



Oral History Interview with Kam Amirzafari 05-23-2026

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kam Amirzafari and Kim Dorman conducted on May 23, 2026. The interview took place at Monument Hall in Princeton New Jersey during the Memorial Day Parade observance as part of the Voices of Princeton Project.



Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Kim Dorman [00:00:00] Okay, good afternoon. My name is Kim Dorman. And can I have your name, please?

Kam Amirzafari [00:00:07]

My name is Kam Amirzafari.

Kim Dorman [00:00:10] Thank you, Kam. And how did you come to Princeton? And how long have you been here?

Kam Amirzafari [00:00:15] We were political refugees and came to Princeton in '84 because the university offered my mother a job with housing,

Kim Dorman [00:00:25] Awesome. Okay, so we have one of these. Are there any of these three questions that speak to you?

Kam Amirzafari [00:00:31] Sure. In 1976 I was here. I'm from Iran originally. My mother was getting her master's at Indiana University. We were, happened to be here for '76 and I was here for the Bicentennial, and all that stuff, but I had got this record from then. It was like all bunch of patriotic songs, Battle of Hymn of the Republic, and stuff. And when I went back to Iran, I played that for a year and a half straight till the record wore out, and it was my favorite record. That's my memory of '76.

Kim Dorman [00:01:00] Oh, that's awesome. 1976. Okay, great. And how is it... So, it says thinking back to 1976, what do you remember most about the observance? Great, okay. How do these... I should have worn my glasses... How do these two milestones feel like or different to you? So, the 20,20, 1976 and this 2026

Kam Amirzafari [00:01:28] What do they feel like to me? I mean, again, being a foreigner here, like an immigrant, like you, and I've lived elsewhere, you know, all the freedoms and liberties we enjoy in this country, so to me it's the same level of amazingness here, because you

see how the whole system works, from a council meeting to whatever, a lot of places don't have that system, and things don't work that way. So, again, you just can't help but just be grateful and positive about everything, because you know what else it could be, right? So, it's much the same to me.

Kim Dorman [00:01:57] Right. Thanks

Kam Amirzafari [00:01:58] Cars are different.

Kim Dorman [00:01:59] Cars are different. Okay, so which one of these four would you, these number fours, would you like to respond to? (Silence) Okay, 4a, okay. Do you feel like the revolution of 1776 is still relevant today, or is it a thing of the past? Are there ways in which it feels like an unfinished project?

Kam Amirzafari [00:02:30] What amazes me about that is I have a copy of the Constitution in my office and Declaration of Independence, and that's a whole separate story, and what people have to realize is how well it was thought out, how the whole Electoral College and all the purposes, so one group didn't get to go over another group, which happens in the rest of the world, whether it's some religious sect or politics or left-handed, whatever it is, everybody, so the way it was crafted and the foresight they had to give all these liberties and put it in writing, and when you look at it, the checks and balances just truly amazing. So to me, when you think about what these people were able to put on paper from all these different groups and being persecuted during that time to even get there, and all the threat and stuff, and persevering for that freedom, it's just amazing to me. So I feel, I don't feel it's an unfinished project, again we have rules and laws in place to make any changes, and follow the rules and laws, and make the changes if you want something different.

Kim Dorman [00:03:31] Great, thanks so much. Oh, there's just one more thing. So, is there anything else that we haven't spoke asked about, but you wish to include? Are there stories about Princeton's past which you feel aren't well known enough, or well enough known,

Kam Amirzafari [00:03:44] The American Legion Post, which is struggling, is a great story. So much history from it was the second African American Legion Hall in the country, and they're trying to refurbish it, but so much history of those people, and been in town for a long time, and of the community around there, and all the veterans. It's a story that most people aren't aware of, because when you grew up in town, you knew some of them, and you know, when I was a kid, not to make me that old, but somehow I don't know how the math adds up. When I worked, volunteered at the nursing home, there was a guy who fought in the Spanish American War, which I don't know how old that makes me, but, but nonetheless, you know, there's me learned the history of these people that grew up in the community and the town, and things were different than everybody kind of knew each other, knew everybody.

Kim Dorman [00:04:32] Is there anyone you think that we should speak with?

Kam Amirzafari [00:04:36] That's a long list. Yeah, yeah, I'll give you a list, but there's a lot of people that you know that you probably enjoy talking to. I mean, this town is full of characters and with stories, that's not a short list.

Kim Dorman [00:04:49] Great, thank you so much for giving us your time, and for organizing this event. Thank you. Thank you.