

Interviewee: Tracy Baldelli
Interviewers: Grace Rinaldi, Shadda Cliche
Date of Interview: March 23, 2022
Transcribers: Grace Rinaldi, Shadda Cliche



Overseen by Dr. Christine Williams, Assumption University

Abstract: Tracy Baldelli was born in Boston, MA in 1993 and grew up with her family in Southborough, a neighboring town to Worcester. She then furthered her education at Assumption College now Assumption University. After Tracy graduated, she became an active member of the Worcester community. She's an active board member at the Boys and Girls Club and joined the Emerald Club. Tracy was first employed at United Way and then at Worcester Polytechnic Institute [WPI] and Providence College. In this interview, we learn about the challenges that Tracy faced and overcame throughout her life, the paths she has taken to become a successful individual, and she shares some great life lessons. Tracy also touches upon the impact and challenges she faces while working straight out of college and later through the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Worcester Business Journal* named her one of the Forty Under Forty in 2020 and one of the Power 50 in 2021.

GR: Okay, so I just want to make sure we have your permission to record your oral history, using your name Tracy Baldelli and on the date March 23, 2022.

TB: Yes.

GR: So, let's start off with, we know your full name is Tracy Baldelli. Do you have a maiden name? Or are you married?

TB: I do not. I'm engaged. So, I will be changing my name. But no, that is my name as of today.

GR: So where were you born?

TB: I was born in Boston and I grew up in Southborough. Mass.

GR: So, you just said you are going to marry, soon you're engaged. So, do you have children? Future children?

TB: Hopefully future children today. Yeah

GR: Awesome. And then what cultures/ethnicities do you identify with if you identify with any?

TB: Growing up, it wasn't super strong. I will be marrying though. A quiet Irish family. Very proud of that to Notre Dame grads. So also ties into the Irish background, but my family's Italian. Baldelli is my last name. So, I identify as that as well.

GR: Awesome. So, are your parents from Italy or your grandparents from Italy? Or tell us a little bit about your parents growing up?

TB: My parents are not from Italy. My mom's maiden name is McGovern. So, she is very strongly Irish. Her grandparents grew up in Ireland and were born there. So, it was my grandparents that were born there not my parents, right. So, it's a little removed.

GR: So, did you live in the Boston area growing up? I know, you mentioned you moved to West Boylston, Worcester. Like, where did that happen? How did that occur? Go to college?

TB: I grew up in Southborough. And went to Assumption [University]

GR: Oh.

TB: I don't know if you guys knew that.

GR: I didn't know.

TB: I graduated in 2015. And then up until last year, I lived in Worcester, down near the Greendale area. So, I just moved to West Boylston last year.

GR: Nice, so what led you to your decision to attend Assumption College, now University.

TB: My mom took me on my first college tour in Worcester because it was close to home. And I told her that I had no desire to go to school in Worcester. Growing up in Southborough, we always went into Boston, you know, to do stuff because it was close. So, I went on the tour. And you know, I liked it fine. It was my first one. Nothing to compare it to. And then when push came to shove, in terms of acceptances, I used to tell people this on tours, I don't know why but something about the community, you know, like my gut told me, and parents never liked that. Because they're like, what do you mean? But it just was like the community feel, I think, and I went back for accepted students' day and other programs and things and I absolutely loved it. So, it was a good choice.

GR: So, what did you study at assumption?

TB: I studied psychology. Are either of you psychology majors?

GR: Psychology minor.

TB: Okay, cool. And I was a philosophy minor as well. I did that because I had taken a lot of courses in psychology, I kind of just was naturally drawn to it. Knew, though, that I didn't want to be a psychologist or go on to get a master's or even teach. Right, so I just enjoyed the classes.

SC: Was it the major you thought you'd end up with?

TB: No, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I don't think I do, even to this day. So that's very normal, right? Yeah, honestly, I think sophomore year came around where you had to declare your major. And to be honest with you, I was a little like, uh-oh, and I think the core helps, right. So, like I had been exposed to a decent number of classes. And when I looked back at what I had already taken, a lot of it was psychology. So, I just picked it.

GR: Very nice. So, if we circle back a little to your life growing up to where you got to now. Did you live in a neighborhood? Did you live with your new neighborhood friends, anything that occurred in your younger life where you lived?

TB: Yeah, so I grew up in a small neighborhood in Southborough, a lot of kids so I think my generation like every house was full of at least two or three kids, which was fun. We used to do summer camp together like the mom would host summer camp. That was cool. And yeah, across the way from me was a girl my age so we were born like six weeks apart. So, we became good friends. So yeah, definitely. That's a big part of growing up for sure.

GR: Was she a friend you stay friends with for life? Are you guys distant now?

TB: Yeah, we're distant now. But we stayed close mostly through college. So yeah.

GR: That's awesome.

SC: Good. Did you have any siblings growing up?

TB: I have a brother. He's five years older than me.

GR: Oh okay. Are you and your brother still close?

TB: We're close. He has two kids now. So, that helps become closer.

GR: So, you're an aunt, that's awesome.

TB: That's right.

GR:

So, do you have family that lives in the same area? Do your parents still?

TB: Yeah, they're like lifers in Southborough, they're still there. My dad owns his own business. So, he runs that partially out of the house. So, like, they're grounded to that area. And then my brother lives in Natick, so not far.

GR: Not far at all, very drivable. That's awesome.

SC: So, since you don't currently live in the Worcester Community, what is your connection to Worcester still?

TB: I've been on the board for the Boys and Girls Club for, I think I'm coming up on five years. Originally when I graduated from Assumption, I worked at the United Way here in Worcester doing fundraising campaigns with local businesses. And we took a group of volunteers over to the Boys and Girls Club just to meet the executive director and get a tour. And she is fearless. And I kind of listened and wanted to follow her. And when I was looking to get more involved in Worcester, having moved here several years ago, I got coffee with her, and she asked me to be on her board, which was crazy. So, it's been a fun ride, for sure. And then I recently joined the Emerald Club in Worcester, which is a nonprofit organization, mostly of Irish clubs being Irish, that raises money for the Mercy Center in Worcester, you guys might be familiar with that group. They're an organization that supports adults with developmental disabilities. So, I'm on that board as well.

GR: Have you gained like any, have you felt like you value the lives of people with disabilities more entering this path that you've taken o get involved.

TB: I've been fortunate that no one in my family or in my life, surrounding network has suffered from a disability. So, I think I'm learning a lot yet, to be honest with you. I haven't been engaged much with that population before I did some volunteer work at Assumption, but it wasn't with that population. It's more like youth. That's usually where I learn. So, I'm learning a lot.

SC: With Emerald, in what ways can people get connected?

TB: So, they've been around for like, I don't know, like 35 years or something?

GR: I've never heard of them.

TB: You probably haven't because to be honest, it's mostly older. It's an older generation. Most of Worcester, probably 40, 50 years ago was primarily Irish. Well, there were pockets of neighborhoods, you know, but a lot of folks that still either work in the city or leave the city are Irish. So, it's kind of created this great network. I would say that there's very few young people associated with it. We just held a gala at Polar Park two weeks ago. That's their big annual event. And then at the St. Patrick's Day parade, in Worcester, they do a beer tent to raise money. In terms of getting involved I'm not, I'm still learning about that I just joined a few months ago, but I think hopefully in coming years there will be more opportunities.

SC: With the beer tent, what do the funds go to?

TB: So, the three or four things they do throughout the year, they kind of pool that money together. And then they donate to the Mercy Center on an annual basis, so that kind of just gets

summed into everything that's raised. So, from the gala from that, they do some like raffle ticket sales and other smaller fundraising things throughout the years.

GR: So, you mentioned you went to Assumption where you studied psychology, and then you went to United Way and worked for them for a little while. So, what was your next step after that? Did you go to graduate school? Did you move to a different career?

TB: So, from the United Way, I went over to WPI to work in their advancement office. A friend of mine, also an assumption grad, had worked in the office at the time and sent me a job posting. I started working with young alumni and students. They have a robust senior class gift program at WPI and I oversaw that and then getting out in the Massachusetts area just meeting with young alumni kind of seeing what they're up to getting them more involved with WPI. And then my jobs kind of morphed over the years, I took on some more fundraising campaigns and larger projects, and then I became a major gift officer with them. So, raising dollars of 50,000 or more from individuals,

GR: Oh, wow

TB:alumni and parents, to WPI.

SC: That's amazing.

GR: So, as you mentioned, your major was psychology, and then you ended up in the field working with alumni and fundraising and stuff. Was there like a challenge you faced, you know, not switching careers, but like doing something that you weren't as comfortable? Or knowing?

TB: Yes and no. So, when I was at Assumption, I got an internship at UMass Medical School working in their development office. And at the time, they had hired a new events person and my supervisor was like—I think because we're both new and I was an intern—we can't say no to anything, right?

GR: Yeah.

TB: So, she's like, we're just going to pair you guys together, which was great. So, we were kind of learning at the same time. And then I was there for about two years. In the summers too, which was great. And through that, I just kind of learned every department that there is and in development, and so that I think that was a good foundation to kind of go into the career, the psychology piece, you know, people are interesting. So, it plays a role when working with donors. And obviously, there's a lot of listening and engaging, you know, interest in personalities. So, I think in a small way, it's still relevant.

SC: Throughout this time, did you have any support networks or mentors that helped you?

TB: Yes. So, while I was at school—I have none of them anymore, unfortunately, but the director of the Career Development Center was a mentor of mine, the director of the Reach Out

Center, so that used to be its own, I guess, department at the University. Right, and so there was a director there that I was close with.

And then Stephanie McCaffrey, who was at Assumption up until a few years ago in Campus Ministry, she was a bit and still is, we're close to this day. And she was a big mentor of mine. And then Liz Hamilton from the Boys and Girls Club is one of my mentors. And then, of course, at WPI. I had some throughout the years, so it's important.

SC: So, bring it back a little bit. What was your first job? Your first-ever job?

TB: I scooped ice cream. Did either of you do that?

GR: I didn't scoop ice cream. What did I do? I was a server at a golf banquet place.

SC: Oh, that's pretty good. I worked at Subway.

TB: Okay. Yeah, there was a greenhouse that morphed into like, they had a golf course and food. Anyway, I scooped ice cream and did other things. Yeah, that was a lot of fun.

SC: That's awesome.

GR: So, you mentioned that you've transitioned to a job at Providence. Would you tell us a little bit about it? Why, what led you to make that decision to transition?

TB: I had been in WPI for six years, and had four or five different jobs, but I also had about five different managers, and I was getting frustrated. And I also knew—so you know, in the higher ed worlds, colleges go through capital campaigns to raise money. Assumption had a very successful one recently, and so at WPI, we had just publicly launched the campaign, which meant probably another end due to COVID, unfortunately, probably another four to five years of a campaign. And that was, as a millennial, thinking about my resume, having 10 years is a great thing, but not necessarily for the age that I am. Right? So, I knew that probably for the last year and a half I knew I was probably going to make a move. I just need to be, you know, obviously the right thing. And I had my brother go to Providence College and one of his friends works there. And so, I chatted with him. And he connected me with a woman in advancement, who the day prior, they had posted the job that I'm in today. So, I chatted with her and really enjoyed our discussion and formally applied and went through that process. So, I'm doing the same job that I was most recently doing at WPI, gifts of 50,000 or more. And this allowed me, I just think, a new place, a new community to join. And then I think there's a lot of growth. They're starting thinking about their next campaign as well.

GR: So, do you feel comfortable where you're at right now? Or are you hoping?

TB: I do, yeah. I think it's right now. I'll be getting married. Probably buying a house. I should be more excited about it. I think that it was a good time. To be honest, personally, sometimes you just must do what's best for you. And it's a good time, I think, to probably take a

step back, and in some ways—so I did a lot of growth at WPI, but it was a lot of work. Right? Thinking back to myself at 24, I just did everything, which was important. But you get burned out from that. So yeah, I'm comfortable.

GR: So, you mentioned you're engaged. So, transitioning from WPI to Providence. Was there any strain on your relationship? Or was that an easy transition for you guys?

TB: I have a commute. I live in West Boylston, and I commute down to Providence every day, which is about 45 minutes. There's no traffic. It's not like anything bad. Going to Boston would be far worse. Right? Yeah. It will probably cause us to move. So, there's a lot of shifting going on. But no, I wouldn't say any strain. I think just, you know, relationships are hard work.

GR: Yes.

TB: If either of you are in one you would probably know. Right? So, it's just a lot of communication.

GR: Yeah, absolutely.

TB: And just thinking about things differently, like, starting dinner before I get home. Right? Like, logistically, it's just kind of funny how much you must think about that. But it's important.

SC: So how does that help with balancing your different priorities, roles, and responsibilities in your life?

TB: Wow. I don't know.

[All Laugh]

TB: I think when anyone thinks about a new job or something like that, there's conversations that must happen, right? Because if we're going to be getting married and buying a house, then we're making something permanent. So, like, where is that? And then if we want to start a family, well, I'm not giving up my career because we're not in the 1950s. So, what does that look like? And if we're both going to have a commute, then how short do we want it to be? And yet—so I don't know. It's progress. I think we're slow and steady. We're working through that. Just taking it day by day, planning a wedding as a part-time job. So, working for that.

GR: Did you meet your partner in college, or did you guys meet after college?

TB: I met him five years ago. So, a while after college, just before I moved to Worcester. I met him through a friend.

GR: That's awesome. So, do you have any like, if you could sit here and think about it, like do any pros and cons and right off the top of your head of the path you've chosen? We can start with pros if you want.

TB: Good to start with the positive. Okay. Pros. I don't know. I think that when I was in college, I gave up Facebook for Lent freshman year, because it was just like noise. Right? And I never went back to that end, and then subsequently, I never liked getting onto any other social media. So, I don't have Instagram. I don't have Tik Tok. I have LinkedIn, and Twitter. I do have Twitter.

SC: Okay, those are good to have.

TB: I've maintained my Twitter. Yeah, I mostly use it for my news. But that's been important to me, to not fill my time, of course, with other distractions, right? It's not like I don't have that. But I think that I've kind of let go of like, "Oh, what's that person doing?" Or I have some friends that I really do love from high school, but when we get together, they're like, Oh, my God, did you see so and so blah, blah, blah." And I don't care. You know if they're happy and healthy. That's important, right? But that's been important to me to kind of just drown out that world, if you will. For other pros,

GR: Social media hasn't played a role.

TB: Yeah, yeah. I think I'm just advocating for myself, my first boss at WPI. I don't remember when exactly, or why he said this to me. But he said, you know, the only person that can advocate for you is you. And I was probably going through some tough time at WPI. And I've really held that to my heart. Because I think when push comes to shove, as much as you have a boss or a manager, it's their job to look out for you. But at the end of the day, that's your job, right. And that's been important, I would say, in my career, as I've gone through new roles, or had to have difficult conversations, when priorities weren't aligning or something. And then cons, I'm avoiding the cons' part.

GR: I understand.

TB: I think relationships have been hard for me. I think college was hard in terms of relationships. I loved Assumption, but I will say housing played a big role in friendships, right? Because it was like, "Oh, who do we drop? Who do you have to go find? So, you can both go to the LLC," whatever. That was really—looking back, that was a huge part of my college experience, which is unfortunate. And I did go abroad to the Rome campus when it first opened, which was cool. And I really did like that because I was having a crappy time with some friends on campus. And I was like, "You know what, I'm just going to apply to this." I did it in the ninth hour. It was a brand-new program, right? I was like, I don't know, I'm just going to apply. I knew nobody was applying. And off, I went to Rome, and it was great. But a lot of that was because of crap that was going on at school. And I wanted to just get out. And it served a purpose. But I think that relationships for me have been difficult.

GR: So, you mentioned you went to the Rome campus. So well, how did that inspire you to do anything? Like, how was that for you?

TB: Well, it was the first time I had been out of the country. So that was wild. It taught me a lot of patience. There were only seven of us. So that was, you can imagine, cool. But we were like siblings. So, when we first left our plane, we got all the way up to Canada. And we had to turn around because we didn't have something in the plane that was messed up. Maybe it was like the AC or something. We had to go all the way back to Philadelphia to wait for an entire new plane. So that was right out of the gate. I was like, "Oh no, this is all out of our control." Right? "We just must sit in the airport and be miserable together." And I think that throughout the whole three months that we were there, that was probably the epitome of what it was, patience. Just either going with the flow, or I guess just being upset. I will say I'm not super adventurous. I really like routine. So that was a cool experience. My mom came to visit me at one point. It was cool to—I walked down the street to meet her and her friend. When they got off the subway, she's like, "Oh, my God, this is your neighborhood." I've been there for a month and a half. I know the coffee shop. Right? That was cool. To kind of have her see that as my new world for the time being.

GR: That's awesome. So, after you went to the Rome campus, you mentioned that you like routine. Have you felt like it inspired you to travel more, or go back to Europe anytime?

TB: Well, I haven't been back. We are going to go on a honeymoon. So where does that take us? My fiancé would love to go to Italy. Been there and done that. But maybe it is someplace in Europe that we will go. I will say, I think of my fiancé's family, his sister is down in Texas so I've had to learn to—I didn't really grow up going on planes. My dad owned his own business. And he was the worst boss because he was like, "Well, we can't go on vacation. I'm too busy." So, it was a car trip. Or if my brother had like a baseball tournament, it was like vacation. So, I've had to learn, if we want to see people, if we want to see his sister, we're flying and we're going for a decent amount of time, to make it worthwhile. So, I think Rome inspired me to see that you need to do those experiences. Those are important life experiences, too.

GR: That's good to know.

SC: It's hard to take those chances. So, with WPI and Assumption, since you've either gone to the school or worked at the other, how do you feel about the Worcester consortium and how they connect with each other.

TB: Oh, interesting. Yeah.

SC: Do they? Is there any way that we can make the relationship stronger, or build up each other?

TB: So, I don't know what it's like now. But when I was at school, I thought they did an okay job of trying to get students from one campus to another. Do they still do that? I think they got rid of that consortium bus.

GR: They don't really do that.

TB: Yeah, not as much. I did that a few times. So, there used to be a school bus that would kind of just run a loop.

GR: We don't do that.

TB: That's too bad. Then again, Worcester has grown so much. So, in 2011, there wasn't a whole lot to do in Worcester. I mean there were still great restaurants, but in terms of activity, you weren't necessarily checking online to see what was going on in Worcester on the weekend. Right? And that's changed. So, I think they should bring the bus back.

GR: Yeah

SC: Definitely.

TB: You can make a note of that.

GR: That's a very good point.

TB: I don't know what other ways. I know there's like a student government consortium, right?

GR: Yeah, I was on SGA, and they do serve on the WSGA with all the Worcester schools. They're board people, but it's not like a heavily populated thing that people know much about. So, when you were at college, were you involved in any organizations that made an impact on your time there?

TB: Yes, I was a service director for I think it was called the Reach Out center. So, I ran volunteers in my first year, I did an after-school program at Our Lady of the Angels, which is a small Catholic elementary school, near St. Peter's Church. And then I did the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. So, at that time, we used to have 40 or so volunteers a week go down to Flagg Street School and meet with their mentees. Again, don't know what the program is today, or if it exists, I hope it does. But that was a big part. And then I did participate in Campus Ministry retreats, and then the confirmation retreats that they run for high school students. I did that as well.

GR: Awesome.

TB: I was a senator in SGA. My senior year. It was interesting, that's for sure.

SC: What skills did you acquire from all that?

TB: A lot of organizational skills, I think. I thrived outside of the classroom. Again, I chose psychology because I had to choose a major and it was interesting. But to be honest with you, I'm probably never going to get a master's degree. It's not really my thing. So, I really enjoyed these outside of the classroom activities.

TB: So, a lot of organization, I would say a lot of communication skills.

GR: For sure. So awesome. If we switch to a different area of focus, do you consider yourself active politically? In your community?

TB: No, no I am not. I probably should be.

SC: We know that you've done volunteer work for the community, what specifically have you done?

TB: The Boys and Girls Clubs.

GR:
Were there any programs that you took initiative on?

TB: So, for the Boys and Girls Club in 2019, they had a gala in Elm Park, and it was to celebrate their 100th year. They had never done a gala or anything formal before this. So, there was a group of us there, about, let's say, fifteen of my friends that I worked alongside with. A lot of them work in nonprofits in and around Worcester. They obviously had a certain skill set. Which was helpful to have. We planned that for about 14 months. We raised over \$100,000 in new revenue for the club. That was a lot of fun and a lot of work.

GR: You mentioned that you took part in campus ministry at Assumption, so would you say religion played an active role in your life?

TB: Yes, and no. I would say I didn't really grow up super religious. We were a family that showed up at Easter Sunday Mass, for the first time all year, and then my mom was upset that

there were all these people at Easter Sunday Mass. I did go through confirmation and CCD and things. Then when I went to Assumption, which I didn't choose for it being a Catholic school, I dabbled in campus ministry. I was not a leader or anything on campus ministry though. I didn't necessarily hang out with a lot of those kids outside of our program, but it was something I enjoyed. Then I worked at WPI, which was not religiously affiliated. Now, I work at Providence College, which is unapologetically Catholic, which is awesome. Yeah. So, I've realized that I really enjoy being surrounded by a religious community. Again, I loved Assumption, but I don't think they're super Catholic in comparison. But that's a topic for another day.

SC: Growing up did health issues ever impact your life or anyone in your family's life?

TB: Fortunately, not a ton. I mean Alzheimer's unfortunately. I mean, I think a lot of people can say that, right? Yeah, so that was a traumatic event when my mom's mom passed away. I don't think any of my grandparents had it easy as they were going. So, they all had their small ailments and issues going on. But overall, fortunately, no big health issues.

SC: Growing up, was quality and affordable health care easily accessible to your family? And how about now?

TB: Yes, because my dad owns his own business my mom worked to carry health insurance because if you own your own business, it's extremely expensive to carry insurance. So, I would say as an adult now, I'm becoming aware of the kind of situation my parents set up with purpose. And my mom is fortunate that she could work part time, but a lot of her paycheck just goes to health, and she has a very expensive plan, no deductible. They just go to the doctor and it's like a \$5 copay. Now that I pay for my own health insurance, I'm like, wait a second, that was nice having a very inexpensive copay. In college when I went to the doctors and I only had a \$5 copay, I'm like, "Great!"

GR: You mentioned your dad had his own business. So, what did his business consist of?

TB: He does residential window washing and has for over 40 years. He basically was a young 25-year-old and started this business. Everything is still done by the book, he still, to this day, does not use a computer for his business. He just got an iPhone last year. My parents were on flip phones. He has been very successful. He employs one of his brothers who works for him. He's very healthy and can still physically do the job.

GR: Is this ever a business he wants you or your brother to take over when it comes time to him retiring?

TB: It's funny you ask; we were just talking about this. So, my dad's only 65. Again, fortunately, knock on wood, is in very good health because he has stayed active. I did say, "What are we going to do about the family business?" I don't think my brother has any interest. I, for the sake of family pride, feel like we must keep it alive in some capacity. I don't know what that looks like. My brother was like, "We're far, far from that." My dad says he's going to work until he's

dead. Honestly, I think he could work another 10 years. Maybe then retire. Hopefully, there's some extended family that may take it.

SC: Have you found during your life that you've ever had to be responsible for anybody else's health? Or be responsible for another individual?

TB: No, no. Does my fiancé count? In all seriousness, fortunately I haven't had to take on that responsibility. My parents just redid their will, and I will be a health care proxy for them someday.

GR: So, during your life, in any part of your lifetime, did you ever have to get through a tough time? If so, what did that look like for you? How did you keep going during those tough times? I know, you mentioned a little while back at WPI, you had some tough times there. I don't know if you want to dive into them or if there's another area you'd like to focus on.

TB: I would say, professionally, that's probably a good example. And then personally, my friend that I mentioned earlier, from childhood, we had a big blowout, as they say, this was several years ago. And she did not want to be my friend anymore. Which as an adult was strange, because you don't realize that these things still happen. That's supposed to be kid stuff, you know? But that was heartbreaking and I would say that for a good year it was rough. I pretended it wasn't happening, I didn't like dealing with my feelings. Then, I went to therapy and I think my therapist also had a hard time believing that my friend would just walk out on our friendship of 25 years. It was almost like she died. I went to therapy up until, of course, just before the pandemic. I was like, "Oh I've learned a lot, I'm well beyond that experience." I felt that I had learned a lot and was in a good place. So, I forewent therapy, and then the pandemic happened. I was well beyond that experience, I really was. Anyway, that's how I got through that. Okay, so because some things I knew up until then, to cope or deal with things, obviously weren't working right. I think my fiancé, who was my boyfriend at the time, probably got the brunt of a lot of my crap. He was like, "You need to do something else, something must happen for you to get through this." Then, I would say professionally I went through a lot of crap at WPI. I guess I managed, I just kept to the work. I advocated when I had to, but unfortunately, I've learned that every place has its qualms, though. I think some stuff I experienced there was extreme, and just wasn't dealt with. Because the person who would have been responsible for dealing with it, just kind of wiped it under the table and said, "Well, this senior person needs to deal with what they do." Well, when the senior person to me can't even look me in the eye, I had to sit with the woman and say, "You know what you did was wrong, but we need to figure out how to work together. We're here to work, so how do we come to a place where that is our focus," because our jobs of course overlapped more than I would have liked. So, I kind of learned as I went, but I made sure that I was staying true to myself. It's very important you do.

GR: As a female, in such a strong role working at these colleges, did you ever feel like you weren't being treated the way you should be?

TB: Hmm, I've never thought of that. So, I always dealt with it. Advancement education is primarily women, but it varies. You know, you can imagine a lot of leadership is usually men. That was true at WPI. Although, I think it was a good mix at the senior management level. My direct senior management was a male who no longer works at the university. I always felt because I was the youngest, and didn't have a family, like a marriage and kids—sure I had a boyfriend and roommates at the time, but to them I had no ties to home. Meaning I could work whenever people had to bow out at the last minute because of their kid. It was always, Tracy was there to go to the event, which was fine, but after a few years of that, it got to me. I was realizing wait a second, if I signed up for five events this summer, and this person, because of their kids, can only do one that doesn't make sense. So yeah, that's interesting that you asked me that. I never thought of it.

SC: How do you define success in your life?

TB: Work life balance is very important. I think the pandemic taught so many of us that. I think you must figure out how you're best motivated. So again, I think the pandemic taught us that. When WPI reopened post pandemic, they were very generous and said that you could define your own flexible work schedule. I've never done anything like that. HR basically said you just determine with your manager what you want to do for work. Which is cool. That meant that my team was fully remote, which I hated. So, that wasn't good for me. I was in a rough spot because I was going to the fridge every 20 minutes and “Oh, what's in there?” As well, I wasn't moving, I was sitting in the space at my apartment that was like a lofted space that I put a big desk in. I wasn't being active. Having moved positions now, I have become honest with myself that I am no longer 23 and I have a lift outside of work that I want to enjoy. Yesterday, I had some visits with alumni, and I ended up at a Starbucks for the afternoon. I got so much done. And I thought, “Hmm how do I convince my boss,”—which wouldn't be hard, he's a great guy, “Can I do half of the day, every now and again, camped out at a Starbucks? As you know, that made me productive.” I closed my computer at 4:30, and I got home, and I thought, “Wow, I just did so much stuff, way more than I would have done in the office.” It's important finding that balance because I have a lot of friends who like work that still consumes their entire life. And again, we were all there six years ago. I just don't buy into that. That's for the people that we hire right out of college. So I've learned that in finding things that make your brain work differently, using your creative side has become important for me.

SC: With the pandemic and being remote, how did that affect you mentally?

TB: At the beginning, because the weather was so nice, I really liked it because I used that to get outside and to move. We all had so much time on our hands that it was like, what do you do with all this time? And then of course, we all went through our slump. Overeating, doing your thing watching Netflix all the time, getting takeout. So, I would say it became a rough time. But again, I think from a professional perspective, it helped me realize what I want. I could not be a remote employee, I needed to work with a team, I needed a boss that really didn't have an ego, that was there for their employees. I think the unfortunate thing about where I was is that a lot of people were promoted, but their jobs weren't replaced. That's very common. But that meant that another

thing was added on, and they couldn't do it all because they're not robots. And so, at Providence, the person I report to, it's his job basically to manage us. He doesn't solicit for gifts. He doesn't have a track of people that he's after. His job is to manage five people, because that's a full-time job. And that has been great for me.

GR: So, you mentioned that you're not huge on social media, that you fill your time with other things. What do those hobbies or those regular leisure activities look like that you do when you're not working?

TB: When I'm being good? It's reading. Right now, it's TV. I go through my binges, you know, right now I'm into the TV phase. I'll go back to reading. I'll read a few books. Also, I make homemade greeting cards. So, that's been kind of fueling my creative side. I mostly buy a lot of products to make the cards and then they sit for a few months in my craft carts. But upstairs in our loft space, I do have a big L desk, it's been great, because it's just a flat top. I can use that to craft and make stuff. And then I would say I'm big in liking to get outside, as much as I can walk, this time of year is my favorite. We can all get back out and enjoy some fresh air.

GR: When you think about your transition from childhood to adulthood, was there one specific difficulty, or many? When you go from the role of being in college and then going into the work world. Do you have any advice for future women or men?

TB: Yikes, it's scary, for sure. I don't think anything can really prepare you for it. Having an internship really helped with the transition because going to a true eight to five or nine to five world is hard. I lived at home after school for about a year and a half, which I didn't want to do but it was awesome. My mom made my lunch. But you really are mentally like transitioning into a whole new thing. And so, to be able to come home after an eight-hour day, and just plop your stuff down and sit down and have a meal that's been already made for you. Yeah, that's sweet. It helps, and then as I started to become more involved in Worcester, it was more of a drag to drive home. My mom would be asking when I would be home for dinner, and it was whatever, I was out and now I had to figure out a balance there. Then, I wanted to get more involved, and I started meeting new people. I would just say, again, being true to who you are, because I think the professional world can alter you. Especially in your first job, being honest with yourself. I think again, the pandemic has helped people really be able to talk and realize how much people have going on outside of work, right, because they were now in their house with their kids. And I will say as someone who still doesn't have kids, that plays a role in the work. So, being able to advocate, you know, just because someone has four kids at home and they get all these, you know, flexibilities, what does that look like for people that don't have or that may never have kids? You know because there's that population too.

GR: So, if we were to start summarizing, what advice would you give, based on your life experiences, to women today, and to future generations?

TB: I think that it's important to realize where you've come from. So, I don't really listen to podcasts but these women in Worcester, Monica, and Wani, do these podcasts of women in and

around Worcester that either they personally know, or they like. And she found me online, which was kind of wild. I did this podcast with her, and a lot of it was about how I got to Assumption in Worcester, and I realized, wow, that the world I grew up in was one very sheltered, which I don't necessarily approve of. It was a great town to grow up in, but it was sheltered. And I was given so much, I had a very, okay upbringing, you know, and I was fortunate to have that. When I got to Assumption, I thought because I was in such a different environment in a bigger environment, right, I quickly realized, wow, that I was lucky. And I've really used that. I would say, from the time I got to campus until now and in the future as to why I give back and why I stay involved in the community because again, I was just so lucky. Some people, they just aren't. I think it's important, I think, especially that it's a form of social media again, but we get sucked into stuff, and we get distracted. And it's just about, I think, always remembering what you have and what others don't.

GR: What are the thoughts and stuff that you take to keep you active and everything? I know, you said you aren't on social media as much. So, like I said, what's something that's keeping you interested in life around you?

TB: As hard as it is to just find some downtime, just to think about, again, six years ago, especially when I moved to the city, I was saying yes to everything, I joined all these groups, which was awesome. I met some great people that I still call my friends. But after a few years of that, I would be going out to their next event. And I'm like, well, why do I go? Am I just going to this because I'm a member? That's what members do. Right? They like to go to all the events, and I realized, you know, what, that group isn't serving a purpose for me anymore like it did. There's a young professional women's group in the city. They're a great group. I don't go to their events anymore. Because, you know, I met a bunch of people, and I have great friends from it. So, I think that inventory checking whether it's all the time or every now and again is important.

GR: The Worcester Women's Oral History Project is working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been recorded in the past. So, what should we be sure to include? Like, do you have any advice to us that we should include in this project?

TB: I probably should, but I don't know. I went to this lecture at Providence College recently, and I relate this back to the Emerald Club and Irish culture. This professor was there from Quinnipiac [University], speaking to Ireland and the Great Famine and the Great Hunger. There was this nurse that was reporting a lot of what was happening right at the beginning, and there was a slide, and there were three photos of the same interaction, right, and I don't know who the gentleman was, but they were reporting this to the authorities. And then the third one no longer had her in the story. This nurse was the groundbreaking woman of the famine. And then three weeks later, she was nowhere to be found. And I just, that's just interesting. It kind of struck me. I know this has happened, not just there, but it struck me to see it. And I just I guess that could be something to think about, right? Where were the women? Or if they were there? Did they like to remain a part of that narrative? Probably not. I don't know, a lot of questions.

GR: I guess to wrap up this time that we've spent with you getting to know you, and we've enjoyed, we've enjoyed hearing about your history. Do you have any recommendations or suggestions of anybody else we should talk to that you think should be a part of this, like you were just a part of this?

TB: Yes. But can I send them to you?

GR: Yes, of course.