was a prominent female runner from Australia. She competed in, and won Gold, in the 100 meter and 200 meter events at the 1952 Olympics.

⁶ Harri Son Dillard was an American track athlete. He was known for his dual wins in the Olympic sprinting and hurdling events.

Sequeira: He America.

Interviewer: I see. So this was a huge champion?

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you happened to run into him?

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: And he gives you starting blocks.

Sequeira: Yeah. He, he, he, he took my address down. I don't know, he wanted to be friends with me, I guess. And he wrote to me. In fact, So many years, I have it in my collection of photographs, and letters, and whatever—this card. Writing to me that "I'm going here and there." But I never, I was never a letter writer, and I never replied. So, So, that was the end of it. Then he came to, to meet me a couple of times. And he—when he won the prize—he came and gave me his bouquet.

Interviewer: Ah.

Sequeira: That was nice of him.

Interviewer: Was he—

Sequeira: Very friendly.

Interviewer: Ok, was he more than friendly?

Sequeira: No. He was friendly, very simple. He just wanted to be friends with me. And I made friends— So many— So it was like another friend.

Interviewer: Did you meet Roger Bannister?

Sequeira: No. He was the, the English champion.

Interviewer: Ok.

Sequeira: 400 meters.

Interviewer: So, did you—

Sequeira: He broke the mile.

Interviewer: Was there an opening ceremony? Did you participate in that?

Sequeira: Oh, yes. It was So—I don't know what's the correct word to use. It was like a gala, you know. We felt So nice to walk into the stadium in our uniforms. All in—everyone was walking and it was just So nice. And I, I remember that we were all there. We could see the packed stadium. And I was saying, "My gosh. Where am I? Where have I come? And what's happening?" I couldn't believe that—world was a change for me So much, you know. And I was just taking it all in. I, I couldn't take it all in. It was just So exciting, and beyond my imagination that I would ever come to that, that stage, that day. So far away from home. I never ever dreamt that I would see that day.

Interviewer: Well just before your, your events, what went through your, your head? And how did you feel?

Sequeira: Yeah, I was—When I saw them all training and all, and I knew. I was quite new actually, you know. I started hardly three, four years. I, although I was the best in India. I, when I saw them, I was a bit nervous. Wondering how I would do. And in India, I was always in front. I never knew who was behind. But here it was the opposite. I was behind, watching them running in front of me. It was terrible experience, actually.

Interviewer: Well, what, what did you place?

Sequeira: I don't know what I placed. I came towards the end. But I Sort of, I didn't go all out. I was So disheartened to see that they were beating me So much, you know, that I was thinking, "Well, what am I doing here?" You know, I, I know I didn't do my best timing. I should've done better than what my timing was, that thing. But I lost heart Somehow when I was running. When I found them So far ahead and I couldn't catch up.

Interviewer: And how many events did you compete in?

Sequeira: 100 and 200.

Interviewer: Ok. So you said you didn't do as well as you would've liked.

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: And, and what—afterward how did you, Sort of, feel? Were you dejected?

Sequeira: No. I said, "I must do better because this—whatever I've done is not good enough." But then I had no coaching, no one to show me how to do better. I just plodded on. And then the next was '51. After '51, '52 was the—I should—They were to have the international women's hockey in '51, but that year, Queen Elizabeth's coronation took place. That was all sudden like, it was not planned. The king died, and she was called from Africa and she was coroneted—

Interviewer: Right.

Sequeira: —in, in '51. So our hockey got postponed to '52. If it was '51, I may not have made it, I think because I wasn't, I wasn't that—that good in hockey. But then one year helped me. In fifty—Oh no, was it '52 that she was coroneted? 'Cause '53 we had this. Yeah. We had '53.

Interviewer: Yeah. So I think it was, I think her father died in '52.

Sequeira: Yes, '52.

Interviewer: And she may have been crowned in '53 officially.

Sequeira: No, no, no. '52 she was coroneted, her coronation took place. And '53—It was, that's why the World Games was held in Folkstone.

Interviewer: Ah.

Sequeira: It was to be held in Folkstone. So they postponed it to '53. So if it was in '52, I may not be able to because of the Olympics and whatever. But '53 I was free. And I was—I had one more year to prepare. So I, I improved. In '53, I got automatically selected for the team. First time they sent an Indian women's team. So I'm the first Indian double international.

Interviewer: So you went to an international—

Sequeira: World Cup, that's what it's called. That was known as the World Cup. Like they have World Cup football. This was World Cup women's hockey. And they called it International Women's Hockey Festival.

Interviewer: And where was it held?

Sequeira: Folkstone, England.

Interviewer: Ok. Did you—How did you feel about your, your sports at that time? Did you consider like Something you were doing temporarily? Or a career? What—

Sequeira: No question of a career. I didn't think there was any career in it. But I just loved sports. That was my lifeline, my life. I had no other interests but sports. So I used to go everyday and play with the boys. And I used to—when I, when I started athletics seriously—I should travel forty minutes by local. I should walk to the station, travel by train, then walk to the stadium. And I used to train there five days a week. And I used to play hockey whenever I could because I—the athletics you needed full training. Like, you know, you couldn't take a break as such, I felt. So I used to train. And I, I didn't train much in hockey. But the speed, and the

fitness, and the thing—I could, by then I could dribble enough ‘cause you hit the ball and everything else. I was Improving my hockey. But I didn’t practice as much, I could’ve been So much better in either one if I could have paid more attention, you know. I had, I didn’t have the time to play hockey. So when the sea Son was over, then I used to play hockey full time. So that’s how I, I did it. And then the mon Soons broke in. You couldn’t do any outdoor sports in a mon Soon. So heavy in Bombay. Then I played table tennis and badminton. So I, I excelled in that. Not much, but enough to play for the railways.

Interviewer: Well where did, where did you live at that time? With your family or on your own?

Sequeira: No. In India at that time, no one left the family till they got married. Well however old you were, maybe twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-six, or how ever old it is, you, you always stayed with the family till you got married and left.

Interviewer: So were, were you making any money off of sports?

Sequeira: No. but you know what happened? The railways is like a state in India. They participate as a state for the Nationals. National means interstate. They and the army. Whatever states there are— So many—two more, railways and. And it was good that the railways started this because they used to recruit. And they had a wide place from all over India. Same with the army. Army used to take only men. But railways took women and men. Wherever they could to join the railways. So we had a good strong team in all the sports. That isn’t fair actually because we took the best from every state to represent the railways. So the railways were always on top—railways. So it became like a railway/army fight. The other states went away because their best players were sucked into the army or railway.

Interviewer: I see. So these are teams from all over India.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: And they’re spon Sored by states.

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: And two of the states were the railway company—

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: —and the army.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interivewer: And So you competed for the railway?

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok. So you were paid by the railway?

Sequeira: I was not paid to participate as such, but I was recruited on sports account because of my sports abilities. They recruited me in the railways. And I was put in the sport's department. So it was good, I liked what I did. I—we used to have like interdivision level. First of all, we used to have division level, like Bombay division. Then they would select—in every game—and then they would select for interdivision level. Interdivision level was selected to represent the railways—like central railway, northern, Southern. So, you know, this was just steps. And they represent the railways. So I was in the sport's department organizing all this, you know. And then I was made an officer in the sport's department where I was able to recruit good players. So I used to scout around to, to see. And we had a good competition because the western railway and the central railway headquarters were in Bombay. So we used to scramble to get the better players before the other did.

Interviewer: So this became a career?

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, I see. Well, I want to, to touch on, on Something very specific—your meeting with Jesse Owens.⁷

Sequeira: Yeah.

Interviewer: Could you describe what you knew about him before, and, and your, your experience meeting him?

Sequeira: Yeah. I was—I heard that he won the '36 Berlin Olympics, and Hitler refused to shake his hand. And he came as an ambassador on sports—he came as a sport's ambassador to India. He was sent by the President Eisenhower to India. He went all over the world, around for that matter. He came to Bombay, went to Delhi, Some major cities in India before he went to Australia and other parts. And he give—he call us—they at least they told us to meet at a stadium So he could give us Some tips. So he gave us Some good tips on how to start, and how to exchange the baton. Whatever he could in that short time he had. And then they have facilitated him at the Taj Mahal. Had a dinner dance for him. And I got a nice photograph of me dancing with him. Yeah, it's a nice memento.

Interviewer: And it was a short interaction.

⁷ Jesse Owens was a renowned track and field athlete, recognized for his four-time Olympic gold record in the 1936 Olympics. He participated in sprint and long jump events.

Sequeira: Very short interaction.

Interviewer: But, did—what did he—what was his personality?

Sequeira: He was a very charming person. And he was very outgoing, and very friendly, and was a very good ambassador—was for the American sports. And especially there was at that time, there was still discrimination between the blacks and whites in America. And in India we have a lot of caste system. So this was good bonding like this, you know. He's come as an ambassador for America. And we were able to meet him. And we all looked up to him because he was such a good athlete. So it was, it was very nice gesture the president made to send him as a sport's ambassador.

Interviewer: Was this after you had competed in the Olympics?

Sequeira: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: Ok.

Sequeira: Much after.

Interviewer: Did he know about you?

Sequeira: I don't think he knew about me, but he met me there then he—They must have told him that I was because he, he gave me special attention there. When he was giving us some tips, I got some photographs of him showing how to do, what to do. So he took special interest in singling me out and giving me more expertise about his athletics or whatever.

Interviewer: And there's a wonderful picture of you sort of, sort of reaching out, and, and he's talking to you.

Sequeira: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So I noticed some of those. So how long did you work for the, for the railways?

Sequeira: I worked till I retired.

Interviewer: And what age were you at retirement?

Sequeira: It was 58 at that time.

Interviewer: You were 58?

Sequeira: mmhmm.

Interviewer: Ok. And can you tell me about, about your marriage and your family?

Sequeira: Yeah. I got married in '58, and my Son was born '59, and my daughter was born '61. My husband was not a sportsman at all. He was very intelligent. And everyone used to ask him, "How did you meet her? She's such a fast runner. How, how did you catch up with her?" So he says, "I waited for her at the tape." He was very funny, you know. You could talk. So, So he always had an answer for everything. So I didn't learn after, "I waited for her at the tape." I thought it was very neat.

Interviewer: And what was his name?

Sequeira: It was Francis Sequeira.

Interviewer: And where was he from?

Sequeira: He was from Goa. He was born and bred in Goa. Schooled in Goa. And then came to Bombay for a job. You see at that time in Goa, there were no jobs. It was not, not industrialized. All were farmers. My grandparents were farmers. That's how my dad came to Bombay looking for a job.

Interviewer: Right.

Sequeira: So he too—after he finished his education—he came to Bombay looking for a job. That's how he settled in Bombay.

Interviewer: How did you meet?

Sequeira: We met at a—we used to have a lot of parties and picnics when I was growing up. And I cannot find in America. They don't have picnics and parties like we used to have. We used to have a lot of picnics and parties. And one such picnic, I met him, you know. And—

Interviewer: Well, can you describe your, your marriage? Was it—did, did you feel—You were working.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: And I assume he was working.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: Would you describe your marriage as an equal marriage?

Sequeira: Yes, we was equal. And I was very fortunate. I had—very strange—we had a maid, a full-time maid. So it was very good for me that I could—My job took me

traveling, you see. We have divisions, as I said, in the railway. We had five divisions where we used to meet to select the team for the railway. So I used to travel a lot. And I used to travel a lot in sports. So this maid of mine was a full-time maid. And it was So strange. Her name was Mary D' Souza. Can you believe it? Of all the names in the world, she had to come and work with me, and her name was Mary D' Souza. And I thought, when she first came, my husband said, "Mary," and we both turned to look. So we, we, we changed her name to Mari. So she was always known as Mari in our household. The children would always call her Mari till now because she died. But she lived till she—she worked with me till she died.

Interviewer: Wow.

Sequeira: So. And it, fortunately for me, she was with me till I retired. So, So it was—it worked well for me. And she was like a second mother to them, you know.

Interviewer: So you had the two children.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: And what were their names?

Sequeira: Richard and Marissa.

Interviewer: Marissa. And you—eventually Marissa moved to the United States—

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: —for further education.

Sequeira: Yes.

Interviewer: And can you tell me about the process of immigrating to the United States.

Sequeira: Yeah. My Son was in the merchant navy. So he was traveling most of the time. I was alone at home. And Marissa was in New York. So after I, I retired, I came. She, she came to Atlanta from New York. And got married in Atlanta. So I came in '91 when I retired. I came to live with her. And So I, I, I—'cause my Son was—traveling. He was in the merchant navy, as I said. So he was never—hardly at home like, you know. Three months in and two months off or whatever. So mostly I was alone. So I came and join her here.

Interviewer: And, and what is it like to live here after spending most of your life in India?

Sequeira: Well, I'm enjoying my life here. I'm glad I, I moved. What's all, I've got a loving daughter, and I got a wonderful Son-in-law. So I'm very happy. And what is

good is I, I am never at home. Five days of the week I keep center hopping. Mondays I go to Alpharetta Senior Center. Tuesday I go to Crabapple Senior Center. Wednesdays, it depends, mostly I go to Crabapple or wherever. Thursday I go to Pinckneyville. That's another senior center. It's a big senior center. And then on Fridays I go to Roswell Senior Center.

Interviewer: Wow.

Sequeira: So five days of the week I'm out of the house. I leave in the morning at about 7:15/7:30, and I come back about 2:30 or So—2:30/3:00. Then I have my afternoon siesta. That's one thing I miss if I don't have. So at least for one hour, I put the alarm because if I don't, I'll, I'll sleep through the evening.

Interviewer: Well, I want to, I want to ask you one more question. So, you mentioned when we were driving over here how your daughter's efforts led to you being recognized in India. Can you talk to me about that?

Sequeira: Yeah. My daughter always said, "Mom, you, you're a pioneer in sports. And no one, no where have you mentioned, and no one ever said anything about you anywhere. You've not received any awards or anything. And why, why have they ignored you?" So when I went to India she said, "You will bring all your cuttings, and your photographs, and whatever you have. Your medals and everything." And I noticed that I, I can't find one medal. I don't know. The Asian Games medal—railways—relay. Second, I, I didn't realize that I got second place. But I couldn't find that medal. She asked me, "Where's the medal?" I found the third place 200 meter medal, but I never ever found that medal—silver medal. Anyway, So she told me, "Bring everything." So I brought whatever I could. And I just gave it to her. I said, "Here. Don't waste your time. You think after 60 years anyone's going to remember me or recognize my efforts? No way. But don't waste your time." And I just handed it to her. And she, she worked on it day and night. She got in touch with the, the president of the sport's per Son in Bombay who was very—what should I say—helpful. And she got in touch with Delhi. I don't know if she managed to get in touch with the sport's per Son there. And Somehow she, she's very pushing. So she got everything organized. All my life history, and all my photographs she attached, and that I was the first in everything—Nation Games, Olympics, World Hockey, and everything. And why I have not been recognized all these years [01:08:34]. And I didn't know she—what she was doing. And when I saw her I said, "What a waste of time." She's spending So much of time. Every time I saw her I said, "She's just wasting her time." I never mentioned anything. And one day I went Crab—I was, I was on my way to Crabapple. And Somehow I have always put my cellphone off, or I forget to take it. But I, I had my cellphone that day, and it was off. So she waited for me to come to the center, and she phoned the manager to ask me to phone me—ask me to phone her immediately. So as Soon as I reached there, I phoned. She said, "Guess what?" So I said, "Yeah, what?" "You got the award." I said, "What?" I could've dropped dead. I just could not believe it, that after 60 years they finally

realized that I, that I existed. So at the awards ceremony—it was a very lovely function though, I must say—all the top sportsmen of every event was there. The president was giving the awards. And it was—I was So happy that my children were able to come. My daughter was there. My Son was there with his whole family. And I was— So at the function, after that they had a dinner for the thing, you know. Many of the ministers and the sports people came up to me and said, “We are very Sorry that we didn’t recognize you earlier or whatever.” I said, “I’m So glad at least I got it. I didn’t get it posthumously.” And I said, “I’m happy that I got it now. Better late than never.” And my grandchildren were there to see me—would not have been So if it was. And my grandchildren were So proud because they told the whole school that they were going to see their grandmother get the award. And they were So thrilled. They felt So important at school that their grandmother was getting the award. So that was worth it. I think that was more to me than me getting the award earlier. Made up for all the late giving, or whatever you call it.

Interviewer: And that was—where was this, this ceremony held?

Sequeira: Yeah. The Rashtrapati Bhavan.⁸ It’s like the White House.

Interviewer: So it’s in Delhi?

Sequeira: In Delhi, in Delhi.

[Interview concludes and resumes with Sequeira’s story of missing an opportunity to attend the Commonwealth Games]

Sequeira: Oh my gosh, that was the worst moment, it still is, ever be. We were at the Asian Games before that in 1953. I went to Salem. They invited me and another athlete, [01:11:20] to Salem to participate in their local—national—meet. And there I met this, this lady from Salem who was first in her, her—the best runner. And then next time I met her in Asian Games in Manila. And to—We said, “hello” and we were, you know, we met afterwards Salem, we just did “hello”. And I was surprised she was next to me taking a start. And we both went on our knees to take the start, and she flicked the start twice. Flicked means she beat the gun—twice. And she was, she was disqualified. Just sitting—she was standing next to me and just crying away. And I, I just could not, could not start. I was looking at her, and I just could not take off. And I had a late start, and that was—I struggled. I struggled to run. In, in fact, I should have run smoothly. I tensed. And when you tense, you, you break your speed. You see, you don’t, you don’t move fluently. So that the, the girl beat me. I, I, I just didn’t even qualify because I was late. My late start destroyed everything. If that girl had won in, in 12:02 or 12:03 because 12:03 was my best, I was doing it consistently. She won 12:05. I knew I was so much better than her. But, but it so happened that I had a bad start. I couldn’t tell anybody that I got beaten because I had a bad start. That was an excuse. So I just

⁸ The Rashtrapati Bhavan is the Indian presidential residency located in New Delhi, India.

kept quiet about it. And I remember I cried all night because if I had won that race, I would've been selected for the Commonwealth Games, which were to be held in Canada, Vancouver. Automatic selection for second at the Asian Games were qualified to go to Commonwealth Games. Just like how in India you have to selection at the Nationals to go to the Asian Games. Asian Games selection for second to go to Commonwealth. And in my, in my dream, and this was Commonwealth that time, not Asian Games. I was so sure of winning. And that I would go. So that, that was the worst day of my life. I can never forget that because of that, I was sure winner. And I lost. And I didn't get to go to Commonwealth. And that disheartened me so much, so much that I, I lost interest for some time in the—.

Interviewer: Well thank you for sharing that.

Sequeira: Ok.