

Katie Hill Interview

AS: Ok so I'm Anna Swartwout and I'm here with-

KH: Kaitlyn, or Katie, Hill

AS: -for the Queens of Slippery Rock Oral History Project. Before we start with the questions can you give us a brief biography of what you did, like your major, minors, hometown...

KH: Sure, yeah, so I came to Slippery Rock in 2011. I'm from Stow, Ohio which is about an hour south of Cleveland. I majored in Early Childhood and Special Education with a double major and I graduated in 2015. While at Slippery Rock I was- do you wanna know what I was involved in?

AS: Yes, that's actually the next one so you can keep going.

KH: Ok, I'll just keep going. I started out with leadership positions in my house council, my residence hall, and then I was involved a lot in CRU on campus and became their president my sophomore-junior year, was a part of the Green and White Society and was their president my junior year, and then was president of the Student Government my senior year and so was kind of involved in a lot of things across campus.

AS: Yeah definitely. Ok so what did Homecoming Queen mean to you and what does it still mean?

KH: Homecoming Queen meant, it was just kind of like who embodied Slippery Rock and who wanted to spread Slippery Rock pride and spirit and that's what it still means to me today. It kind of just means that there's always going to be that connection there and that there's always going to be that something that brings you back because people wanted you to represent Slippery Rock and so I kind of take it as like, alright they want me to continue to spread that wherever I am.

AS: What made you decide to run?

KH: Well I wanted to run my junior year and I didn't get nominated, or something happened and it was like whatever, it ended up being for the best because it was kind of like this farfetched idea and I was like, well why not run? And so I got nominated by the Green and White Society and the Student Government so I kind of had like a dual nomination going in, so it was kind of just by chance and just where I was at the time on campus that I was like, why not run? Why not give it a shot?

AS: Definitely. Can you tell us a little bit about your campaign? Did you run with somebody? How did you guys campaign?

KH: To be honest, I don't remember. I really think that- I don't even know what I did to campaign. I don't have any Facebook event that I could find, like I was gonna try to find you some pictures of chalking that I did, can't find anything. So I really can't remember. I think during that time, I think Slippery Rock Homecoming was super early that year, or it was super late, something was happening, but we went to Michigan that year for the football game and so I think running that and then getting used to running the Senate and knowing what that was like, I don't even think I had time to campaign. I think it was all just word of mouth.

AS: That's awesome, though.

KH: That could be a lie, but I think that's it. Cause I don't remember.

AS: What was the hardest part about running? I know you don't really remember much but...

KH: I remember that I was stressed because I really didn't campaign. Like I felt that I was so busy and doing everything else that I was like, there's no way I was gonna win, cause I haven't done anything. So it was super stressful cause I didn't think that I had put the time in to win.

AS: Before the election, what did you think your chances were?

KH: I didn't think- they weren't bad, but they weren't great. Because, like I said, I didn't campaign as much as I thought I should have so I was expecting to make court because there was five and I knew a lot of people so I was expecting to make that, but I didn't know if I was gonna win queen or not.

AS: Did you experience any stigma around it, like just the title, the event, anything?

KH: I think that it was just that a lot of people were like, well you're on Student Government so you probably are gonna win because everyone knows you. And I was like, yeah but Student Government is Student Government like either you know about it or you know nothing about it, either you read The Rocket or you don't read The Rocket. So it was kind of like, people were like, you're gonna win because everyone knows you, but that's not necessarily that they- they might know me but they don't know who I am and what I stand for or anything like that.

AS: Why do you think that you won? Because of the general 'everybody knowing you' or...

KH: Yeah, and I think I just tried to be friendly, like I was an Orientation Ambassador too, so for the two years before that, I had met or seen every freshmen that had come through the door. So that helps too when you have two classes that know you and saw you do funny skits and danced

in the aisle, like that totally helps. So I think it was just being a friendly face on campus and being president of multiple organizations, I had to be at events where students were at, which I loved doing, so I think that helped with building relationships with the students.

AS: No, definitely, that's extremely important. What did your family think about you winning?

KH: They were super excited. I don't know if I sent you the picture but both my parents were there because they only live an hour and a half away, so they came for the game and the parade and they were super happy for me and super proud of me.

AS: That's awesome. Has your life changed in any way [because of being queen]?

KH: I don't think so. I mean, it was still like people were like, you're the queen. And I received emails from faculty and staff members just saying like, congratulations, you totally deserve this, you earned this throughout your time at Slippery Rock. So I think it changed- the way that you view yourself is like, wow, I didn't just win by chance. I won because I earned it and I deserved it and people saw me as that figure.

AS: Definitely. And so, going along with that, how else did your college experience change once you did win?

KH: I think that people were more like, oh my gosh, you're the queen. And people that maybe you weren't as close to were like coming up and congratulating you. And you're like, wow, I didn't even know that we even had a relationship and now you're congratulating me. So it was super cool just to have an immediate connection with someone who was there at the game cheering me on, you know. So I think that was really cool.

AS: What was it like during the game, like during the crowning?

KH: Well at first I worked the Alumni tent in the morning, so I had my flowers and was in a dress and was like checking people in at the Alumni station and was like, oh my gosh, I gotta get up to the game. And then I just remember standing, waiting for halftime, and then walking out there- it happened so fast. Cause then they're like, pictures, halftime's over, go, go, go. But it was like a super humbling moment. Cause you really don't know if you're gonna win and it's all in the hands of the voters. So I think it was just a really humbling experience.

AS: Did you know any of the other girls that you were running against?

KH: I did. I think I knew all of them, if I remember correctly. Yeah, I think I knew all of them, or pretty much all of them, and I knew most of the king candidates as well. Just because we were

campaigning against each other, I think there was like an informational meeting we had to attend. So I just knew most of them through conversations.

AS: What was the pep rally like? Did you enjoy that or did it make you nervous?

KH: Well my roommates and everything came to that, so it wasn't too nerve racking. I do remember, so we walk in with an escort. I don't know if the escort I was supposed to walk with- I don't know if they did it by alphabetical or by who you ran with, but if it was with who I ran with he didn't show up. I don't know where he was. And he ended up not making court, so it was fine, but I just remember this panic like, where is he? I was like calling him. I don't even think I had to walk in with him but just like the fact that he wasn't there and we were supposedly running together. So it was pretty stressful, I remember that.

AS: Has it affected you in any little or big way after college?

KH: So I did it my senior year. I went out to teach in Virginia after that, and so I remember just like the excitement of coming back and hosting the pep rally and riding in the parade the next year and kind of feeling like, wow, I'm back. And just the feeling of seeing people you hadn't seen in a year and reconnecting with them and so that changed my excitement to come back and just really be involved. It's hard to go from being involved in everything to like, now I'm an Alumni. What does that mean? Like, yeah, I joined the Alumni Association but what does that mean now? So I think it was just cool to have a purpose to come back and be needed when I came back.

AS: Yeah definitely. So have you come back for multiple Homecomings?

KH: Yeah! So I graduated in 2015, and yeah, I've come back for everyone. So I rode in the parade and now I'm here. So this is my third one back?

AS: Yeah, third one. Second as an Alumni.

KH: Second?

AS: Yeah, cause last year and then this year.

KH: No, cause I crowned Casey. Casey crowned Tori. And now Tori will crown someone else.

AS: So then yeah, this is your third. Look at this math. So would you come back if there was anything to honor the queens during the game and stuff? Would that make you more willing to come back?

KH: Yeah, I would, and I'm also on the Alumni Board, as you know, so I'm kind of already bound to be here for different events so I'm working the tent today and just different Alumni

events. So I'll be around for the next three years, at least, serving my board duty. I'll be up here for any major events.

AS: Ok, thank you! That was great!