

Micah Bailey:

What's up, podcast world? Welcome to season two of I Am WT. This is Micah Bailey.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I'm Thomas Rodriguez.

Micah Bailey:

And we're here in the podcast studio with a very special guest. Dolores, will you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Dolores Thompson:

My name is Dolores Thompson and I live in Amarillo. I am a nurse by profession and I'm here to talk about I Am WT. I think I'm a little nervous about the whole thing because I'm not sure what I want to talk about and what you all will ask me, but I'm here to talk about what WT means to me, so let's go for it. Awesome.

Thomas Rodriguez:

That's very awesome. How about we go a little bit more in depth? So you say you're a nurse. How long have you been a nurse for?

Dolores Thompson:

I've been a nurse since 1971. That's too many numbers for me to calculate at this point. I went to school at Texas Women's University and graduated in 1971, and I've been practicing nursing since then. I came to WT in 19, probably 91, 92, to work on a Master's in Nursing, and that's when I became associated with WT myself as a student. I did have lots of friends and family who came to WT. In fact, my mother is Helen Neal. She was the first African-American to graduate from WT in 19, I don't even remember the year now, but I can remember that I was in middle school, in junior high school. We didn't even call it middle school. She was in junior high school, so it had to be in 63, 64 that she graduated, I think, from WT. And then my father was a faculty member here, and I think he was the first African-American faculty member here at WT. So I have some ties with WT from way back then.

Thomas Rodriguez:

So your family is involved. That's cool.

Dolores Thompson:

Oh yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

That's awesome.

My dad actually came to WT before I did. He graduated with a master's in music in 2001.

Dolores Thompson:

Okay.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah, I'm-

Dolores Thompson:

Where's he, does he teach music?

Thomas Rodriguez:

He does, he teaches music down in Houston, an inner city middle school. He's been teaching for 15 years now.

Dolores Thompson:

I have a lot of family and friends. I have other family members. God's a family members who graduated from WT. It was convenient, it was easy to get to, and so education has always been an important part of our family. When it's there and the opportunity presents itself, we take advantage of it. So I have lots of cousins and so forth who also came to WT.

Micah Bailey:

That is cool. I've got to ask, did it kind of make WT the only option for you or were you extremely excited to come to school here?

Dolores Thompson:

At the time, I was working, teaching nursing at Amarillo College, and I needed to get a master's degree in order to keep that job. And I had worked on math, I had worked on it and started going back to TWU in the summertime, but it's kind of hard to do that when you have kids and family members to go off and go to school in the summertime. So I put that on the back burner and decided I need to get this done, and WT was an option for me back in 70, I think it was 76 or so. University of Texas brought a Master's in Nursing program in Amarillo, and I didn't take advantage of it then, but again, I had little kids and I was busy working and raising a family and didn't do it. I was at Amarillo College and I knew needed to get that Master's degree.

It was an important part of who I am and what I needed to be doing in my profession. And so WT presented itself and it was an opportunity, and so I did, and it was really easy considering the fact that I didn't have to come to class. We did it on weekends, in the evening times when most of us who were going to school were working people. They made the program easy for us to do at that particular time. I can remember coming down on Saturdays and we'd have class all day Saturdays and stuff like that, but it was easy. It wasn't easy, but it was convenient for us to do that. So WT made it easy for me to get that Master's degree. Right.

Micah Bailey:

That's interesting. Classes on Saturdays. They have completely changed that. We don't even have classes on Friday anymore.

Dolores Thompson:

For real?

Thomas Rodriguez:

I could not do classes on Saturday. No.

Dolores Thompson:

We did on, you have to remember, we were working people.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah, makes sense.

Dolores Thompson:

So we had jobs, and so it was easy to do that Saturday thing to do that. And it was before online things. See, I couldn't do online stuff. Now I don't know how people do online classes. I need to see the teacher. I need to be sitting in the chair, somebody talking to me.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I don't know how we do online classes either. I'm not a huge fan, but it's part of the degree plan, so I got to do them.

Dolores Thompson:

Yeah, yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Some of them are better than others. It just depends.

Dolores Thompson:

I never got that far, but this was easy. It was easy for me. It was convenient for me to do it. I was going, in fact, I think all of us, my two daughters and myself were all going to school. I got a divorce in the midst of all of this stuff, and so it was just the two of us, and I think we were all going to school at the same time. Some kind of school. Yeah, I think so. All three of us were.

Micah Bailey:

Yeah. That's awesome. So education definitely is at the forefront of absolutely everything.

Dolores Thompson:

Oh yeah. There was no option in our family. My parents were both educated and it was not an option of if it's called when. So we didn't have any choice. We had to go to college and my daddy always used to say to us, I'm going to do two things for you, buy you a set of luggage and send you to college, and then you're on your own. Well, he did that for all four of us. I have three sisters and he did that. They did that for all four of us.

Micah Bailey:

That's such a blessing.

Dolores Thompson:

It is. Not many people can say that their parents paid for their education and they talk about student debt now, and it's like we didn't have student debt because our parents did it for us. So that was a blessing all by itself.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I have two parents who are both teachers, so it's a very tight budget we run to make sure that I can come here.

Dolores Thompson:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I make do. Can't complain.

Dolores Thompson:

I can't complain. I'm blessed to have been able to do my, I'm the oldest, so I started the process, and so my sisters behind me started Amarillo College because daddy worked at Amarillo College as well, so I was still at TWU. They started Amarillo College, so we kind of worked our way up to, my daddy always says he owns part of Denton because he sent lots of money to Denton because two of us went to TWU and one went to North Texas.

Thomas Rodriguez:

You've been talking about your time here as a WT student. Do you have a favorite memory while you were here?

Dolores Thompson:

I don't know that I have a memory other than that we worked hard. I didn't get involved in the student activity part of WT because I was a working student and I did my student stuff on weekends. I come to the library down, I can remember coming to the library down here. You could drive straight through the campus, you know, you can't do that anymore. You could turn on, what's the street right there by the box.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Box. Oh...

Dolores Thompson:

Right off the highway. What is that?

Micah Bailey:

That's not Russell, is it?

Dolores Thompson:

Is that Russell along Boulevard?

Thomas Rodriguez:

Don't think it's Russell. No, you can drive down Russell.

Dolores Thompson:

Well, anyway, but you could drive straight through Old Main, where Old Main is. You could drive all the way straight through campus. I remember going to the library more than anything. We had to do all this research and stuff, probably more than anything. I remember the library and you could drive straight through to the library. Yeah, I remember that. But otherwise, I don't really have a lot of memories of student activities at WT other than I had to get this degree.

Micah Bailey:

There is a lot of people here who come for our nursing program because it's phenomenal.

Dolores Thompson:

Phenomenal.

Micah Bailey:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Huge program.

Micah Bailey:

It is most definitely. And along with our Ag, but nursing wise, do you have anything that you would give advice to someone on that? What's the biggest thing that you would tell someone?

Dolores Thompson:

The nurse, to come to nursing?

Micah Bailey:

Yeah.

Dolores Thompson:

Nursing is a hard profession, but it's very fulfilling. You have to have the desire to want to help people to do that. It is, it requires a lot of hard work and it's a lot of studying, but it's well worth it at the end because you can do lots of things. It's a wide open profession now.

There's tons of opportunities for nurses. And so this is a perfect place WT to get that degree and start that profession. I strongly believe that. And they have the nurse practitioner program as well. So it's an excellent program and it's a good stepping stone for somebody that's one enter into the nursing profession. Now, I didn't teach at WT. I taught at Amarillo College where we get associate degrees and we had a lot of students leave that program and come down here and finish their BSNs down here. But this is a perfect place to do that. It's always been a good school, have good graduates, have excellent faculty members. So I don't have anything bad to say about WT at all.

Micah Bailey:

That's lovely. Yeah, I love it here.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah, I think we all share that sentiment. I love doing podcasts, really being on the radio and all that stuff. It's a great time. I love it here.

Dolores Thompson:

That's good. That's good. Good experience for you.

Thomas Rodriguez:

It's a great experience. It's very out of my element compared to back home, because back home is like you're in the city. There's people everywhere and out here, it's all spread out and it's quiet.

Dolores Thompson:

Houston is home?

Thomas Rodriguez:

Houston is home. Yeah.

Dolores Thompson:

I have a daughter that two sisters who live in Houston. My daughters always tell me, you're going to have to move to Houston when you can't take care of yourself. And I go, I'm not going to Houston. Don't like Houston that good?

Thomas Rodriguez:

It's pretty loud.

Dolores Thompson:

It's too hot.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yes, it's very hot, very humid. I prefer the dryness of up here to humid down there.

Dolores Thompson:

I didn't appreciate the dryness that we had here in Amarillo until I went to Denton and TWU, and Dallas when I went to college down there and it was like, what is all of this humidity coming from?

Thomas Rodriguez:

Why does the air feel like water? It's not supposed to do that.

Dolores Thompson:

Well, my family, my parents were from Oklahoma and Oklahoma's pretty humid too, but I don't remember the humidity being there when I was a little girl. But when I went to Dallas and Denton, that humidity was horrible. So I can't stand that. So what is your major?

Thomas Rodriguez:

I major in digital media and communications. I'm going-

Dolores Thompson:

What does that mean?

Thomas Rodriguez:

So that means the stuff that you see with the radio, this whole podcasting suite. I work with audio, I work with video. Some of the videos you see on the TVs, I've had a hand in making. And I just do a lot. I do everything. Whatever he needs me to do, I go and I'm like-

Dolores Thompson:

You do it.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Heck yeah.

I'm always going for hands-on experience.

Dolores Thompson:

Okay, that's good.

Micah Bailey:

It's very important. Hands on.

Dolores Thompson:

Hands on. That's nursing.

You can't learn how to take care of people if you're not out there with patients. And so I'm a big proponent of that. Our nursing students, without nursing students, with any nursing students, you got to get out there. You can't learn how to take care of a nursing simulation. And I say that we do a lot of simulation, but I'm an old nurse now. You remember that. I need to see a patient over here. I need to talk to that patient.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah. I don't mean to make you feel old, but you were talking about the math and how you've been doing nursing since 71. That's over 50 years of nursing.

Dolores Thompson:

Okay.

Thomas Rodriguez:

You've got a lot of years of experience. That's good to have. I think.

Dolores Thompson:

It is. Yeah. That's too long. I can't think about that.

Thomas Rodriguez:

My bad. I didn't mean to do that.

Dolores Thompson:

It's all right. It's okay. I know how old I am. That's what you-

Micah Bailey:

You said you work with people a lot. So would you say you're a people person?

Dolores Thompson:

I guess so.

Micah Bailey:

I can see it.

Dolores Thompson:

I guess so. I like talking to people and I think that's part of my nursing is that you have to talk to people in order to take care of them. So even at their worst, we see people at their worst many times and they're in pain and they're unhappy and mad and sad and pissed off. And so you have to learn how to talk to people. That's a big part of communication I think, of nursing is communicating with people.

So I guess that's probably why I'm so involved. Even in the community, I still talk to people. I belong to the League of Women Voters and we do a lot of voter registration, young people. And so we do it here, down in here at WT, and we usually set up over there in the JBK where the students are. And my fellow members of the League always say, you are. She said. And they always tell me, you have no problems approaching people because people won't walk up to the table and say, I want to register to vote. She said, I pick up my, I will pick up the cards. And I start walking around the room, go to different tables and say, are you registered to vote? And how come and why not? And here, let me fill out this card and so forth. So they say, I do that all the time, and I guess I do.

Micah Bailey:

That's really cool. So how did you get involved with that? And I guess why?

Dolores Thompson:

You know what? I don't know how I got started. I became a VDR, a Voter Deputy Registrar. I think it goes back in 2017. I think for some reason or other I thought I needed to do that. So I took the course and got to be a VDR and I was doing it. And then for some reason or other, I hooked up with the League of Women Voters because I believe in their philosophy, and it's a nonpartisan organization. We're not supporting any parties or anybody, but we want to make sure that people are registered to vote, that

democracy continues. And it just kind of felt good in my spirit. And so I joined the organization. I think I've probably been a member a couple of years now, but I have had more fun and enjoyed that because I get to go out to the communities. And we've done voter registration in high schools, particularly because the seniors are 18, they need to be registered to vote.

So we've been going to high schools for the last couple of years getting these young people registered to vote. And I always say, okay, you're registered to vote. Now the second verse of this is you go vote. So that's how I got started. And I truly believe that young people need to be voting and making decisions of how this world, this country of ours is going to run. Because again, I'm 74 years old. I don't have too much longer here on this earth, but you have a lot more Lord willing more than I do. And so you all's group need to be voting, paying attention to what's going on, who votes.

Speaker 4:

That is true.

Dolores Thompson:

It's true, but who's going to be living through those laws that we are voting? And so I always say that second verse is go vote. Pay attention to what's going on.

Thomas Rodriguez:

You a good point. We're going to take a quick break and we'll be right back with more of the IMW WT podcast.

Speaker 4:

Donors to West Texas A&M University give more than their materials support. They devote time, expertise, and commitment. WT would not be what it is today without individuals dedicated to our forward progress.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Welcome back to the I AM WT podcast. As we get back into it, we'd like to say congratulations to you on your upcoming honor at the Celebration of Color this week. How does that make you feel?

Dolores Thompson:

Well, I don't like being honored and things like that, but somebody nominated me for this honor. I think it's overwhelming to me. I'm excited about it. I'm humbled, very humbled that somebody nominated me to be in this group of people who are being honored this weekend for the Celebration of Color. I find that I am a community minded person, that's a part of who I am and what I grew up doing. And so somebody's seen that in me. And so I'm honored and humbled that they nominated me for this honor.

So it is an honor for real to be nominated here. One of the things that last, we have have a suite here on WT that's named after my parents. It's the Nathaniel and Helen Neil Multicultural Center, a suite over there in the JBK. We dedicated that a couple of years ago, and I thought that was a tremendous honor, and it still is to think that my parents have a building at an institution of learning named after them since they were big educators themselves. So it's an honor. It's an honor to be their child and to have this memorial here.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Do it. That's super awesome. I've always walked past that room and I was like, I wonder what that is. So now I know that's a really huge deal.

Dolores Thompson:

It is.

Micah Bailey:

That's so sweet. Someone looked up to you. They were ready to-

Dolores Thompson:

Somebody did. My friend tells me, somebody nominated you. And I go, are you going to tell me who? And she goes, no, I'm not going to tell you. And I thought, oh, well, okay. So I'm honored that I was nominated. So it is an honor. I'm humble to know that somebody was watching, said, did I say the right thing? Sometimes I were my actions better than, did I say the right thing? So yeah, I'm really honored that it's here.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I've done that before, not getting an honor. That's a you exclusive, just wondering, huh? I hope I said the right thing there. And then they're like, yeah, you did good. And I'm like, oh, cool.

Dolores Thompson:

Oh, cool.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Because when Dana approached us about doing the podcast, and I was like, absolutely, I'd love to do that. That sounds super cool. And he's like, sure. We'll start next semester. And I was like-

Dolores Thompson:

Is this is the second year for doing podcasts?

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yes. This is our season two of the I Am WT podcast. Yes, we are. The last episode of the last season, we met with the old host, Ray and Tyranae. They talked with us for a bit and it was a fun experience. And now we're the host.

Dolores Thompson:

You're the host.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yes.

Micah Bailey:

We're all growing up. It's kind of scary.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I know. I came here wide-eyed, just excited to do band and see what was going to happen. And now I'm here. I have a special show on the radio. I host a podcast.

Dolores Thompson:

So when are you graduating?

Thomas Rodriguez:

The plan is to graduate in 25. Yeah.

Dolores Thompson:

Okay. Micah, when are you graduating?

Micah Bailey:

December 24.

Dolores Thompson:

In a minute. Both of y'all. Okay.

Thomas Rodriguez:

We've got a little bit. I've got two. I've still got a year and a half. You only got like a year.

Micah Bailey:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Dang.

Dolores Thompson:

It's okay.

Micah Bailey:

It's going fast.

Dolores Thompson:

It's going fast. It'll come to a end. I'm ready. And then you'll have to have to act like a grown person.

Micah Bailey:

Oh, no, don't tell me that.

Dolores Thompson:

Yes, you have to act like my daughter. My youngest daughter's the one, she's so funny. She says, mama, she's always my, she's so grown. She said, I didn't realize being grown was going to work every day and paying bills. I said, that's exactly what it is. So your day's coming.

Micah Bailey:

So I've heard a lot about, we were actually talking about it outside of the podcast studio, how you volunteer, will you tell us a little bit about where and why and all the cool things.

Dolores Thompson:

I guess I'm almost a busy body, but I like doing things. So I serve on the Friends of the Library Board, and that board supports the library activities, and we do a lot, we raise lots of money. Have you ever heard of AmaCon?

Micah Bailey:

I haven't.

Dolores Thompson:

Oh my gosh. You need to do that. It's in July. I mean August of every year. You just missed it. But you can go online at the library, Amarillo APL, and look at it and you see pictures of it. And this is an activity that the Friends of the Library sponsor, helps raise money for the library activities. We provide the summer reading club stuff. We have books on Broadway, but AmaCon is for the, I'm not a comic book fan.

Micah Bailey:

Oh my goodness. Wait, yes.

Dolores Thompson:

Yes. AmaCon.

Micah Bailey:

I literally volunteered last year.

Dolores Thompson:

Anime. Did you do it? Did your mouth fall open watching that?

I was amazed the first time I saw him. These people come and they are dressed in these costumes and they are excited about what they're doing. Anyway, I serve on the Friends of the Library Board. I like library. I grew up in the library. We used to have what we call a book mobile. That was before we went to the library. And they had this truck looked like a big milk truck, and it would come to the park and we would go to the park and check out books from the library. So I've been a big reader all of my life. So I love the library. I volunteer at League of Women Voters. I think that's important. I volunteered BSA Hospice of the Southwest. I worked in hospice as a nurse and as a teacher. And I always thought, I'm going to go back and do that when I retire.

And I did. My brother-in-law happened to be a patient at hospice at the particular time. And a friend of mine was a nurse there, and he came through. He said, what are you doing here, DT? And I said, well,

I'm visiting with my family members. He said, well, why come you're not volunteering? I said, I don't know. I hadn't never thought about it. He said, you come with me.

So I went with him. I went to the volunteer coordinator and I took the course while my brother-in-law was in hospice. And so I became a hospice volunteer. And I love that. I tell people I get to go be a nurse and I don't have to be the nurse. So I get to go do the nursing things. I can fluff and puff and turn and support family members and patients, and I don't have to do all that charting and give her the medicines and all this stuff. So I do that a lot and I enjoy that.

What else do I volunteer at? In my church? My sorority. My sorority is a public service organization, so we do a lot of things in the community as much as we can. Voter registration is one, volunteer at the food bank, see what other, that's enough.

Micah Bailey:

That's wonderful. Can I ask, what motivates you to do all of that?

Dolores Thompson:

I guess just to do something to help somebody. That's all those things that I do, help somebody make their life a little bit better, a little easier. So I think that's what it is just to go out and help somebody and appreciate what I have that I can share it with somebody else.

Thomas Rodriguez:

All right. I think it's time. We're going to have to drop the big question on you.

Dolores Thompson:

What's that?

Thomas Rodriguez:

What does WT mean to you?

Yeah, that's about the average host or the average guest's reaction to the question.

Dolores Thompson:

Really?

Micah Bailey:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Yeah, just a little bit. It's okay.

Dolores Thompson:

Okay. Let's see how I can, what do I want to say? WT has presented opportunities for me, presented opportunities for my parents to further our educations, our professions. And I'm delighted that that has been an opportunity for us. So I think that's the biggest thing, is that the opportunity presented itself and allowed us to expand our own wings so that we could have influenced other people in the

community that we live in. And I think that's basically what we all want to do, is do something that's going to influence the community that we live in. WT has allowed me to be able to do that.

Thomas Rodriguez:

I also associate WT with opportunity. Oh, there's a radio program, now I'm part of the radio program. This radio program is fun. I want to keep doing it.

Dolores Thompson:

Yeah.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Wonder if I can get more involved, gets a lab assistant job, and then now here we are.

Dolores Thompson:

And so it's providing me opportunities. It's providing each of you opportunities so that when you finish school here, you can go influence somebody in another community, in this community. That's what education is for. It's that we learn something, we can take it with us and to help somebody else. I have a philosophy. It's do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And I think education has helped me do that, and WT has helped me do that too. I say that to my students when I first meet them. So you want to take care of your patient, just like you want somebody to take care of your grandmother or yourself. So do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And education has allowed me that opportunity.

Micah Bailey:

Yeah, I guess that's the beauty of life in general, not just education. You get to learn and then you get to teach. And that goes for just about anything in life.

Dolores Thompson:

Anything. If you're influencing somebody with what you do in life, that's what it's all about. And sharing that information or sharing that knowledge that you have somebody else, the crowd that I'm with in the Celebration of Color, I'm impressed. I'm impressed by them more than I am by me with some of the things that they've been doing. I've known Demerson for a long time. The other gentlemen, I don't know very well, but I know Demerson, so I'm impressed that I'm in the company of those gentlemen there.

Thomas Rodriguez:

Well, that's all the time we have today for the I Am WT Podcast. Dolores, you've been a fantastic guest. We're so happy to have you.

Dolores Thompson:

Thank you so much. I appreciate you all having me. I never did a podcast before, so I hope this comes out all right.

Thomas Rodriguez:

This transcript was exported on Oct 25, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

That's the plan. You can find the I Am WT podcast at wtamu.edu/podcasts. Thank you all for listening. We look forward to seeing you next time on the I Am WT Podcast.