

Hau Fung Moy Kwan Venezuela



Hau Moy: My name is Hau Moy. I'm originally from Venezuela. My parents are Chinese. I'm a Spanish native speaker. I was born and grew up in Venezuela. So have a lot of tradition, of course, I have Chinese, Latino, and now American traditions. I studied in Venezuela, and I have a PhD and a Bachelor of Science. I am a computer engineer by profession. I have a Master's Degree in Telematics, that is telecommunication. So I worked for five years in the industry as an engineer, and I spend more than 13 years teaching at the University in Venezuela in the engineering school.

Interviewer: Do you have a favorite holiday that you celebrate?

Hua Moy: I will say that my favorite holiday is Christmas for sure. And why I love Christmas because I love food. There is a lot of tradition in food that we can share. Normally celebrate Venezuelan, but I also love Chinese, and I love everything that we do- sharing with family, and meeting each other, and having a good time. I think this is one of the things that is very important- When you have a tradition, to keep your culture, keep your values, and your routine that you can share with others with friends who come in on Christmas. I think this is a really great time that we can just enjoy in that holiday.

Interviewer: How do you feel like you keep alive both your Venezuelan and Chinese culture within your family now in the U.S.?

Hua Moy: Well, it has been a very long journey during my life. My parents moved from Hong Kong to Venezuela in the '70s. My mom was pregnant when she just immigrated to Venezuela. I think that it is very blessed to have three different cultures and to use the ones that fit your personal styles. Enjoying and learning about culture I think is amazing. I used to just keep Chinese traditions, such as sharing with my kid the red envelope. I don't know if you know about that, this is the most amazing and happy moment for my kid when every holiday and Christmas, or Chinese New Year, we just give to them because inside they have money, and everybody loves money! So, about our Venezuelan culture there is a lot of good things as well that you can say. I love the way how our community are very warm, very kind, and always willing to help everybody. In America, this is another culture that have a lot of a nice tradition as well. And that's also nice. Having us, as immigrants here, I think is a blessing.

Interviewer: What objects tell the story of your life?

Hua Moy: I will definitely say that the object that identifies my life is my university degrees. One certificate, or diploma, that I received here last year is a recipient of the Teaching Excellence Award at Salt Lake Community College. So I have my PhD in Education, my Master's in Telematic, and my Computer Engineering Diploma- I think those are the objects that had been impacted me and my life, and tell who I am today. Being in engineering, creating things to make a difference in the world, and helping people who benefit from technology. Being an educator, not only in Venezuela but now at Salt Community College here in the United States, is

a blessing. To keep continue working as a professional and just building my journey here is amazing. So my diplomas are the objects for that, for me as a person.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you arrived in the U.S.?

Hua Moy: When my family and I arrived here in the United States, we feel very scared. It is not easy to move to another country when you need to learn another culture, and especially the language. I feel very happy and blessed that we together overcame that part. Now I feel really happy to be here. Because America give me the opportunity to have a new home, to keep my family safe, and more important to continue working as a professional in what I love the most-educating.

Interviewer: When did you guys move here?

Hua Moy: We moved here eight years ago, in 2015.

Interviewer: Can you compare the difference in schooling between the U.S., China, and Venezuela?

Hua Moy: It's so different. I do believe that education in different countries is completely different. I never had the opportunity to study in China because I was born in Venezuela, so I studied Venezuela, and now I'm teaching here in the United States. Both systems are very different. Whereas in Venezuela, all careers or degrees take five years, including a thesis, or any project in the industry, and additionally to that, you must do an internship before you get your degree. Here in the United States, it's a four-year degree, and it is not mandatory to do a thesis or project, and also internship. But both systems have the same goal- to prepare professionals to face a workforce and to be confident in what they are doing after they just get the degree.

Interviewer: What are you thankful for here in America? Are there any things you struggled to do in your hometown that you can do easier here?

Hua Moy: Humans always adjust to the environment. But sometimes we feel like we don't belong to the place. I think this depends on how people treat you. Sometimes we feel that we have imposter syndrome- so we feel like 'I don't belong to the environment.' But if you meet people that always willing to help you to help you, kindly treat you respectfully, and make you feel welcome, I think one of the struggles can just be disappeared. So of course, when you move to another country, it is very hard, again, because of the culture because of the language. Not only when you move to another country, but you always have a struggle in life. But, the most important thing here is having the struggle, you need to keep moving, not giving up, and just keep working hard to accomplish your goal, to keep dreaming to go to the goal and accomplish the objectives that you have in life.

Interviewer: How did you get interested in computer engineering?

Hua Moy: Well, this a story that is started because my brother. My older brothers, I'm the youngest one, one of them is an electrical engineer and the other one is a mechanical engineer.

As a little sister, I've always followed them. I like to read, I love math, and when I just started being interested in technology, it's not like it is nowadays. So I get frustrated in that in the career, but I never give up. And then I say, 'Okay, I want to go to the engineering path,' but this career is for men at that time, women always discriminated in the classroom, because you can see 30 men in one class, but that doesn't stop me from keep moving forward and keep working hard for my dream. And then after I just graduated, I chose some of the professor that told me that, 'I don't belong in that environment.' And I said, 'I did it.' I just invite you all, I know that you guys might be interested in some careers related with the STEM field, so go to the STEM field and we can say, 'We are women in STEM.' You can reach out to me, I will be very happy to be your mentor. I'm teaching at Salt Community College so you can reach out to me anytime.

Interviewer: What are your hopes for your community?

Hua Moy: My hope for my community is for everybody to embrace together and work as a team. To help each other, to keep our culture, to keep our languages, and more than that, to support and help the younger and the new generation to be working in education because education is the weapon that nobody can take away from you. Having an education and completing a career at the college, or even the University, will help you have a better future and a brighter future.

Interviewer: What things do you miss the most from your country?

Hua Moy: I will said my friends, my childhood friends. Even though we're still in contact by email or via video call I missed the time that we just spent together when we was young.

Interviewer: Are there a lot of Chinese individuals in Venezuela?

Hua Moy: Yeah. Because of the political problems we're facing, there is a lot of dangers come back to China. So a lot just go to any other country.

Interviewer: Did you get married or do you have any children?

Hua Moy: Yeah, I'm married and have two kids- one daughter that she started at the college this fall, going in electrical engineering, and one boy that he is in 8th grade and is 14 years old and he plays baseball.

Interviewer: Is there a story behind your name?

Hua Moy: Definitely. So my grandfather picked my name in Chinese which means, 'morning breezes.' He loved the morning breezes and he believed that the morning breezes is the element that starts a nice morning and just give a positive vibe for people who were around him. And that's why he just gave me that name. And I think he was right, he knew all about me. I used to wake up in the morning with a positive vibe. That vibe I always try to cheer up with my students during the morning class. We need to be positive always.

Interviewer: When in life, have you felt most alone and most connected with people around you?

Hua Moy: I feel alone when my parents moved from Venezuela to the United States and left me there. That was the day that I felt the most alone. The day that I feel more connected is when I moved here again with my parents, and I feel very blessed that my kids can be sharing and can be you know together with their grandparents.

Interviewer: Why did you make the decision to leave Venezuela?

Hua Moy: Due to the political problem in Venezuela. So my husband and I, as professors at a university, the government was chasing us. And that's why we just run away because otherwise, we can go to the jail. That's why we decided to move to the United States.

Interviewer: Why was the government coming after educators?

Hua Moy: We have a dictator in Venezuela, and the dictator doesn't like when people don't think like them. So that's why they're chasing the educators.

Interviewer: What does 'being welcoming' mean to you?

Hua Moy: 'Welcome' means to me when you are in a place where people treat you respectfully, treat you fairly. I say respectfully as a person that I am and not because of my background or what degree I have. Also, I feel welcome when people have empathy and respect. Respect my beliefs and my culture, be kind, and help each other to feel included in everything that we do.

Interviewer: What does the 'American Dream' mean to you?

Hua Moy: Well, I think the 'American Dream' for me is what I'm having nowadays. So having a new home here for my kids, I keep my kid and my family safe, and working in what you love to work and passionate about. For me this is a dream. It is a blessing- more than dreams.

Interviewer: What do you do to help your students, and how do you feel after helping them?

Hua Moy: Well, this is a nice question. To educate is an art. To be in this field, you must feel this feeling to serve, to help your students be successful, and to be their mentor. And what do I do to do that? I just say, 'You have to always be willing to guide them, to be their mentor, to be their tutor, to be by their side.' I do believe that students don't need an instructor or professor to tell them what to do. But giving them the resources, being on their side cheering them up, and making them feel confident no matter if you fail or not. Because failing is okay. If you fail, you just need to wake up again and try again because that's why the pen has an eraser on the top. If you made a mistake, you just erase it and try again. I think this is the important part. So it is not about the grade. It is about how you feel as a student to be successful. It is about the soft skills that you can develop, that you can learn, to face what you have outside the school in the real world. I feel amazing when students are setting and accomplishing their goals. I think this is the

only thing that not any money can buy, it's that feeling that you feel when you're making a difference in people's lives.

Interviewer: How diverse are the students you help?

Hua Moy: Very diverse. I have many students from Africa, from Latin American, America and India.

Interviewer: What do you teach them?

Hua Moy: Computer Science. I used to teach the classes that transfer to university, such as fundamental computer science, oriented programming objects, computer architecture, so I'm now, I'm teaching in the School of Engineering so it is various courses depending on the needs. But, the four most important courses, most of them are related to programming and computer architecture.

Interviewer: How are your parents alike and different from you?

Hua Moy: Well, that's a good question. I do believe that I'm like them in the big heart they have. I have a big heart too. I love to serve people, I love to help people and my parents did as well. The difference between my parents and myself is that I have, thank God and thank them, the opportunity to educate and to have my degree, and be the person here today serving the community and helping all of you, especially students. I love when I have a student in front of me.

Interviewer: What is your favorite holiday food memory?

Hua Moy: Latino food, Venezuelan food, but I love Chinese food as well. So I'm not picky on that. I love any kind of food.

Interviewer: What's something you wish more people knew about your profession or your home country?

Hua Moy: My profession I think is good to know because I'm trying to encourage more girls and women to be in the STEM field. The difference that it can make in their life I think is most important to me. Also sharing something about my country.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your religious or spiritual beliefs?

Hua Moy: Well, I have two components that I will talk about because I know that this is a very controversial thing to talk about. But firstly, I do believe in faith and the belief in God, so all my family believe in God. Also, I believe in love. Four letters that I think that is very impactful in every life. If you just give love to people, I think it will really make a difference in their lives when they're down, or when they just need a hug, or they need something to support them. And the third component is action. So action is the most important part, because no matter what action is the things that can demonstrate when you are doing something you love. You really want and demonstrate to support and help people to just accomplish that goal.

Interviewer: What led you to become a teacher?

Hua Moy: Um, well, I am a computer engineer by profession. And I spent five years in the industry. Working in industries is nice but it is hard- it is even harder for a woman when you have kids. You should be on call 24 hours. I worked in the operations department and the IT department. One thing that helped me discover the educator part was when I just started my master's degree and started doing presentations and helping my colleagues. And suddenly the Director of the School of Engineering asked me if I wanted to teach, and I thought this was a new challenge, so I said, 'Yes.' I just discovered one part of my personality that I never knew about. Then when I started to teaching I really loved it.

Interviewer: What was the hardest thing for you immigrating to the United States?

Hua Moy: The hardest thing for me and my family was to start over again. I wasn't start teaching at the University. Like every immigrant, I started in a restaurant working as a washer, cleaning the floor, cleaning the restroom. But, it was hard but it wasn't something that I feel bad about. I think any job that you do it honestly is something you must consider and feel good for yourself. I been working for three years in a restaurant while I just learning English or I teach at an elementary school as an educator and I taught at two different high schools in Spanish after I get my license to teach Spanish. After three years I applied at the Salt Lake Community College, thank God and thank America, I got hired for the position. I have now five years at the college teaching what I love to do in my field.