

Interviewees: Julie Allen – Tessa Allen de Oliveira (Mother and daughter. Julie was married, took name Allen de Oliveira, then got divorced and switched back to her maiden name; Tessa kept the combined name)

Interviewer: Jessica Higgins

[Intro and consent] *So can you just tell me a little bit about the last name story?* JULIE: Tessa's dad's last name is his mother and his father's last name, so his last name is Ferera de Oliveira. And then when we married we took my last name and his dad's last name, so it's Allen de Oliveira, and honestly, it was... I just did that because her dad moved from a different country, and I thought that that would be the only thing I could really do to... You know, for him, would be to use that name, but... I wouldn't do it again.

*You wouldn't?* JULIE: No. *Why not?* JULIE: Because the girls have had a really hard time with having such a long last name, and it's just... And also, you have to change all of your documentation, I just think it's better to... TESSA: You mean after you get divorced? JULIE: I mean after you get married and after you get divorced, but after you get married first, because you usually don't plan on getting divorced [laughs].

*Yeah, so when you got divorced, you went back to Julie Allen.* JULIE: I did. *And did that cause a lot of confusion with legal documents?* JULIE: You mean like as it pertains to my children, like, them being my children?

*Yeah, or just like... That... Yeah, that would definitely be a problem.* JULIE: It was never a problem, it's just like, you've been calling... Tessa's sick today, this is Julie Allen, I'm calling on behalf of Tessa Allen de Oliveira. You know, it's... It wasn't really a problem, but it would've been better... When they went to private school, they just went by Oliveira, because even though their legal last name was Allen de Oliveira, I just thought Oliveira was easier for them to deal with. But in public school, you have to use your legal name, so... That's why, if I had a chance to do it again, I would've either gone with Oliveira for them or... That's it, I guess. Because you couldn't really be Allen. [Tessa and Julie laugh].

*Was there any importance to you in maintaining or keeping your original last name? Are you glad you got to keep your maiden name in the end?* JULIE: When I got divorced? *When you got married, too. Like, was it kind of nice?* JULIE: Um... Yes, it was, I should've just kept it. But as I said, the only reason was just to give one thing... But yeah, to me it is important.

*How important was the way that the name sounded to you? Like, the asthetic part of it.* JULIE: Oh, apparently not important at all, because I wouldn't have gone with it! It doesn't sound very good! [laughs] *I kind of like Allen de Oliveira! It's got a nice little ring to it, you know? So you've had some unforeseen consequences, just dealing with schooling and things like that. Tessa, what about you, what have been some consequences?* TESSA: Some consequences of what? *Like has it been difficult for you to have a different name than your mom, and a long, lengthy last name?* TESSA: Um... I think more than anything it just confuses people. Like they don't know whether to place me with the "A's" or the "O's" with standardized testing and whatnot. My name can never fit in the allotted bubbles, so... Colleges and stuff always sent me duplicates of everything. No one can pronounce it, like at every awards ceremony or at graduation or whatever. It's always wrong. So not necessarily complications, I think just confusion.

*Just kind of annoying sometimes?* TESSA: Yeah, and I think people - it makes people assume that I'm different, just because I have a ridiculously long last name. I get a lot of questions about my ethnicity. *When I first saw your name - because Tessa and I are roommates - I had no idea how to pronounce it. So, it took me a little bit. [discuss my troubles with Tessa's last name]. If and when you ever get married, what are you going to do with your last name?* TESSA: I'm not sure. Because I think something interesting about how they do it in Portugal is that it tells a part of your identity just by your name. So you can tell my mom's American and my dad's Portuguese just by my last name - if you're at all familiar with Portuguese names. So, I don't know, I'm a little hesitant to lose that part, but if I were to keep any name I think it would be Allen just because I would rather honor my mom's name, because she's the one who raised me. *So would you do the combining thing?* TESSA: I'm not sure. I might... I would consider making it my second middle name. Or maybe combining - I'm not sure. I guess it depends on how terribly long my future hub's last name is.

*This could be a question for both of you: how effective do you think it is for a woman to keep her - just in terms of feminism - how effective do you think it is for a woman to keep her last name, just because, really you're just keeping your father's father's father's name, you know? It's not, you know, you as a woman's name - I guess it depends on your perspective - but what do you guys think about that?* TESSA: I don't know, I think a lot of times if I see a hyphenated name or whatever, I make assumptions that that person's mother was more feminist than if it wasn't. But I'm not sure if it has a huge effect. JULIE: I actually... Now I'm remembering that I didn't ever use Allen de Oliveira at work. I always used Allen, no matter what, like when I got married I never changed it because one, the confusion, but... So to me it was important in my business life, but my personal was more geared toward my children, so...

*Yeah, that occurs a lot, women, you know, just... Even if they get married and they change their last name, in the work place they keep their maiden name, just to avoid confusion. I think you already answered what do you think the generation of children with hyphenated names should do as they marry and have children. Julie, what do you think?* JULIE: I think they should do whatever they want to do, like if they think it's - I think a lot of times things like that skip generations, they might just think it's ridiculous, and either choose to go with the husband's or choose one of their parents, like Tessa said she would do, and it may just be based upon the ease of the name.

*Yeah, I think a lot of it has to do with how nice the name sounds. [End of questions, thank Julie and Tessa for their time]*