

**Houston Asian American Archive**  
**Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University**

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Interviewee: Lynn Chou  
Interviewer: Taylor Crain, Priscilla Li  
Date/Time of Interview: July 25, 2018  
Transcribed by: Taylor Ginter  
Audio Track Time: 1:02:20  
Edited by: Priscilla Li (8/2/2018), Brianna Satow (9/21/18)

**Background:** Lynn Chou was born in Taipei, Taiwan in 1958 where she grew up as a self-proclaimed tomboy in a middle-class family. She came to America after undergraduate school to be a graduate at the University of Houston after receiving a scholarship to study geophysics in an overwhelmingly male-dominated lab. While still enrolled in school she was offered a job with Texaco where she ended up working for 18 years before transferring to Chevron from which she retired after another 18 years. Throughout her years working she developed a deep sense of caring for her co-workers and credits those personal relationships for her success as a higher-level boss. After retiring at the age of 60, she is now ready to travel the world with her family and continue volunteering her time to local Houston organizations.

**Setting:** This interview took place on July 25th and lasted about one hour. It covered the topics of education, work, discrimination, assimilation, and family life.

**Key:**

LC: Lynn Chou  
TC: Taylor Crain  
PL: Priscilla Li  
—: speech cuts off; abrupt stop  
...: speech trails off; pause  
Italics: emphasis (?): preceding word may not be accurate  
[Brackets]: actions [laughs, sighs, etc.]

**Interview transcript:**

**TC:** Alright hello, this is Taylor Crain and-

**PL:** Priscilla Li.

**TC:** With Miss Lynn Chou at...1:31 pm on July 25th. Alright, so just to start off [LC: Yup.], when and where were you born?

**LC:** Okay I was born in Taipei, Taiwan, uh 1958. So, you can figure out my age [laughs].

**TC:** Where did you live?

**LC:** Uh, I lived in Taipei and um I would describe the neighborhood as more like uh affordable living for government, white collar uh workers. My father worked for the uh Department of Education and so the neighbors were all mostly his colleagues, and the way they can move in there is either the ranking is there or the family size is big. So it's usually three children or more, so we had lots of kids in the neighborhood.

**TC:** Okay, um can you describe your childhood?

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**LC:** Uh I was more like a tomboy I would say, because the neighborhood uh boys, they—we played outdoors mainly, um baseball, uh rocks, marbles, all kinds of stuff. We didn't have iPhones or iPads at the time, so mostly outdoors, and, and playing with boys.

**TC:** Mhmm...Okay, what hobbies or interests did you have when you were growing up?

**LC:** Uh...like I said, I was playing a lot of uh sports. Baseball, softball, basketball, and I loved reading novels—not the, not the, the good novels, but the ones that, that they were like kung fu, martial - love stories, and stuff like that. So we read a lot.

**TC:** Okay. Um what were your parents' careers?

**LC:** My parents—uh my father was the uh, uh director of uh the Department of Education and then later he became a um —another director at the TV—one of the TV stations. But his biggest accomplishment was to really start the whole virtual university tra- school in Taipei, Taiwan. Uh that was pretty visionary at the time, for fifty, forty years ago. And the way people could get degree was through mail—mail real correspondences. There was no email at the time. So he started that whole system uh that was probably his proudest accomplishment. My mom was a schoolteacher for forty-one years—music teacher. So, very middle-class kind of family.

**TC:** Okay. Did you have any siblings?

**LC:** Yes. I have an elder sister and a younger brother, so I'm in the middle. Um I would say had I been a boy we probably would not have the third boy, you know how that goes. [laughs] So, so my brother was uh eight years uh junior to me. So. The three kids.

**TC:** Okay. Who were you closest with?

**LC:** Um...I would say my brother. My brother followed me everywhere I went. And uh my sister was the um, you know, the elder sister, they always had that [laughs] demands the respect from everybody. And she, she definitely was the um the super scholar, if you will, or the “curve wrecker,” however you say it. So she's very good at school, so um so we followed her on those and she's a perfectionist on everything so, so we're scared of her somewhat [laughs].

**TC:** Okay. What kind of principles were you raised on growing up with your parents?

**LC:** Uh so my parents, I think the biggest thing I will say is they really want to make sure we don't take advantage of anybody else. Uh don't borrow anything, don't owe anything, uh even comes to financial mortgages, they're like, “Really? You have to borrow?” So, so that's kinda their mindset and really want us to be fair on us with our friends and that seems to be the biggest thing with them for us.

**TC:** Okay. Were there any cultural traditions practiced in your family?

**LC:** Uh we're, we're not a very religious family. I would say we just practice all the folk beliefs, uh so we do worship our ancestors like many, so like at New Year's Eve we worship, we uh we do those, but other than that, that's pretty much our, our tradition. Just New Year's Eve you worship your ancestors. That's what we do.

**TC:** What kind of foods were at home?

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**LC:** Uh mainly uh Chinese and my parents both were from um Hangzhou, it's somewhere near Shanghai, so, so it's the uh southern style, so um nothing very authentic uh that's in Taiwan. In, in, in here, United States, we do cook different varieties and everything. Cooking is a big thing in my house, so [laughs].

**TC:** Okay. What experiences do you treasure most from your childhood?

**LC:** Uh I would say because um my sister was the, the super scholar, so—and I have a younger brother, my parents really had higher expectations on my sister and my brother because I was in the middle. So they didn't have much high expectations on me. Yet, my father always told me that I'm the smarter, the better one, but he didn't have that expectation on me but he had the confidence in me so in a way I felt I had more freedom. I had uh - I didn't have the pressure that the other two had, which I really cherish so. [laughs]

**TC:** Let's see...what was your favorite subject and teacher in high school?

**LC:** Uh I, I, I liked natural sciences better. Uh I'm not sure they were my *favorite*, I just really are very lousy in history and geography and stuff, I did a whole lot better in all the natural science and math things, so that kind of led me to, to my major and so on. So I would say nat- natural science.

**TC:** What school did you attend before college?

**LC:** Um so, so the high school I went to is Taipei uh first high school, it's the best high—girls high school in Tai- Taiwan. Uh very competitive, but because of that I made a lot of good friends which we are still in touch. Uh very organized, every year we still get together. Um so that, that was my high school experience. We still stick together a lot so [laughs].

**TC:** And those friends are still in Taipei or they also came to--?

**LC:** Half, half. I would say a lot of them came here just like me. A lot of them stayed there. Though we have this annual kind of trip in October this year we're going to Hawaii again, so we all get together.

**TC:** Let's see...so what kind of led you to focus in geophysics from like natural science?

**LC:** So you gotta understand, in, in—well first of all, in Taiwan, we take this entrance exam to get into the schools, right. Um so at the time, depending on your scores, you, you go to the school with that major. So I just - I picked the school which is National Taiwan University and my score got me to, to the geology department and um so geology—and the reason I went to geophysics is when I came here um I thought geology and geophys- geophysics were similar, and I got um scholarship for geophysics—in University of Houston. So I took the, the scholarship and came here and lo and behold, they're so different [laughs] the first six months was a major struggle. But um but I managed through it and really enjoyed it after that, so.

**TC:** And what is the difference between geology and geophysics?

**LC:** Yeah they're different. Uh so geophysics is about the uh science that really um it's about the physics of the earth. So we learn the physical properties, the physical processes of the earth. Geology is a science more on the history of the earth, so it's more the structure, the substance, the, the history, and the process that it act- acted on earth to take us to where we are, so it's more of the history. So one is more on the physics, properties, processes. And the other one is just the history of the earth, so um so they're different. One is whole lot more physics and one is a whole lot more chemistry. So [laughs] it's quite different.

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**TC:** Okay. What were your most memorable experiences um in college?

**LC:** Probably a couple things, one was um I was on the um varsity basketball team and that's where I met my husband who was the captain of the men's varsity basketball team. So that was a good thing. Uh I also made it to the varsity choir, um but didn't have much time for it. Anyway, but, but did uh go to a few events. And the other main thing is uh once I got to the college, I pretty much uh became financially independent uh so I had to make money uh so I tutored, I do um some research assistant work, and uh I—so there, just anything that can help me through the, the financial situation. It's not that I - my parents wouldn't support me, I just didn't feel like I wanted to um because my brother and everybody still needing the, the help. So um so that was, I think I took pride in that but it did take me some time to, to make the ends meet. So um but that's one of the experiences I think I learned on how to manage through tight situations [laughs].

**TC:** Okay, what research did you do while you were in college?

**LC:** Uh so actually was part of my uh money-making process, I helped a professor in his rock lab to make uh microscopic slides, so cut a lot of thin slides for him, so as a result I learned a lot of rocks and [laughs] techniques. I didn't write any papers by any means, but I did help him to put some samples and stuff together, so that's the extent of research I did, I guess, in college.

**TC:** Okay um, so when you immigrated to the US, did you have any assumptions about the US before you came that were confirmed? Or—

**LC:** Yeah, um so I had one of my uncles who usually wasn't one of the most intelligent [laughs] person in the world, but he did say something that stuck with me, he said, "Did you know there is a place in the world that as long as you bend down you'll find gold?" [laughs] Okay, so and that's the United States. So I said, "Really??" So I just remember that, so after that, when I was looking for my future, why - where do I want to go after I graduate from the geology department in Taiwan—Taiwan is a very small island, right, so there's not a whole lot of geology to be done, or uh oil to be found on that volcanic island. So I had to really think hard on what to do, and um remember what this uncle said, and uh and also got this scholarship from University of Houston, that's why I came here in 1980 right after the college. So that's kind of the short story of why I'm here [laughs].

**TC:** What were your first impressions once you got to U of H?

**LC:** Uh like I said, the first six months was very, very hard because I - English—that's another thing, we thought we learned English because we spend six hours a week in school for ten years, or even longer, since middle school, right. So we thought we got English down, but the truth is that uh we had good grammar, we can spell a few words, but comprehension, or listening skills was just not there. So the first six months I really couldn't understand what the professors were saying uh so everything was done through hard work every night, looking at the dictionary to really understand every word on the textbook. So the six months—the first six months was very difficult and I also remember when I landed in um—that first time I got here with two suitcases. And my mom did give me twelve-hundred bucks okay, to make my first transition. Um so two suitcases, twelve-hundred bucks, landed at IAH and um came out looking for ways and uh there was a big tall cowboy with a big hat, right, and he look at me and said, "Howdy!" [laughs] Oh boy, what is this? [laughs] I said, "oh my god." [laughs] So the point is that the English we learn is very different, it's British kind of things, so it's—and listening, or comprehension is not there, so the first - I think that's true for most of the Chinese uh students. We, we learn grammar, we

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learn everything through study, and everything, but, but the speaking, the comprehension is just not good. So that was my impression was, “boy we didn’t learn English the right way.” [laughs]

**TC:** Okay, so after University of Houston, um how did you get your position at Texaco Bellaire Geophysics Center?

**LC:** Um so I was in University of Houston, I was in the geophysical applied uh lab, so I was doing research papers for them. And uh so there is an industry consortium, every year we need to present the work we do, and so I was presenting my first paper, just totally freaking out. And uh but after the presentation, um two companies came to me, Shell and Texaco both say, “we’d like to give you an offer. We will have a - just come here for a um interview,” so I got the two offers before I even got my degree. Um and I picked Texaco just simply because it was um closer to my apartment [laughs], and Shell’s offer was actually a bit higher but I did not think about Shell as a Dutch company or anything like that, I did think, “this is closer to my apartment” so I took Texaco’s offer as a geophysicist, in uh the Bellaire office right here, so that was um before my degree, so I had to work and get my degree at the same time for, for a year or so. Um so kind of lucky, um didn’t need to look for jobs. Um the timing is so critical in our industry, it’s very cyclic. So I just happened to be at the right place at the right time, I guess.

**TC:** Um what was it like working at Texaco?

**LC:** Um. How do I say this? It’s a very old-fashioned kind of company, so my career at 36 years is just half and half, 18 years with Texaco and Texaco got merged and um acquired by Chevron. Um so Texaco, I would say, much more um...old-fashioned. And the culture awareness on diversity or um respecting the differences just not nearly as strong. Um very few minority at the, the higher level, and um I think there was some borderline, today, borderline sexual harassment kind of comments, um we can hear almost on a daily basis um but that was many, many years ago. Um but the culture was is different. Chevron was much more friendlier than, than Texaco, I would say, but it—but I would say 18 years ago that probably wasn’t too uncommon, right, in the industry. Especially for my industry. When I started, there were very few geo- geophysicists, um I mean very few female geophysicists, let alone Asian geophysicists. I remember the first field trip I had with a helicopter to a drilling platform, um so I walked out of the helicopter, jumped out, right, landed on the helicopter pad, and there was this broadcast system saying, “Women on board, women on board!” [laughs] and all the guys just dash back to their uh stay room (?) to put their clothes on. So that’s, that’s, that’s, that’s how I started in the industry 34 years ago.

**TC:** Okay. How did your job at Texaco prepare you for Chevron?

**LC:** Uh I, I, I’ll say, I had to learn how to earn respect from people who were totally different from me. Uh different in level of experiences, different in race, gender, age, almost everything. Uh so I had to adjust, adapt to, to the situation and still earn their respect and hold my ground against the, the stereotypes that, that they had on me. So um it wasn’t easy, but, but over time you just learn you had to adjust your style based on who you’re dealing with. Not everybody is the same, so you just need to be uh bit alert as to who you’re dealing with and earn the respect one at a time, right, so that’s kind of how I learned.

**TC:** What projects did you work on at Chevron?

**LC:** So I worked on many projects as you can imagine in, in a long career. Two maybe I will talk about. One, I would say, is, was about ten years ago is what we call accelerate uh downstream. “Downstream” is a jargon in our industry meaning really is the seg- the segment that refines oil and gas—oil, primarily. Uh and marketing, so all the gas stations you see, um and all the petrochemical stuff—plastic, polymer, all of those are downstream business. Um the upstream is where we drill—we discover, we drill, we produce,

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that's all upstream, that's how we divide. Um so at the time, ten years ago, Chevron found that our downstream portfolio was not competitive because our portfolio was just a collection of many mergers and acquisitions. So there wasn't a strategic kind of direction on the uh business, so at the time, our downstream executive vice president uh Mike Wirth was the head, and I was the CIO that, that he took me in um he decided to really turn—we have to turn the business around. So he kicked off this project called "Accelerate Downstream" and it was very hard because we had to really sell a lot of the properties to make sure we had competitiveness, and we had to cut a lot of the overhead and the people uh to the in the tune of 40, 50%. So half. So it's very, very uh excruciating, as you can imagine. And um in the meantime, the IT function which I was a part of also uh was going through a transformation, so IT function itself had to transform. So with all this together, um we, we had to deliver the results that our business is looking for. So - but we got it done, I would say that's probably one of my uh defining moment of the career was to deal with such a difficult situation while um you deal with it with empathy, with compassion, and, and get everybody to the right places. So, and the good news is now Chevron's downstream business is one of the best. We're very competitive, we're number one, if not number one, number two in reliability, and profitability, and return on capital investment, all that, right. So as I would say, as a result of Mike Wirth the downstream EVP, now who is our CEO. He's rewarded with, with turning the business around, so he's our uh CEO. And, um anyway I have a, he's one of my mentors, my most important mentors. I know you have a question on mentors I'll talk about them I guess later.

Oh! The other project I said I had two, the other one is really right before I retired is about accelerate um uh our digital strategy, if you will. Uh we're really right in the middle of the uh fourth industrial revolution, as you probably know, if you have heard. Um so in Chevron we know we have to transform and, and change, and we defined digital strategy with five elements, so one is the - we call the data analytics, or big data, some people call big data. We also include uh robotic process, automation, anything about automating processes. Uh or internet of things. Um and mobile computing, and cloud computing. Um so those are the five uh elements of uh digital strategy that we're just in the early phase of uh execution. And why am I so proud of it? Because right before I retired, I was able to uh get Microsoft and Chevron sign a very long-term kind of strategic agreement at the CEO level, the CEOs talked to each other. And um so what we will do—my team and everybody, we will sell our data centers, uh the big ones, to Microsoft. And we will move our data platform, our infrastructure, um many of our applications to Microsoft's Edge Cloud environment and we're one of the first uh two companies that sign anything with that size in our industry. And um it really set the momentum and foundation for the current digital acceleration. It was literally signed uh maybe a month before my retirement. So it was just a few, few months before my retirement, and now everything is chugging along. I check in with my friends so we're all executing um the, the plan. So um it's another proud moment I guess of, of my career is ending with that kind of long-term strategic partnership, so.

**TC:** Did you have to learn any new skills or—

**LC:** All the time right [laughs] so you have to constantly reinvent yourself. Especially in the IT space, things are moving so fast right. So this is one uh attribute, if any young professionals want to be successful is you gotta continu- continuously reinvent yourself right and be open minded to, to challenges.

**TC:** So it seemed like you were doing like the technology side and then like the geophysics side—

**LC:** And the business, yeah.

**TC:** And business—

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**LC:** Yeah, so maybe I'll say uh Mike is my mentor. He took me in—I really appreciate this because I didn't—I was in geophysics for, for 23 years upstream. Didn't know anything about downstream—his business, even though I was the CIO for upstream, and so on. He took me in knowing I didn't know anything about his business. So our first mentoring session he told me is, "Lynn, if you want to be a good CIO you've gotta learn the business." So I started learning the business, I walked in with very rudimentary kind of downstream 101 kind of questions for him to answer. He was very patient and just really taught me a lot. And, and I worked very hard to learn the business, and he could see my progress and he was very proud of my business knowledge, which really helped me a lot during that acceleration downstream project. So maybe the learning here is uh whatever you do, you really need to understand the business you're in, right and spend the time to, to really understand what drives the business. What drives the executives, the, the decision makers. Um what, what they are looking for. Anyway, I forgot what you're asking [laughs].

**TC:** What was the skills, or um what did you have to learn or research?

**LC:** Yeah so we—like I said, you, you really need to constantly learning new things, yeah.

**TC:** So you talked about him being your mentor, could you go like how did that relationship get established [overlapping] and how did he help you?

**LC:** Yeah so he heard of me, but he never knew me, so he took me in. So I brought this letter because on my retirement he wrote this very nice letter, and I can leave you a copy. But anyway, it's uh—yeah he kind of summarized who, who he thinks I was, and so on. But um anyway, um what else do I want to say? Go ahead, just continue with your questions.

**TC:** Okay, um so working for so long with Chevron, what really made you want to stay with the company?

**LC:** Yeah, so that's a good question. So it—once I realized Chevron is a good com- company, maybe that's my learning with the younger generation too, because you want to commit your career to a company this long, right this is not your mental model any, anymore. Um it is very important you understand what is important to you. Um because thirty, forty years is a long time. If you don't like it, it will be even longer, right. So to me, I think, once I understand, I think people who I work with I care the most. So I hope you understand. So if you like the people you're working with, high integrity, good people, that motivates me to jump off the bed and go to work. Um so Chevron is a company with good culture, with good moral value, and the value system just fits very well with, with my belief. And, and also I see the company really believes in developing people. Uh as a senior manager, I know how much time I spend to develop our people, and that's why I know they are spending time to develop me. So um once you know this is the right fit, then you probably are more willing to commit your, your entire career to, to the right company. So it is important you find the right company. If it's not the right company then perhaps you don't want to do that. But first off you need to understand what's important to you, right. So uh so to me, just the next big raise, it doesn't seem to drive me as much, as long as I have enough I'm fine. So um so I look for the longer term kind of career as opposed to the next promotion, so, um.

**TC:** Okay, so you talked about your skills and stuff that you needed to uh kind of like get to keep working in that area. Uh what other advice would you have for young people that like are young professionals and want to, like you said, find a really good company to work for?

**LC:** So, so for - again, if you have the right company uh - in my whole career, I have never asked for a position or a promotion, or um a raise. The - I never had a résumé in my life, okay, because that's how

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much I trust the managers know what they're doing. So they gave me some assignments I raised my eyebrows with, "You sure I can do this?" And they—I guess I always proved them right, I guess I always delivered what they're asking for. But even though in the beginning I was like, "Really?" Um so, so, if there's any advice, it is important to do some lateral moves so you, you build a solid foundation, so later when, when you move up you have that foundation, and not just a very narrow base of skills, does that make sense? So build your strong pyramid, then when you're ready to skyrocket you have that foundation. If you don't have that solid base then you go like this, then it's very easy you get tilted, right. So if you have that mindset then you, you're accepting all the challenges in a positive way. The other thing I would say is really just keep a very positive um mind um, because people wanna follow positive leaders. Who wants to follow a leader who doesn't think things will come together? People are good people, right. So even when you have doubt, so sometimes in my career I did have doubt about whether we could get this done, but you gotta find that positive energy to, to make people follow you. Otherwise the whole thing will not go far, right. So, um but that, that's kind of my philosophy is always keep a very positive mind. I always believe people's heart is at the right place. They may have different perspectives, different opinions, but they're all coming with a good heart. And once you have that then you're more open minded, you're willing to work things out, right, and be a good listener, and so on.

**TC:** So you say prioritizing your energy and your mindset and then really investing in relationships.

**LC:** Relationships and the one thing I, I take a lot of pride is that I, I have the reputation of being a good listener. I really do listen, and I try to um make everybody connect and work together. Um see, there's an Africa saying that I truly believe it says that—maybe you've heard this—um if you want to go fast you go alone, but if you wanna go far you have to go with a team, right. You need to bring the team with you otherwise you won't accomplish big things. So, but why do people wanna follow you? They gotta follow you with their heart, with their mind. Not just they have to. So um you gotta win their hearts and minds and how do you do that? So I challenge myself to—for the people who worked for me—when I retired I had two, three thousand people worked for me so it was a bit challenging but at least for my direct reports, I challenge my direct reports, do you know your peoples' need, not just at work but at home? What drives them? Right, what their family situation is. If you give them an assignment, is that the best time for them to take that assignment. Is that the right location? Is that the right job stress level for them? Right, are they ready to take on more? Maybe they have a very ailing mother at home. Then, so, so they know I will inquire, what's the family situation? What's the children's' situation? Um including work, of course. So that way you really show you care and run it more like a...um really caring leader. Right? So, um that actually worked for me. Anyways, my—um the employee surveys all showed they, they really appreciate um the, the leadership style that when we care. So they just want to know people know.

**TC:** So do you think like your caring leadership style really like influenced kind of your success in Chevron?

**LC:** I think so. Um at least they were comfortable to give me a huge organization to run. And again, our employee surveys show our employees are happy, comparing to the other uh companies and organizations. Um they're happy. So they feel they are valued. That's very, very key. Uh so...so I told you, I, I people are so important to me, right, so um how to motivate people is a big thing for, for me to accomplish, so.

**TC:** Let's see. Um did you see any changes in your work environment at Chevron even in terms of how they treated minorities and women in the workplace?

**LC:** In the past thirty or so years? [**TC:** Yes.] Oh absolutely. It's changed quite a bit. I will say more progression for women than Asians, if, if you agree with me. Um so...I think if you asked me if there's



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any disadvantage of being a minority or so on, I would say language probably is more a barrier for me uh than the race or the gender. Um because it is not my native tongue, and um sometimes the subtlety of a verb um may seem to be okay with me but it may mean different things to, to the other people. I'll give you an example. I used—I once worked for a manager and um he had a strategy of some sorts, I say, "I will align my activities, my strategy with yours." Um I thought that was good, I will align it, and as the meeting went on, he turned redder and redder in his face, I said, "something's bothering you, tell me what it is." And he said, "align? Align means you're forced, it's passive. That means you really don't want to do it but you have to." I said, "Really? Okay. Then what's the better word?" "Integrate. Integrate your strategy with mine." I said, "Fine [sighs]." But things like that, so I—I think language was, for me anyways, more a barrier than, than race and gender.

**TC:** Do you think people were like aware of that? Or did they—

**LC:** Once they worked with me more they, they knew I'm, I'm not the one to polish every word. I, I can't, even I want to - wanted to. So, but for the people who don't know me well, right, if they just listen to me first time or read my email the first time some of the, the word choices may come across as a bit abrupt, or not as smooth and polished. Uh but like I said, that's just my—not my primary language. As good as I can, but it is, to me, a more constraining factor than gender or race.

**TC:** Were there any like programs or support for you to continue polishing your English? Throughout your career?

**LC:** Um luckily, I haven't had any supervisor who told me my language has been a barrier. Um but I think probably for the level I was at, that's probably okay. But for me to say, go to the even higher level, I think that the language probably would become an issue. But um but for what I was delivering, I was doing, in Chevron, that didn't come up as an issue—in my face, maybe they talked about it, I don't know. But um but I never had anybody say my, my communication was an issue. But, but I know in my heart that I'm not as good. So.

**TC:** Okay. Uh so what other like challenges did you have to overcome in the workplace? Or just with your life in general?

**LC:** Um...not, not so much. I, I guess uh just sometimes you do wonder the time you put in to work, right, we, we have to work very hard at certain level um company expects you pretty much 24 by 7 on call, especially when you run operations. Um during the weekdays, I pretty much work 12, 14 hours a day. Um so sometimes I do—I did feel guilty for, for my son and everything. I didn't have very high expectation on his academic level. Um he did okay, um yes. So that, that was a bit maybe guilt if any. But, but now I think that was probably still a good choice to, to be a working mother. Um I, I don't think I would change that at all if I do it again, I'd do the same. Um and I can tell my son was proud of what I accomplished. He, he didn't believe I'd accomplished this much, but [laughs] yeah he didn't know until he told me, "Mom, until I was in college my friends were telling me 'how great your mother was'" "Okay." But anyway. [laughs]

**TC:** Were there any lessons learned that really stand out from work or-?

**LC:** Um I think I kinda touched on, on some. Um it just...challenges—I guess...just, I always keep a positive mind. Even when I got knocked down I would think the positive so you come back with, with higher energy and the right attitude. To me, attitude and drive and work ethics, those, those really will conquer, overcome a lot of the, the challenges and, and so on. One thing I would share, uh which I, I wish somebody would have told me earlier in my career, and now I learned that probably...25 years into my

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career. Um so that was a culture difference, I guess um I...about 10, 15 years ago I got my performance review. I, I was usually doing quite alright, and this manager said that “I wish you would be more um—providing more critical thinking.” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “You always do whatever I say you need to do.” I said, “Isn’t that the way it should be?” Because that’s how we were brought up, right, especially for Asian female, you, you, you were told to be obedient, you were told to please your superiors. Um so I worked very hard to deliver to do whatever my boss asked me to. And in my performance review, near the end he said, “I really wish you would provide me more critical thinking and challenge me. You don’t challenge me enough.” I said, “Okay...” [laughs] I didn’t realize that was the expectation on me right. Now he probably regret it, I challenge everything [All: [laughs]]. But I really didn’t know this until after 20, 25 years into my career. So now I really encourage my um workers, especially the Asian heritage uh employees that provide more problem solving, more critical thinking, uh as opposed to just follow the rules, follow the processes. And I, I do see the differences, uh Asians between and Caucasians. Caucasians tend to challenge more and, and with more problem-solving kind of mind. So um that will be learning I like to share with the younger generation and don’t take 25 years to figure that out. [laughs]

**TC:** So with all your accomplishments at Chevron, is there any area where you’d like to have done more either for the organization, or for the people that worked for you?

**LC:** Hmm...I think I would do pretty much the same. Maybe I would navigate my career a little bit more by doing a little bit more networking or some sorts. Um like I said, I never asked for a job or an assignment. I never had a résumé. Um so if I had to do it again, I think I probably would spend a little more time to nurture my um relationship with my peers and...and the friends. The—it just, it’s not natural for, for people like us um so for some of my Caucasian male friends, they hang out every lunch, they go to bar after work, um I just didn’t do that, any of those, right. I’m not saying I would do that, but I, I, I probably would do a little bit more networking, um that way you have even more influence and more impact in what you do. But overall, I, I wouldn’t mind repeating my whole career again, it was quite uh rewarding to me.

**TC:** Okay, so we’re gonna move on to like personal life.

**LC:** Okay.

**TC:** So how did you meet your husband?

**LC:** Um as I said, he was the varsity basketball team uh captain, and so he came to our practices and games so that’s how I got to know him. He actually came to Rice for uh the Master’s degree in civil engineering. So we came to the states at the same time, same year.

**TC:** Okay. How did you balance work and family life?

**LC:** So like I said, we-I had to work very hard, uh so the way that I tried to balance was I keep—kept the weekends very sacred. So my secretary, my co-workers know, weekends they try very hard not to bother me uh because my son plays competitive soccer at the time so he traveled on weekends, so I tried to be with them. Uh but weekdays, pretty much all work. Um so that’s kind of my balance, if you will. So I try not to travel the weekends, and try not to work, work too much on weekends, and be with them.

**TC:** Did you ever travel back to Taiwan?

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**LC:** Uh yes, quite a lot. Probably twice a year, because my mom still lives there, and my sister is there, and my mom is in good health, so I try to take her out for one or two good trips every year so, so I go back to Taiwan, pick her up, then we travel. So I'm very fortunate she's in very good health so.

**TC:** Um what kind of hopes did you have for your son growing up?

**LC:** Um like I said, I, I, I, I really didn't have huge—not like a tiger mom kind of— you know you've got to be a doctor or something. My biggest goal is that he's happy, he's healthy, and he's a good person. Uh I want to make sure he has a kind heart. That to me is more important than being a cracker jack whatever. Uh luckily he's a very good boy, a very kind heart, so I'm very proud of that. Uh it sounds pretty low goals but that really is what I, I think is important for him. As long as he's happy, he's healthy, has a good heart, that is what matters.

**TC:** Did you have any like traditions in your house?

**LC:** Um...so like I said, cooking is a big deal. So birthdays we, we tend to cook together. So everybody cooks one meal—one dish, and we put a meal together, uh as opposed to go out, we, we think cooking together is fun. Um so we do that quite a bit. Um and Chinese New Year's Eve, we play Mahjong together, we do that. Uh when we are together we do that. Those are probably the two—Thanksgiving we try to get together but sometimes we travel. But birthdays we, we cook together which is fun. [laughs]

**TC:** What were like the go-to dishes you would make?

**LC:** The go-to dishes? Oo. Recently with the, we just figure out how to make very good uh chaoshou (抄手) I know, the wonton, uh wonton, but it's very spicy kind. It's very good. And...lemme see. They are really into the green—the mixed green stuff, so they're doing all the healthy drinks. High probiotic whatever. They taste good, they are very, very healthy so - because they work out a lot so they need those high protein kind of stuff. Um they, they taste pretty good, actually. So, we change, by the season and by the mood [laughs].

**TC:** So do you do any community volunteering?

**LC:** I do. Uh the biggest thing I do now is I'm a docent at the uh Museum of Natural Science so I do quite a bit there. Um I volunteer at the Food Bank; I do that when I want to do some mindless labor work I go there. Uh and I do, um when Chinese Community Center here, if they need uh helper like if there's hurricane or things, I will jump in and help out, but mostly it's the docent work at—right here, the museum here. Yeah. So they - I do—I primarily do the energy hall, and that's in high demand and so we're very busy. Um it is the fourth most visited museum in the US.

**TC:** Oh really? Wow.

**LC:** Yeah. Because every um student here, in the fourth grade, has to go there once. [**PL and TC:** Oh wow.] So we have to tour all the kids. [laughs]

**TC:** Do you see yourself pursuing a second career after Chevron?

**LC:** Uh not at this time. Um there's another thing I think I mentioned on the way here, we just-I was one of the founders just uh formed this uh National Taiwan University alumni uh fellowship to really support the academic freedom and um university autonomy kind of thing, that is taking a lot of time from me so I,

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I don't think I'm looking for another career right now, I just want to get this, this uh organization going, and get the event um done in a month or so. So.

**TC:** Okay. So general identity questions, um what are your proudest accomplishments so far?

**LC:** Um I—as I said, I think I really am proud that people told me they loved to work for me, and, or with me. And um so they're, they're friends with me, so I'm still keep in touch with a lot of them, they will text me telling me what they did and, and so on, so to me that's a lifetime friendship that I, I have, so the employees always say that my org (?) is very happy and they accomplish a lot of things so, so that to me probably is my kind of people moment if you will [laughs]. Yeah.

**TC:** How do you identify yourself?

**LC:** Uh I hold myself high in I think integrity I'm very—I care if people see me having high integrity. That I'm compassionate, um good listener, open-minded. Um I guess I, I can share what Mike's told me what he thinks I am as a person. Um again, I'll—I can leave a copy with you—he said, uh so this is from our CEO, Mike, my mentor. He said, “You possess a unique blend of intelligence, work ethic, drive for results, curiosity, humor, and empathy and I enjoyed every interaction we had because those attributes all seemed to come together” so uh that's how he sees me, uh but I heard—so I had um seven retirement parties [laughs] right, and that—those are the common words I, I heard, so if that's what you're looking for. So that's why I say the friendship, the lifetime friendship is very important.

**TC:** And what makes like um family and friendship and treating people very well so important to you? Is it like an experience? Like your parents?

**LC:** Say—I'm not sure I understand your questions

**TC:** Is there like a certain experience or um something that your parents told you that really makes you want to treat people nicely and make that such an important value?

**LC:** No, just over time I, I think in the beginning of my career I was more just results driven, let's get things done. But over time I asked myself right, “What, what is really important to you? Is it money? Is it really what you accomplished?” or, “What is it that really matters to you?” Um and I talked to a lot of retirees, I said, “After you retired what do you miss?” and they said, almost all of them told me “It's the people, it's not the work, it's not the money, it's the people you will miss.” And then they are right. Uh the people interaction, the good people—that's why um, and that motivates you. Me, anyways, to go to work with high energy, with very positive mind is you're working with people you like. And people trust you, you trust them. Um it's just more rewarding than, than—to me, anyways. So um, it just over time, I didn't start that way. Maybe become, once you become more matured, it seems to just the importance just came up a lot. In the beginning when you had early family you still had to establish, maybe it's a different priority. But once you're established, then you want to ask yourself what's really important to you. Um to me are the people, probably...that I value the most. So, that's probably not what you expected, but that's how I feel [laughs].

**TC:** [To PL] Do you have any questions?

**PL:** Oh yeah. I had a few. Um like um, so did you apply to the U of H scholarship or was that kind of like—yeah, did you have to apply to the scholarship?

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**LC:** Yes, I did. Uh I applied for four or five schools here and um U of H was the only one that gave me scholarship [**PL:** Mmhmm. Okay.] Uh um and my sister also helped because she was here at U of H at the time. Um she was an accounting major, so she walked to the geophysical department and talked to the dean or somebody and said, “I have a sister here, can you look into her file?” and um at the time, because the market was very hot for geophysicists, so they took me and gave me the scholarship. So um yeah, I had to apply for it, but they gave it to me, so. [laughs]

**PL:** Did you like geophysics more than geology?

**LC:** Yes. [**PL:** Yes?] Yes. And there’s a reason to it, because um geology is more um interpretational, it’s more like an art. So you had to use your imagination to explain why you think the earth is the way it is right now, so you had to come up with the history, the story to explain. Language was a barrier for me to fin- to explain why I think the earth looked like this. Geophysical—geophysics has a little more science behind it that, that it didn’t have to be all artistic or interpretational.

**PL:** So were your parents very supportive of you um studying geophysics and like coming to America?

**LC:** Um...to be honest, um the—so the, the, the, the department, geology department, had only two girls out of 37 when we first got in there, because it’s not a major that girls would sign up for. And my mom, I still remember I got the uh results of the test, right, so I got into National Taiwan University ahh I was so happy. And, and I will never forget my mom’s reaction, she looked at me said, “Good. Now you can find a good husband.” [laughs] So that’s kind of the expectation they had of girls, right. Um but, so, I, I wouldn’t say they had much reaction, but just good school, go. Um but I would say, um when I was in college, I got into geology, I was able—I could transfer to the other departments like chemistry or other departments and I was thinking about it very seriously because geology wasn’t really for girl at the time, girls at the time. And so I called my sister who was here in—U of H and, and told her I was considering going to chemistry or something else, and she just said, “You’re nuts! Geology is so good, wha- especially in Houston. Why would you even want to think about transferring?” So, so because of her strong advice, I decided not to change and followed with my geophysics choice which was um—but that’s the whole story there.

**PL:** Um and what prompted you to decide to retire?

**LC:** Uh...age? [laughs] Um so Chevron is one of those uh traditional companies, we still have very uh...healthy pension program. And the pension program is designed for us to retire at age of 60. So it peaks at age 60, and after age 60 it actually goes down. You, you—so as a result, you may work for nothing beyond 60, right, so the whole thing is to motivate us to retire at age of 60. And I also want to travel. I feel like I’ve worked so hard the whole life, uh I want to have some real freedom in my life, and now I really feel like I’m totally liberated, I can do anything I want, right, in the past even when you take vacations it’s different because I still was accountable for a lot of the operations so you’re still kind of on call, if you will, and you’ve got to check e-mail when you’re in Europe, but now we don’t right, so it’s total freedom, so I’m really longing for that, and uh really enjoying it. So yeah.

**PL:** So what are your plans? Like do you have any big plans? I know you said you travel to Taiwan to visit your mom.

**LC:** Yeah we just came back from a month of uh tour in China, Tibet, the Silk Road, and all that was good. And next, in two weeks, we are going to Africa to do the animal migration. Kenya and Tanzania, it’s a wedding gift for my son and my daughter-in-law, so the four of us will have a Jeep and then the

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guide will chase the animals [**All:** [laughs]] for two weeks. So I have nine trips this year. So going a bit overboard [laughs]. Yeah.

**PL:** That's exciting.

**LC:** Okay?

**TC and PL:** Thank you so much!

**LC:** You're welcome!