Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: NICOLE NGUYEN
Interview: Malessa Tem
Date: February 21, 2012
Location: Yorba Linda, California
Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Winter 2012
Length of Interview: 00:85:50

Time Log

0:00:19.2 Nicole Thu Nga Nguyen explains her birthdate and birth location.
0:01:37.8 Describes her families migration from Da Nang, Vietnam to Saigon, Vietnam.
0:02:03.4 She talks about her family and how her grandmothers were single parents.
0:02:50.0 She describes the night when her family escaped in the middle of the night.
0:04:52.6 She has no pictures from being on a boat, but only Malaysia.
0:06:18.6 Everyone survives the boat trip to Malaysia.
0:07:58.2 She describes her experience of landing in Malaysia.
0:09:12.9 The camps were small and cramped. She cherished eating Top Ramen.
0:10:14.6 The length at the camp were only for a few months.
0:12:16.0 Acknowledges that there mainly Vietnamese people in those camps.
0:12:21.9 She played a lot in the camps.
0:12:48.7 Catholic Church sponsored her family to Lawton, Oklahoma.
0:13:28.3 She explains why her parents chose the U.S.
0:13:58.2 The resettlement in Oklahoma and the same apartment space for a family of nine.
0:14:54.8 She went to a Catholic school and family lived very much like in Vietnam.
0:16:33.6 The family walked everywhere and used old trays for dishes.
0:17:25.5 Her family couldn’t handle the cold of Oklahoma.
0:18:26.5 Teacher rubbed lotion on her arm because she had bad skin.
0:19:43.2 She describes the first experience of learning English in school.
Everyone was nice to her family.

Stays in Oklahoma for almost 11 years.

Describes the first experience of being bullied by others.

Her communication skills helped when people bullied her.

Her nickname Na, Na-Nu.

Her family decides to move to California, she was bitter and didn’t want to move.

Transitions from Oklahoma to California school system.

She went to Bolsa Grande High School.

She joined the basketball team during high school.

She is not Chinese although she may look like it.

Latin classes in order to get great scores on SAT.

She drove a beat-up car to commute to UC Irvine.

Worked 2 jobs and went to school full-time.

Majored in Chemistry but switched to social science.

Got involved in Project Ngoc.

Advocacy was the main objective for Project Ngoc.

Disbanded the group on the 10th year.

Describes Project Ngoc in great detail.

She describes a boycott that Project Ngoc held to protest human rights in camps.

The year she disbanded the Project Ngoc.

Origin of her name Nicole and the ban of Nike products to bring awareness.

Networking was different back when she was in college.

Describes her career choices.

Telling her parents about her desires to go study at Hanoi University.

Reflections on being a 1.5 generation.

She explains her choices in getting involved with the community.