

## **Monique Jannette**

### **Artist, Paralympian, and former Civil Rights Lawyer**

*Interview conducted by*

*Mark Harris*

*In 2016 in Dallas, Texas*

Disability Studies Minor

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## **Biography**

Monique Jannette was born September 23, 1962 and graduated from Warren Travis White High School in Dallas, Texas, earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Geology from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1987, and her Law Degree from Southern Methodist University in 1992.

While in middle school and high school, she became interested in science and competitive diving. Jannette excelled at diving and traveled throughout the United States and other countries with diving teams. She earned a full scholarship to Southern Methodist University (SMU), but due to an accident shortly after graduation from high school in 1980, she became paraplegic.

Starting in 1981, Jannette attended the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), where she studied geology and participated in adaptive track and field under the direction of Jim Hayes. While attending UTA, she was selected to the 1988 U.S. Paralympic Track and Field team, and Table Tennis team in Seoul, South Korea. In 1992 she was selected again to compete with the U.S. Paralympic Team in Barcelona, Spain.

Upon graduating from UTA, Jannette went back to SMU to study law. During her time there she collaborated with architects to make SMU more accessible to people with disabilities. After graduating law school, she and a partner began to practice civil rights law, helping the communities and business in and around the Dallas area. Their primary clientele were people involved with sexual harassment lawsuits and disability accessibility. After some health issues, she had to quit the firm and concentrate on her health. Jannette then began to concentrate on art, but is still heavily involved with the community and disability rights.

## Topics Discussed

- Rehabilitation in Dallas.
  - Rehabilitation in Colorado.
  - Life as a student athlete at UTA.
  - Jim Hayes
  - 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea.
  - 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain.
  - Working with architects on accessibility at SMU.
  - Words of encouragement.
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### Harris

This is Mark Harris interviewing Monique Jannette for the UT Arlington Texas Disability Oral History Project. Today's date is Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and I am at the home of Monique Jannette.

I am here today to talk with Monique Jannette about; her rehabilitation in Dallas, her rehabilitation in Colorado, life as a student athlete at UTA, Jim Hayes, the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, South Korea, the 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain, working with architects on accessibility at SMU, and any final words of encouragement.

Thank you for participating in the university's oral history program again, and inviting me into your home.

### Harris

Let's begin right after your accident. What was your experience when you found out the severity of your injury?

### Jannette

Well at the very very beginning, I remember lying on the cold hard table. Doctor looking at me and said you're paralyzed, and I thought oh that's grand, and then I passed out. Then I woke up again several days later in intensive care. Of course I was like gosh this this really sucks, but as far as the magnitude of it, I cannot comprehend. I didn't know what to expect, what was going to happen, other than, oh no I had no clue. At that point it was more like the basics, alright I'm hungry, and I feel horrible. I want to take a shower, but I was lying in bed I smelled of the rock quarry where I've been diving. My hair was all bloody, I just wanted to be clean, and I wanted something good to eat, but there was hospital food. I was passing out all the time, I didn't know a lot of times where I was. I was confused, but then I had family members come and friends and so that can help calm things down.

<topic>Rehabilitation in Dallas</topic>

Then they transferred me to Caruth Rehabilitation in Dallas (Caruth Memorial Hospital and Rehabilitation Center). I had a few setbacks, they put it was called the Halo on my head, and there were two screws with the metal...it looks like the Halo circling my head. It wasn't in properly so it was moving in my head, and every time they move me, I could feel it crunching and in my, and I don't know if you call it my brain or the outside of my skull or what it was. At that point I would complain, and I thought aw she's just upset because you know she no longer can walk and she's just acting out. I'm like no there's something wrong with me, something wrong. So they would constantly have Psychiatrist

come and talk to me to calm me down. I'm like "No get out of here, just so I don't want to talk to you!" Then finally they believe me, because the whole thing moved on my head, and my neck turn sideways and there was blood everywhere. So they took off the Halo and I wouldn't agree for them to put it back on. From then on I only had a neck brace on, so that was much more comfortable. So I was stubborn, the doctors did not like me. I didn't follow their protocol of what was necessary and what needed to be done.

**Harris**

What was your routine there? What were your daily exercises? Was it hard for you at first or was it easy?

**Jannette**

At the very beginning it was it was more or less just trying to be able to sit up without passing out. I couldn't do anything I couldn't feed myself, I couldn't go to the bathroom, I couldn't get up out of bed. I was basically for the first month just looking at the ceiling.

**Harris**

When did the decision come down to transfer you out of there? First how long were you there? And then when was the decision passed down to take you out of there and you mentioned going to Colorado for further treatment.

**Jannette**

Correct, correct.

The rehabilitation in Dallas was a new facility, it was their first time to have a doctor's in for the spinal cord injury. Before it was a place for alcoholics to recover, and I think a lot of staff didn't have the training it was all very new for everyone, and when my parents realize that perhaps this isn't the best place to be. They hired individuals to help them seek out the best hospital for my situation, and they found Craig hospital to be probably the one of the best in the country and that's how it was decided that all right they would transfer me from Dallas up to Colorado to get the best treatment.

**Harris**

And where Craig Hospital located in Colorado?

**Jannette**

It was in Englewood Colorado.

**Harris**

Now what year was that?

**Jannette**

1980  
(jacket rustling)

**Harris**

And how long were you there?

**Jannette**

I was there in September to December. I broke my neck in August 3<sup>rd</sup>, so I was in Dallas from August 3<sup>rd</sup> until they moved me, and I think that was, think maybe the 18th of September or somewhere around there middle of September.

**Harris**

What did you think about the facility in Colorado?

**Jannette**

<topic>Rehabilitation in Colorado</topic>

It was great, it was wonderful. They treated you more like a person, instead of a kid that had to be babied and watched, and told what to do. This they said well these are your goals we would like for you to accomplish, and hopefully you will follow our routine and go from there.

**Harris**

And what was your routine? Daily routine?

**Jannette**

Right, it was waking up way too early for me, I was not a morning person. They had the assistant at the time that they would first get you in the shower, bathe you, get you ready for classes. Bathe you dress you and so forth. The assistant who was helping me and several other patients, I think she wanted to work with me first, because I was lightweight and easy to handle, easy to transfer but then since I wasn't a morning person my body just didn't like it. I then again with her I kept passing out while I'm the shower, so it's too dangerous apparently and so luckily I was the last person she would shower, so I had a little bit more time to sleep. So instead of waking up at 6:30, I could be at up at 7:30.

**Harris**

Now you mentioned you were passing out. What was causing it?

**Jannette**

Low blood pressure, and just not being out to eat, being very weak, losing a lot of weight. Your body is going into a state of just being, survival mode and only the heart working, the blood pumping but not so good.

**Harris**

You mentioned, you would have to take shower, and then you would have to go to class. What did the classes consist of?

**Jannette**

It was very slow at first, because I also had an elbow that was broken. I couldn't can put much weight on it, I couldn't move it, so that meant I couldn't really push my wheelchair, I can't put any pressure on it, I couldn't sit up, I couldn't feed myself. I needed a lot of help so it was more listening to people what I can maybe do, and then moving my limbs going through videos, training, listening to therapist, and it wasn't until my elbow healed that I was able to start to exercise. Learn what I can do on a mat, they would get us on a mat and it was exercises that exercising that that your neck, your shoulders, your arms what you can use.

**Harris**

When did you really start seeing the progress?

**Jannette**

It was it was so minimal, it wasn't any specific date of when I could see actual progress. Except for I guess it was when my elbow was strong enough for it to allow me to start exercising. Then I guess from there on, I started to exponentially get stronger and was able to be more independent.

**Harris**

Was there ever a time during your progress that you wanted to give up? Was there ever a low point that you wanted to give up, or did you see it as "hey this is just a temporary setback?"

**Jannette**

Well your mental state for me was like okay this really sucks, but how can I improve, how can I get better, how can I make my life easier. So there wasn't really any time to have this reflection of self-pity of pour poor me. Of course I cried, I was upset, because my whole life was diving, and I'm like okay am I going to dive again, and the hope was yes I will. My thought at that point was I'm going to walk again. I need to do everything I can to be able to walk again so therefore I can hopefully dive again.

**Harris**

Besides your family, was there anyone at the facility that inspired you, or motivated you?

**Jannette**

Not really, not that I recall. It was more what I can learn I guess from other individuals who weren't as disabled as I was. Seeing how they were able to accomplish various exercises, or to eat. It was more like monkey see monkey do, what can they do, can I imitate what they do, can I learn from them.

**Harris**

The last time we spoke, you mentioned one of your sisters moved up there? Which one?

**Jannette**

My sister Montine.

**Harris**

Okay, and you said she quit her job.

**Jannette**

Yes she did.

**Harris**

And moved up there to help you. What was her role in helping you?

**Jannette**

She was fantastic. She was great and instrumental in helping me improve that much faster. She fed me meals, homemade meals, so I didn't have to rely on hospital food all the time, so I got better nutrition. Also she knew how to do what's called reflexology. It was a type of massage with the hands and the feet to help reconnect nerve connection, and to help the muscles relax. It's I guess you could say it's a form of acupressure instead of acupuncture, it's acupressure. With certain points that you can press to activate nerves, to activate muscles, and that I think was very important for the healing process...

*(Home phone rings. Paused recording)*

**Jannette**

My sister Montine she did some exercises with my legs, and my arms, and my hands, my feet and she would hit certain pressure points. I could feel them, it allowed me I think too have sensation that I normally wouldn't have had if she hadn't been there to help the brain and the nerves to activate. I don't know what the correct term would be, but it was I think helped me surpass other individuals who were in my position because of her help.

**Harris**

Now during this time from when you first had your accident to the rehabilitation in Colorado. You mentioned how your family was very supportive, but you also mentioned in our last conversation, that your mother was very nervous during your dive meets, because she was scared that you would hurt yourself. How did she take it when she first found out about your accident, and the extent of it?

**Jannette**

Well, all I remember is that when I first broke my neck and they brought me to the hospital, I was with my girlfriend and she called my parents to let them know I was at the hospital. And apparently my mother was so upset she's like "Okay we'll go we'll be there soon as we can", but she hung up the phone and didn't find out where she was supposed to go. So my girlfriend said she had to call back and say, "okay we are at Medical City this is where we are," because I think my mother was in panic mode. I was like "OH NO", but to me, she didn't say that she didn't show nervousness, she tried to be as strong as possible, and was always step up to the plate to find out what would be the best treatment for me, where to go, what doctors. She was an intelligent lady, even though a bit of a worry-wart but she did her research.

**Harris**

What year did you get out of the facility in Colorado?

**Jannette**

Is in December 1980

**Harris**

Following that up, you decided to enroll in UTA?

**Jannette**

Actually, I went to SMU right afterwards because I had a diving scholarship at SMU. It was for a year, so for that last 6 months I took a geology course. Just one course at SMU.

**Harris**

What made you pull out of SMU after that one semester?

**Jannette**

The campus was not accessible whatsoever. There's steps everywhere there's no parking and it's just not set up at all for anyone in a wheelchair.

**Harris**

How soon after did you enroll in UTA?

**Jannette**

<topic>Life as a student athlete at UTA</topic>

I believe it was probably in '81, and again I just took one maybe two courses. My sister would drive me to school, or my mother would drive me to school so we would go back and forth. They sat while I took courses, and so I believe the first 2 years from '81 to maybe '82 or the end of '82, I just took part-time courses.

**Harris**

During that time, what made you get back into sports?

**Jannette**

Well the even before then, when I was in Colorado, they had a swimming pool in the hospital. To get stronger, I started swimming and then soon as I got back to Dallas, Bachman Recreation Center had facility set up for the disabled. There I met Brandy Snow, I met Shorty Powers some other individuals that were in wheelchairs. They were very encouraging, very open about life in a wheelchair, and of course I was like "well I'm not going to be in this too much longer, I'm going to walk!" Then they were like "okay we'll pray for you I hope that will happen yes, but in the meantime let's get strong as do this!" So I think just talking to various individuals and went in wheelchairs. Everyone was like UTA, go to Arlington it's the best, you'll love it.

So that's how I was introduced, and I like I can't remember the exact meeting with Jim Hayes other, than I remember I was in his office and I thought he was a bit arrogant, a bit cocky when I first met him. He was asking me questions like "what makes you think that you can be a student here? What makes you think that you will be able to succeed?" I thought that was a bit rude of him, because I was like "I just started, I don't know," but I think my past can maybe tell you that I was an athlete before and I'm going to do the best I can. But later did I find out he was an absolutely wonderful person. Nice as can be, I think he was just trying to be play hardball with me to see if I had the guts to take...what it took to be able to accomplish what I need to do to being in a wheelchair.

**Harris**

At UTA, talking with Jim Hayes, what made you choose track?

**Jannette**

<topic>Jim Hayes</topic>

Why first started swimming, and Jim Hayes he had classes setup for weight training, exercising, and he had already had it set up for track and field and basketball. I tried a little bit of basketball, but I was not good with the ball. I didn't have much hand coordination since I was paralyzed from the neck down. I



didn't have much use my hands. I tried it but it wasn't for me I couldn't do it, but I did try I was called quad rugby. At that time was called Murderball (Wheelchair Rugby), and that was fun, but Jim Haye's program was more set up just for track and field. I continued swimming and I also did track because that was just accessible, and I had help. He had helpers that would get you in wheelchairs, and I first competed and I just my regular everyday chair. When we had competitions I would borrow racing chairs from other people, but they never did fit and it was just hard to compete.

What made the decision of going from one venue to the next, it was hard to go from the swimming pool to the track because they would be not at the same location, and sometimes it was I wouldn't miss an event if I couldn't make it in time. The coaches were like "okay if you want to be chosen for any of the teams, or to go anywhere you need to choose what you want to compete in." So swimming I liked but not so much, because I hated getting wet and getting cold. Training back and forth in a swimming pool, just going back and forth back and forth was boring to me. For track you could get on the road, or you didn't have to get wet obviously for track. There was more people around you, you could talk in the pool, you could talk after I added water below and around you. There was just more people in the track and field and it was just more accessible as well.

### **Harris**

When did you start to realize "hey look I'm pretty good at track?"

### **Jannette**

When I guess I look at the times and at other people's times. I realized that I could compete in this and I could be fast. It was just a matter of seeing the other competition and see how I related to them, and as far as their times and can I beat them. It was more about OK how fast can I do this 100 meter to 1,500 meter. I tried everything from sprints, to middle distance running, to 5,000 meter runs, to half marathons (13.1 miles).

### **Harris**

When did you start to narrow down the events? Like you said, you participated in a whole bunch of them. What made you decided on specific ones?

### **Jannette**

It turned out middle distance was my best anywhere from 800 to the 1,500 meter. 5,000 was probably, then maybe 3,000, 5,000 was a little bit better than the sprints, but not a whole bunch but again the 800 and 1500 were my best times that I could get.

### **Harris**

Any of the teams you participated on in track and field, did you all go to championships?

### **Jannette**

Right, first you start locally then enough for state, then you do regionally, and nationally, and internationally. It's a stepping stone, you qualify for one and then you can compete in the next competition, but you had to go to the competition in order to qualify. So if of course if you won your event, then that would automatically qualify you. They would look at other events of other participants, other competitors and they would see their times, and see you know whether they wanted you on the team or not.

**Harris**

What was your daily routine as far as being a student athlete? Did you have to train in the morning, and then go to school, and then train again? What was your daily routine?

**Jannette**

At UTA I had morning classes, but again not too early because I was not a morning person, and so my training didn't start until afternoon and evening. I would train for track during afternoon hours and then evening I would sometimes go to the pool and train.

**Harris**

Now let's get back to the Murderball.

**Jannette**

Okay

**Harris**

It was called what again? Rugby, something rugby?

**Jannette**

Quad Rugby that's correct, that's what it's called now, but it originated known as Murderball, and I think it started first in Canada. Then it made its way to the United States.

**Harris**

Okay how is the game played, please explain to me, I'm naive.

**Jannette**

Well again it was rugby and is a cross between, it was like basketball, but didn't have to obviously have a hoop. You just had to be able to carry the ball across like a field goal area. You would pass it, you would stop and pass it to individuals and they would make their way and down the court to the total gold area.

You would have blockers, you would have someone who handled the ball and since I was fast, more or less. I would be more of a blocker and sometimes they would hand me the ball but not too much, but once again I was not good handling the ball. They would do it every now and then, but there weren't many women in the sport it was mostly men.

**Harris**

Back to track and field. What years did you participate on any championship teams at UTA?

**Jannette**

It was probably my sophomore year, I'm very bad with dates, but most likely it's sophomore year. The first competition was in Seattle; it was nationals as far as making the team. Only few individuals I think from UTA went there I'm not quite sure. When we went to competitions it was more, is it called Southwest Athletic Association, Southwest Wheelchair Athletic Association. Jim has he allowed us to get to the state, to Regional games, having individuals to come travel with us to get to that point, and then it was through the Southwest Wheelchair Athletic Association who had a team together to go to national competitions.

**Harris**

You said you won the national championship?

**Jannette**

Yes, a few times.

**Harris**

A few times?

**Jannette**

Well, several events and then that would lead to going to International games for World Championship Games. The first one is the Stoke Mandeville games in England was 1986, and from there I went to Sweden, went to the Netherlands. Actually went to Sweden twice, and Puerto Rico, Venezuela just so on for Pan American Games to world championship games, and from there get chosen for the Paralympic games Seoul, Korea. It was just a stepping stone each event depending on your time and if you met the requirements of the people who selected to be on the team.

**Harris**

After you graduated from UTA, what did you take away from UTA? What did you take away with your experience with Jim Hayes?

## **Jannette**

Jim Hayes was instrumental to me getting stronger, and instrumental and allow me to get into the sports. It was it was like the accessibility of everything to you at hand. The campus itself was wonderful, it was you could say is a safe haven for the disabled. It allows you to excel to be a part of society, to be a functioning member of society. It is almost like being in Disneyland because it was also fun, you could do things you would want to do you can be with friends you may know the other people in wheelchairs. It was comradery, it was almost though you were like in a bubble though, because you go outside of Arlington go outside of UTA and you're on your own. There is no place that you can say "oh that's easy to get to." It was always a struggle, but UTA you didn't have to worry about that, you could get two classes. You could go to competitions, you could be with individuals other than also in the abled body community at it's called the Dry Gulch and UTA. It was a bar, but you could go there to hear music, you could see bands coming in, so it was a fun place to be.

## **Harris**

Now you mentioned the 1988 Seoul, South Korea Paralympics. How were you chosen and you mentioned a series of events you went through to be chosen for the team. What was your first reaction when you found out you were going to the Paralympics?

## **Jannette**

<topic>The 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, South Korea</topic>

Of course excitement, thrilled to death I would get to go. Actually, I was considered a backup person. I wasn't first chosen to go there and the girl that was chosen, she decided not to go because she was scared of South Korea with the situation with North Korea. I said I have no problem, I'll go and since you backed out then I got to go. I was they alternate the first and then I got to go it was just like "yay hurry for me!" I learned all I could about the Korean culture. It was very exciting because they treated us like athletes. The facility in Korea was completely handicapped accessible as wonderful. It was cold as heck though, never been so cold in my life, it was close I guess Korea was close to the water, but it was very very exciting very fun.

## **Harris**

What was your training routine getting ready for that?

## **Jannette**

At the time I had started law school in '87, so Korea was in '88. Law school did take up quite a bit of time, so my first year I went part-time so I could train for the games. I again start training in the afternoons, and in the evenings and I met this individual his name is Terry Jessup (Head U.S. Wheelchair coach 1988-1992). He had coached other Olympic track athletes, so he was very knowledgeable on how to train for the Olympic Games. So he really helped me in setting up a program in order to excel to get even better in my endeavors to train on track as well as off road. I would train sometimes up to 10 miles a day, but we would mix it up from maybe just do sprints one day, to the next week middle distance running, to and then to 10 miles so on.

## **Harris**

What was your reaction at the opening ceremony at the Olympics, Paralympics? Sorry.

**Jannette**

Well the Koreans definitely knew their fireworks. It was amazing it was a beautiful day opening ceremony was just like the able-bodied. It was it was just like wow this is great, I felt honored, I felt privileged that I can do this. I was thinking okay since I couldn't do it since I didn't make the 1984 Olympics in diving, then this was the next big step that I could take. That was my goal in my life ever since I was a little kid, ever since I started sports when I was starting at 9 years old to make the Olympic Games. So this is like all right I've done it I made it and I feel like a person.

**Harris**

Now the night before your first event, were you able to sleep? (Laugh)

**Jannette**

I don't even remember that! I'm sure I was very excited, no kidding. It was more less more to can I stay warm? It was, what they do is they before competition they would corral you into a kind of like a holding pen, and you couldn't really exercise before your event so you can stay warm. So I was more concerned about freezing up, and not being able to run as fast as I could. It was more like okay how can I stay warm and be ready for this event? So that was a concern, it wasn't so much it was excitement, it was it was more of like okay what do I need to do here?

**Harris**

Did you medal in any of your events?

**Jannette**

I did! I medaled in a bronze medal in the 1,500 meter run. The others, I think I placed...it was the 800 meter run I think I've placed sixth. I'm not quite sure I don't remember it's bad but yes I did medal in Seoul Korea.

**Harris**

In our last interview, you said something very interesting. You said you participated in table tennis also. Where did that come from?

**Jannette**

Well when I was training for track and field, I met the one of the coaches who was the coaches for table tennis, and we just got to talking and this is at the New York when the qualifying games. This is like guess about two years before, and anyway I met him and he goes "we'll have you ever play table tennis?" I said yes when I was a kid I used to play all the time, and he goes "well how it how would you

like to maybe get involved in this sport?" I'm like well I'm sure I'll try it. Just meeting him got me into that sport, and he introduced me to several individuals who could connect me with other individuals in Dallas who I could train with. I also took time I traveled out to New Jersey where he lived, and he trained me for a couple weeks. That's just how it began and fortunately I travelled for various competitions again. Starting at the regional level, to national level to hopefully make the team.

Since I had already made the team for Korea, for track, then they needed a doubles partner for table tennis. I don't know the exact doubles partners for there were different levels of competition. If you're a quadriplegic, to being a paraplegic they put in different categories. Since they need a doubles partner and my certain category then they're like sure you've met the prerequisites of making certain points. There's a point system in table tennis by how many competitions you're in, and if you want or so on and so on. I qualified that way and that allowed me to be on that table tennis team, but mostly because I had already qualified for track and field an hour and I was going to be there. I was there to play table tennis as well.

**Harris**

Did you medal in table tennis?

**Jannette**

No but we did make it to the third round, but no medal. We made it to the semifinals.

**Harris**

Now you did all of this while in law school at SMU?

**Jannette**

Yes yes, but I only went part time so I could train.

**Harris**

Once again, the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics. Same questions, how were you chosen for that? What events lead up to you participating in the 1992 Olympics.

**Jannette**

<topic>The 1988 Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain</topic>

The exact probably same scenario as 1988. I was part of the South West Wheelchair Athletic Association team. You would have to qualify, you would have to go to state, regional, nationals. Then the Pan-American games, World Championship games, and from there they would choose if you made the qualifying teams. For those then they would look at you for the Paralympic games, so it was the same scenario just step-by-step various competitions.

**Harris**

How was your experience in Barcelona?

**Jannette**

Again wonderful, I loved it, it's beautiful the town Barcelona. Very inviting for people in wheelchairs, and they did it like they would for the able-bodied community. It was just fantastic, the people there were very accepting for people in wheelchairs. They didn't look at you "aw you know you're not really an athlete," but everyone did consider you as an athlete. The food to Barcelona, the art, I just fell in love with the place. I want to go back! Yeah it was a fantastic experience.

My biggest concern though I was having a lot of problems with pain, a lot of nerve pain. I was had the best time going into it (track time), so I was looked as the person to beat. I'd since set World Records previously that I was hopefully going to win. That was the goal, but that didn't happen, and it was kind of a big blow for me because of my nerve pain. It was very disappointing. I think I placed fourth in the hundred-meter which was not my event, but I was able to hang onto pain and still do okay for the hundred-meter sprint. For my other events like 1,500 which is when I was supposed to win, I came in sixth. The 800 I think I came to sixth as well and maybe even seventh place for the 400 meter. It was my coach I think didn't understand what was going on either, we didn't really talk much. So there's a lot of tension but fun at the same time. I would love to place, I had a great time but yeah at the same time, it was a bit of a disappointment for me. I felt I let the team down by not winning.

**Harris**

Your time in Barcelona, was your family there with you?

**Jannette**

No I was there alone so they could tie my team members there. It was great fun, I don't know how to express it other than. I was a bit, how to explain, I didn't I kind of was a troublemaker in a way though because I didn't like the team uniforms, and for the opening ceremony I was like "I'm not wearing that it. This is hideous!" So, I started petition going me and 3 other people and to see if we could wear something else, because it wasn't very attractive. The coaches didn't like me it apparently or not necessarily the coaches. Coaches like me, but it was it was the people in charge or so forth, because I guess I was considered a troublemaker. Anyway, other people like "well here is a reason why this would be better to wear this so that outfit." We got them to change what we could wear for the opening ceremony, closing ceremony. That was I guess it was an accomplishment maybe I don't know! (Laughter) I guess I didn't ever follow the rules for anything.

**Harris**

What memories stuck out most to you about Jim Hayes?

**Jannette**

Jim Hayes was a very genuine, helpful, wonderful person who would take the shirt off his back to help someone. He made it instrumental for me to actually become independent. He devised a set up that allowed me to use the restroom on my own so I didn't have to have someone shadowing me everywhere I went. He what he do was he constructed tubing out of some PVC pipe that's connected to rubber

tubing that I can then insert a catheter into that allow me to have a grip. Because when you break your neck, being a quadriplegic, you have limited hand function. I didn't have to rely on other individuals to help me in the bathroom. He made it to where I could have independence, and that was just probably the biggest contributing factor in my life, and as far as being functioning individual and Society without having to depend solely on someone else. That was just the most wonderful thing that anyone could have done for me. Jim Hayes was an individual...I don't know...you asked the question! Ask another question! Mr. Hayes.

**Harris**

What characteristics did you remember about Jim Hayes?

**Jannette**

The characteristics that I remember most about Jim Hayes is that he loved coffee and he loved cigarettes. He lived on them constantly, I didn't see him without coffee I don't think ever or maybe a cigarette in his hand. I don't think you ever ate; I barely ever saw him eat. I just remembered him then tall and skinny. I think his weight was something like a hundred and thirty pounds, and with him being 6 feet tall I was like "Wow okay he needs to eat better," and I was very much proponent of eating healthy. I was a vegan at the time and would try to introduce various different ways of thinking of how to eat that would help people's training. I knew Jim Hayes gosh, that I don't know how this would work with him, but he was amazing he was a fine athlete. We got along great and it was a good connection mentally, physically and I could probably one of the most fun, educating experiences in life and being at UT and it was mostly because of Jim Hayes.

**Harris**

In a conversation you mentioned, you said something very interesting. You said that you and Jim Hayes participated in a meet together, and what was the result of that meet?

**Jannette**

Jim Hayes he ran some track as well, and we competed in a relay team together. Actually the qualifying for national games was held in Houston, and some other UTA members. It was me Jim Hayes, David Kingsbury, Joseph Davis we were on all relay team. We broke a world record at that point, but unfortunately David Kingsbury and I guess Joe, I'm not sure if they went to Hawaii for the national games are not bad it was just me and Jim Hayes on the national team for the relay for the quad relay. For I think a 4 by 1 relay and we again broke the world record.  
(Jannette's jacket rustling)

**Harris**

Now you mentioned about Barcelona that you were suffering with nerve pain. In our last conversation you said that you had to go through a procedure to take care of the nerve pain. Can you elaborate more on that?

**Jannette**



My nerve pain wasn't anything definitive that any doctors could figure out what was wrong. I tried several types of different kinds of operations. One was this huge, I can't remember exactly what they did, but it was like a needle, this huge needle that they stuck into my neck to try to hit the nerves to see if they could stop it from connecting the brain to my spinal cord for the nerves to try to stop it. But they didn't do anything I also had implanted a TENS Unit into my neck to try to stop the nerve pain, and it didn't work. Then the last surgery I tried was everything Colorado, and went back to Colorado because since they were probably on the leading edge of the spinal cord injury how to help individuals with spinal cord injuries and problems related to it. I had on untethering of the spinal cord and what they did was they went into my neck. It was an 18-hour long surgery and it went into my neck. They had to cut all my muscles that connected to my neck to my shoulders the lats (Latissimi dorsi or "wings"), and the upper lats and to get to the area of my spinal cord. What they did was they took out tissue and replaced it with bovine tissue, and that was hopefully to stop the nerves from twisting. Because what they thought was that every time I move my neck that the nurse or twisting and getting knotted. So that idea was to cut it and Bovine tissue is apparently very hard and that would keep the nerves in place. That was the idea behind it unfortunately the surgery didn't help my pain it only made things worse. That was pretty much the end of my career in sports. I couldn't handle the pain and also I was starting my law practice, my law business, I needed to concentrate on trying to make a living.

### **Harris**

Speaking of which, you said at this time during all of this, that you were going to SMU. Once again when we last spoke, you mentioned that you somehow connected with some architects at SMU to try to make SMU more accessible. How did that come about?

### **Jannette**

<topic>Working with architects for accessibility at SMU</topic>

Well it came about merely because I could not get them in the campus. When I first arrived there, there was only one building that I can get into to use the restrooms. Even classrooms that we're up on the second floor I had to be carried to get to my classes. It was it was hard to find individuals you know, if you're late for class or early. I had to like roam the hallways "hey" look at someone strong enough to lift me up to get me at to the classroom? It was a pain, so from there I talked to the dean of the law school, Dean Rogers. I guess it was through him that got me to talk with the Architects. They are because they found well this is a need for other individuals that they wanted to come to the school, SMU. Then we need to make it accessible for anyone and everyone, and not just someone in a wheelchair. They're might be someone else I just can't walk very easily or made need a walker or whatever.

I helped the architects build in accessible bathrooms in buildings, especially in the law building since that's where I was having my classes, so I didn't have to leave the class and get out and the elements. I mean it was not fun when it was winter time, it was raining and you can stay in that building you had to leave the building just to get and push that another building just and use the restroom. It took a lot of time and sometimes you only get 15 minutes between classes, and that wasn't enough time for me to push from one class to the next class, and go to another building, and use the restroom then come back. So that's kind of how it began just because the mere logistics of just getting to my classes. I wasn't able to because there was no accessibility.

I work with the architects like again, for other individuals as far as the dormitories making, and that was also where my travels to Korea helped me, because I tell the set up what they did and make it accessible in the apartments. As well as UTA, the apartments they had accessible apartments there and using the knowledge of what was done to make it wheelchair accessible for all levels of injury. It helped me to explain to the architects what would be a good setup.

**Harris**

During that process at the beginning, did you see any pushback or any politics involved from the University?

**Jannette**

A little bit there was, because they're saying well we really don't have to do this. We don't have to make it accessible because we're a private school or not a public school. It was a matter to like well let's see what we can do, but we can't promise anything we had to find the funds to do this. I think they were maybe more concerned that they didn't want me to sue them. Even though I couldn't see them because they were a private institute, a learning institute, but at the same time I think they wanted to cover themselves.

**Harris**

Did you get any kind of recognition for that?

**Jannette**

Not really other than after I graduated from law school, when I come back to do research in the library, people would seem anything please come back we need you we need your help on this when you do help on that because this isn't being done. So then I'm like "I'm sorry but I've graduated why don't you ask other individuals other students to do the work." The other thing that I helped with was I was a chairman of the recycling committee of what's called the Environmental Natural Resources Law Society. Because of that I got the recycling program set up for Coke cans, or paper because a lot in school is being used. However, it only lasted for a couple years because the students weren't emptying their drinks properly, and it was creating a mess in these bins. They attracted insects and roaches and they're like I'm sorry but we're going to get rid of this we're not going to have it anymore.

The other thing I had done in what's called the law quad there were four buildings at SMU law school, so they call it the law quad. There were times where people would walk across the grass and it created huge paths. Whenever it rained all the runoff from the land would run on the sidewalk, and I couldn't jump over the mud, I couldn't jump over all the water and I have to go through this and all my clothing, my wheels, my hands would get terribly muddy. So would go into the classroom tracking in mud, I couldn't get the mud off my hands because I can't even get into the bathroom to wash them because there wasn't a bathroom. So that was another thing I managed to get done. We raise some money to plant whole bunch of plants in the law quad to prevent people from walking on the grass and help with the soil erosion so therefore the sidewalks remain clean. Because of that, I would have professor's other individuals say "aw this is great," so that would be the recognition people would come up to me and say thank you for getting this done it helps us to. (Jacket rustling)

**Harris**

What encouraging words do you have for someone in a similar situation? Where they are handicapped, oh or have a disability, sorry and feel that life is at a standstill for them?

**Jannette**

<topic>Words of encouragement</topic>

Well, I think to get anywhere you have to be strong mentally and physically. In order to accomplish your goals, I think you need to feed your body the right nutrients and exercise to get the oxygen to your brain. To have the determination and willpower that some days are going to be bad but know it will get better it will pass. To rely on other individuals, you know you're not alone, you don't have to do this alone. Get help, ask for help, reach for help and just do the best you can. Don't think of the past; you can maybe look at it to learn from it but don't dwell on it. Think of the present what you can do for now for yourself because if you look too far into the future it might be too overwhelming. You can't predict the future for one, you can't count on it, you can plan for it but you certainly can't count on it, and what you have is the present moment. Do the best you can and educate yourself as much as you can. Try to be strong and keep your body as healthy as possible, in case science comes up with something to where you can actually walk, or just make your life that much easier. I think that's advice for just anyone. Everyone at some point is going to have some sort of disability no matter at what age. No one is immune from it, so what you what you can do now I can also help you later on in life.

**Harris**

That's very encouraging! Anything else you would like to elaborate on?

**Jannette**

Other than UTA is great I loved it, the best years of my life! It really was, it was so much fun I didn't have to worry about things, I can just be a kid and also be an adult and learn as much as possible. It allowed me to excel without having to worry. That's my memories of UTA.

**Harris**

Thank you very much for this second interview, and inviting me into your home again. I really appreciate it.

**Jannette**

You're welcome my pleasure!