

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Mildred Rodriguez

Date 7 March 2025

Medium born digital audio file

Description Audio file of interview with Mildred Rodriguez. She was interviewed by Silas Segar on 7 March 2025 in East Hartford, CT . Mildred Rodriguez was interviewed as part of the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History's Community History Project discussing moments of change in her life. Mildred was interviewed on March 7, 2025 in East Hartford, Connecticut. Change, for her, is something that happens when a person realizes that they want something different to better themselves. The change happened for Mildred during Covid when she had felt extremely lost in life and was seeking guidance from more spiritual sources. She had explored different religions prior, initially being raised Catholic, but had not been able to find something that felt right for her. That was until she had read the Quran which stood out to her due to its long, unchanged wording from 1400 years ago. She first began to interact with Islam through the patients she cared for as a nurse. One patient had given her a copy of the Quran to allow her the opportunity to read it and the Muslims she spoke with were patient with answering her questions until she was able to read it and understand it for herself. There were many aspects to the Quran that had been difficult to comprehend such as the polygamous marriage and cutting off a hand for stealing. Both of these were much more reliant on the previous social expectations of the time and had elements where community comes together to

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solve a problem where it is rarely expected today. One of the more difficult parts

of her conversion was the change in attire but she found that wearing the hijab

and dressing according to the customs of Islam provided her with a sense of

freedom and agency she hadn't known before. Her first experience with Islamic

prayer was in the house of a patient. She had learned the prayer in both English

and Arabic and now is trying to learn how to read Arabic. Mildred explains that

“the Quran in Arabic is like a song” and how powerful it felt for her to listen to.

Mildred learned how God had been helping guide her towards different life

choices through various trials including her conversion. This was not without

other difficulties however, as she found that a number of people in her life had

not stuck with her after it. Those who stayed and accommodated her lifestyle

proved to have a meaningful relationship with her that she deeply valued. Her

children were supportive of her too, seeing how she had become happier and

less burdened with anxiety, and they had read the Quran for her too to learn

about it as well even when they chose not to follow any religion afterward.

Mildred discussed her experiences with Ramadan. She explains it as a time not

only for fasting, but for self control where life habits are changed to strive for a

more peaceful life. After Ramadan, she wishes to continue to keep her swearing

to a minimum as well as pray five times a day as she has been able to do so far.

She wishes for people to be more open-minded and not to treat people poorly

for their religion because she is willing to share her experience to any who ask.

Dimensions Duration: 55 Minutes, 14 Seconds