JOHNSON: [00:00] So, Patty, you’re –

SICULAR: I’m going to just introduce you here, and then I’m going to sit over here.

JOHNSON: OK.

SICULAR: I’m just going to do the intro. Tell me when you’re ready.

PASSERO: You actually can move closer.

SICULAR: No, I know.

PASSERO: So we’re rolling. And action.

SICULAR: Hi, my name is Patty Sicular. I’m director of archives at the Ford Model Agency in New York City, and together with Professor Karen Cannell from the Fashion Institute of Technology we’re collaborating in archiving the history of fashion, beauty, photography, and Ford models. [01:00] Today we’re so lucky to be interviewing the beautiful Beverly Johnson, who had her wonderful Vogue cover in 1974 and such an amazing career. So we’re here at the Celebrity Vault in Beverly Hills. Today’s date is July 22nd, 2010, and we’re going to start our interview. First of all, we’re so thrilled to have you here.

PASSERO: Stop.

SICULAR: You can move over here.
PASSERO: No. Beverly, you stay where you are.

JOHNSON: Yes. Am I OK here, Dan?

SICULAR: OK. We are so thrilled to have you. Thank you for joining us today. We’re about the same age, and I was reading all of the magazines that you’re in, but especially the wonderful Vogue cover. Before we go into that, I want to find out where you grew up and how you became a model.

JOHNSON: Oh, my goodness. So we grew up together?

SICULAR: Yes, we did. We’re the same age, just about.

JOHNSON: It’s really interesting, having grown up with the nation of women. I started at 17 years old. I was going to Boston -- not Boston University, Northeastern University in Boston.

SICULAR: And what were you studying to become?

JOHNSON: I was a political science major. I wanted to become a lawyer. I’ve always wanted to be a lawyer. I still want to be a lawyer, because I pay so much money to them, I’d rather be one, I could save a lot of money. But anyways, I was a swimming instructor, I was an athlete, and that’s what I did. I was a swimming instructor at the Roxbury YWCA, making $28 a week and going to school. This opportunity came where I was afforded to stay at Boston and continue this job as a swimming instructor, and the rating cuts came. There were no more jobs. So I didn’t know
what to do for that summer. I didn’t want to go back to Buffalo. One of my girlfriends who went to school with me at Northeastern said, “Why don’t you become a model?” and I said, “What’s a model?” And she grabbed the magazine and she showed me these women standing there with their hands on their hips. She said, “They make $75 an hour.” I said, “You’re kidding. I could do that.” It just so happened the summer before I went to college my mother wouldn’t let me work as a life guard at Beaver Island in Buffalo, because I had no clothes. She said, “You’ve got to work at a store or something. You have no clothes.” So I worked at the [Ginny?] Shop on Main Street in Buffalo, New York, and there was a woman there by the name of [Mimi?], who said, “If you ever give up this notion about becoming a lawyer, I want you to call this woman,” and I thought the woman was really nuts. I mean, I was like, I wanted to be a lawyer. And I kept that piece of paper. It was Korby Pleasant [04:00], and she was the manager of Jax 5th Avenue, if anybody remembers Jax.

SICULAR: This is J-A-X?

JOHNSON: J-A-X, that’s right. I called her, and she said, “Come to New York. I’d like to see you. Mimi is a very good friend of mine. She has very good taste.” And I called my parents, and they were like, “Are you kidding?
No, absolutely not.” And my mother went against my father’s wishes, and she came with me to New York City. I remember meeting with Korby Pleasant. She sent me over to the Graybar Building, to Condé Nast, and I’m sitting there and people are walking in and out. They’re trying to give me a typing test, because they said you had to, you know, do some kind of job even if you were going to be a model, and I was like, “I didn’t come here to type, I came here to model,” you know. Finally someone came out and said, “We want to take Beverly on a 10-day trip to Fire Island for [05:00] Glamour magazine.”

SICULAR: And was that booked through a model agency or through your friend?

JOHNSON: That was through Korby Pleasant, who was the manager of Jax. I looked at my mother and I said, “See, Mom, I told you. It’s very easy.” That’s how it all started. Then my next job was with Vogue, with Bert Stern. This was all freelance. Then I was like, OK, now what do you do next? They said, “You got to get an agency.” I said, “Well, who’s the top agency?” “Eileen Ford. Ford Models is the top agency.” I said, “That’s the agency I want to be with, is Ford.” I went to Ford’s, and I was interviewed, and they said, “No, I don’t think so.” Then I went to all the other agency, Black Beauty, Wilhelmina, all
the others. No, you’re too this, you’re too that, I can’t even remember the excuses. Then about 10 days later I got a call, and it was from Ford, and they wanted me to come back down again. I [06:00] went back down, and Eileen Ford said, “You lost so much weight!” I didn’t even know that I should tell them that I was already freelancing for Vogue and Glamour magazine, and I would imagine the word had gotten around that that’s what I had been doing. I said, “I want to be with the best agency,” and Eileen became my agent and my second parent.

SICULAR: What year was that?

JOHNSON: Oh, dear. Nineteen seventy-two?

SICULAR: Nineteen seventy-two. Did you live with Eileen and Jerry?

JOHNSON: No, I did not, and my girlfriend went back to school, so I couldn’t live with her. My mother had a great-great-great-great aunt that lived in Queens, so I took like a bus, train, a boat, whatever, to get to New York every day. It was like a two-and-a-half-hour ride, and I lived with my great aunt.

SICULAR: Do you remember your early days making the rounds with the go-sees?

JOHNSON: Oh, I remember the blisters on my [07:00] feet making the early run, and the sweating and the walking. So it was
great, it was great. I loved every minute of it. I was dedicated and I started to learn about models and how to do it and models of the past. You know, I got -- you know, it was like a research project for me.

SICULAR: Talking about models from the past, who were some of your icons when you were growing up, whether they were models or actresses or beauty icons?

JOHNSON: Well, I didn’t have any icons in the fashion world, because I was an athlete, and I had never even looked at a fashion magazine in my life. But when I got into the business, my icons had become Naomi Sims, Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge, Jean Shrimpton. Veruschka was like, I looked at these photographs, and I was like, “Holy! How does she do that?” [08:00] They were like, I mean, I just started having this whole education, and I was introduced into this world of art, because I was never introduced to the arts, being from a small town in Buffalo, New York. So I was just wide eyed and bushy tailed to learn whatever I could about not only beauty icons, but the arts, opera and theater and artists and going to museums. Fortunately I made some very good friends that were my mentors.

SICULAR: Who were they?

JOHNSON: There was a man by the name of James Farabee, who was my hairdresser and he became my friend, who introduced me
into the arts. There was another very famous artist by the name of Jan de Ruth who introduced me to the opera, and we went. We got dressed up with the capes, it was just fabulous, [09:00] just fabulous. And I knew this is where I belonged, in the world of art.

SICULAR: And then you became such a wonderful model, and your cover came out, that cover that changed your life --

JOHNSON: Changed my life.

SICULAR: -- and changed the world really. And what was that like, when you saw yourself for the first time on that cover? Where were you? And did you know, or was it a surprise?

JOHNSON: It was a total surprise, because you never knew you were on the cover until it came out.

SICULAR: Because they did cover trys, they would do maybe nine different situations --

JOHNSON: No.

SICULAR: -- models and hair and makeup or different wardrobe.

JOHNSON: You didn’t even really know. They were always like a beauty shoot. So they weren’t really, well, for me, cover trys. Well, I guess -- and I had already been on the cover of Glamour a number of times.

SICULAR: That in itself is a thrill.

JOHNSON: Oh, man, that was awesome.
SICULAR: Let’s go back to *Glamour*, the first time you saw yourself on a cover of *Glamour*.

JOHNSON: Well, I’ll tell you about the first time, from that [10:00] 10-day shoot in Fire Island. First of all, the boat is coming up to Fire Island, I see all these people dancing and dancing, and music was going, and the boat is getting closer and closer. And I realize it’s all men dancing with men, and I’m like, aaahhh, this is great. They take me on the thing, and I’m dancing and whatever, you know, and they would like embrace me. So that was so glorious, I made so many friends.

SICULAR: Who was the photographer on that shoot?

JOHNSON: Frank Horvat. I remember coming down. He said, “You got too much makeup on. Go back upstairs.” You know, because I had brought all my little Maybelline makeup, and I was trying to do whatever I was doing. He said, “Wash your face. Wash your face.” Anyways, so that was done in July, and it came out in September. By this time I was back in school, Northeastern University is a co-op school, you go to school a semester, you work a semester, after you go to school the first year. So this [11:00] 10-page spread in *Glamour* magazine, and the pictures are gorgeous, gorgeous. I’ll never forget. I had like a red plaid coat on, hair pulled back, walking through. And you know, this
is July, right, so you can imagine how hot I was. But anyways, it was just the most -- and that in itself was like I was a star. I was an instant star. Then I went to my professor, because I was supposed to be working at the jail for my work study. So now I’m torn between whether I’m going to go to school or whether I’m going to go back and model, you know. I remember getting the check. It was like $300. I was like, oh, my God, I thought I was a millionaire. It was more money than I had ever seen in my life. I mean, my father brought home $100 a week from the steel plant, so it was like -- so I’m like torn. So I go to my professor, my dean, and I say, you know, [12:00] this opportunity came. I showed them the magazine, and I said, “I don’t know what to do. I know I’m supposed to go to the prison to work there” -- or the jail, it wasn’t a prison -- “and work there as part of my work study. But I have this opportunity, it’s all this money. Would you let this be part of my work study?” He’s sitting, you know, like law, modeling. He said, “I’m going to let you do this,” and he let me make that part of my work study. I don’t think if it hadn’t been for him, I would --

SICULAR: Who was that? Do you remember his name?

JOHNSON: I don’t remember his name. So I went back and forth like that for a few months. I don’t know which I would
have chosen. I don’t think I would have left school at that point. But anyways, he let me do my work study as a model.

SICULAR: And then the Vogue cover came out in 1974.

JOHNSON: And then a lot of Glamour covers came out, and then people recognizing me on the street, and I was like a big deal.

SICULAR: And what did your father have to say?

JOHNSON: [13:00] Then he was very happy. “That’s my daughter in the magazines.” But he was very afraid for me, New York City. So finally when that Vogue cover came out, August 1974, oh, my goodness.

SICULAR: It was on the news. It was in the newspapers. I mean, it was worldwide, people knew.

JOHNSON: It was just a really big deal. It’s a really big deal for a model. I mean, you have reached the pinnacle of the modeling world when you get a cover of Vogue magazine, and that was always my goal.

PASSERO: We’re going to cut, coming in.

SICULAR: Should we start again asking about the cover?

PASSERO: Yeah, let’s do a take from the top.

SICULAR: OK. And just, after you leave, I can do your intro over again, so don’t worry about it. OK, so then the cover came out in 1974, and everybody knew about it. It was in
all the evening news and the newspapers. It was just the biggest thing. So how did you feel then?


SICULAR: And [14:00] you weren’t told about it, so it was a surprise. Did you see it first from the agency or on a newsstand?

JOHNSON: I saw it from the newsstand. They called me up and said, “You’re on the cover,” and I just ran down there. I remember that moment like it was yesterday. Right now my heart is beating fast just thinking of that moment. I could not -- and then the picture was gorgeous.

SICULAR: I remember that picture.

JOHNSON: I mean, it was just so pretty.

SICULAR: Who took that picture?

JOHNSON: Francesco Scavullo.

SICULAR: And did Way Bandy do makeup?

JOHNSON: Way Bandy did makeup.

SICULAR: And did Harry King do hair?

JOHNSON: Suga --

SICULAR: Suga did hair.

JOHNSON: -- did the hair. Frances Stein did the styling.

She’s fabulous. I remember sleeping with the cover next to my bed. I would wake up in the middle of the night and
turn on the light to see if it was really true or not. I mean, I just [15:00] couldn’t believe it.

SICULAR: And what were your parents -- what did they have to say?

JOHNSON: Oh, I remember calling my mom on the pay phone -- that’s how long ago this was -- collect and just screaming and whatever, and she’s happy. It was just --

SICULAR: And how about Eileen and Jerry?

JOHNSON: Everybody was --

SICULAR: And your booker?

JOHNSON: Throughout the entire industry, it was kind of shocking, and people in the industry didn’t really know how to take it. It was very interesting. I remember going on a few jobs, and the girls were like all quiet and everything, because normally when they’d say, “Oh, your pictures were great in that Vogue, that magazine,” or the Vogue spread or whatever, and this time it was just kind of nothing. That kind of hurt my feelings, but as the requests for interviews for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, [16:00] Time magazine, Newsweek, I mean, you name it, and also from press right around the world, I realized just how big and how important and how lucky I was. I mean, I was just a girl that was in the right place at the right time.
SICULAR: And with the right attributes, too, the beautiful face, the beautiful figure, the beautiful personality that shone through, and your eyes.

JOHNSON: It was just that moment --

SICULAR: Your eyes just popped.

JOHNSON: That moment in time the planets or whatever.

SICULAR: Were all aligned.

JOHNSON: Because there were a lot and still are a lot of beautiful black models, quite a few beautiful African American models, beautiful brown models, just, you know, there’s no shortage on beautiful women. I feel very fortunate to have been there at that moment.

SICULAR: Did you feel at the time when that happened it was a heavy weight, a heavy mantle to carry, since you were the first black model on the cover of Vogue magazine, that you’d be carrying a generation of people expecting you to be better than better, better than the best.

JOHNSON: Well, what happened was it started my journey into who I was, as an African American, and my roots, and really listening to what Martin Luther King had to say as opposed to just kind of glancing at it off the TV, and really studying about my heritage and my family, and inquisitive about where I came from and some Native American roots. It
really immersed me into reality and into the world. From that I gained strength to be able to go out and represent.

SICULAR: It’s so funny, because you’re talking about reality on one side, and fashion and beauty photography is not real on the other side, and you’re bringing the two of them together. That’s very interesting.

JOHNSON: Yes. Because in fashion and even for myself, it became about the physical and what you did to maintain this one-dimension image.

SICULAR: But that’s just one dimension, but with photographs you almost need more than one dimension. When we see that cover and your eyes just pop and the beauty and the loveliness, I mean, it’s more than one dimension that shows through.

JOHNSON: Well, thank you.

SICULAR: It’s not a blank face.

JOHNSON: Well, thank you.

SICULAR: So once that cover came out, did your bookers decide to take your career in another direction, or were they choosier?

JOHNSON: Yes, they were choosier.

SICULAR: And were they more deferential?

JOHNSON: They were choosier, and the jobs were bigger. My quest was to build a name for myself, and I chose
editorials. Two weeks in the Bahamas [19:00] with Glamour magazine or three weeks in Brazil in Vogue, as opposed to taking some advertising jobs or some catalog jobs.

SICULAR: Do you think at this point that it was the right choice?

JOHNSON: Absolutely. I wanted to do, I wanted to build my name. You agents weren’t very happy about it, but for somehow, for some reason instinctually I knew that that’s what I should do.

SICULAR: But it’s funny that you said that, because we interviewed a woman yesterday, Betty Johnson, who modeled from 1956 to ’62, and Eileen wanted her to take more editorial, and she said no, she wanted the money. Sitting right where you’re sitting, she said, “I should have listened to Eileen.”

JOHNSON: That’s very interesting, because we had like the girls that were making all the money, and I was kind of jealous of them, you know, the Ronnie Carrolls, and the Susie Blakelys that were making all the money. Then you had, I’m sure they were trying to do more editorial to try to round out the career --

SICULAR: Right. [20:00]

JOHNSON: Right. And I was doing all the editorial, and I’m going, “Yeah, but you’re making X amount of dollars.” In
certain times I would come in and do a few catalog jobs and whatever, and I was like, dang, this is a lot of money compared to what I was getting. But it was really interesting. I always had a lot of respect for them. I used to call them the money girls, you know, the ones that made the money in the business.

SICULAR: So tell us about some of the fabulous photographers you’ve worked with. Who are some of your favorites and why? You got to work with them all.

JOHNSON: My favorite, of course, would be Francesco Scavullo.

SICULAR: How come?

JOHNSON: He was flamboyant. He was wonderful. He taught me how to model, how to pose. He saw my beauty. It’s really interesting. You can get one of the greatest photographers in the world, but if he doesn’t see your beauty, if he doesn’t see it, he can’t photograph it. So there’s a very unique [21:00] relationship, and he saw my beauty. I mean, he saw something that I didn’t even know I had, and I loved working with him. Gorgeous, beautiful, you know, he wore the cap, and Sean Byrnes, who was his assistant --

SICULAR: His assistant, and [Ann Rothstein?] was his manager.

JOHNSON: -- and partner, and they treated me like I was a queen, and they made me feel so beautiful, and they taught me so much about modeling. So Francesco Scavullo.
[Richard] Avedon, I loved working with Avedon. I remember doing these leaps and jumping across the screen, and he used those huge --

SICULAR: Huge lights, right, that moved.

JOHNSON: Big, no, 8x10 cameras that you only used in the catalogs, and the fashion photographers never used that camera. Actually he taught me a lot about photography, as this camera was [22:00] more precise, as opposed to the Nikon, the camera at the time. But anyway, so it was Dick Avedon, it was Norman Parkinson, it was Horst. There was Patrick Demarchelier. I did my first black woman on the cover of Elle magazine. That cover was so gorgeous. Patrick Demarchelier took that cover. Bruce Weber. It just goes on and on and on.

SICULAR: And what are some of the fabulous places you got to travel to?

JOHNSON: I went all over the world, from Japan to the Amazon to down the Amazon River, you know, with the piranhas in the water, and, oh, gosh, to all of the islands. And Europe, of course, and Paris and Italy and Milan and Rome, a fabulous life.

SICULAR: When you worked, did you prefer working in a studio where everything was more self-contained or going on location?
JOHNSON: [23:00] I didn’t, wherever.

SICULAR: It didn’t matter?

JOHNSON: It didn’t matter.

SICULAR: And do you prefer working with the same team, say working with Mr. Scavullo over and over again, or did you find enjoyment in the surprise in working with different photographers?

JOHNSON: Well, basically you were always working with different photographers, but if I had an upcoming assignment with Francesco I would really get excited about it.

SICULAR: You got excited?

JOHNSON: Yeah.

SICULAR: And did you prefer doing fashion or beauty? Or was it one and the same?

JOHNSON: I think beauty. I think beauty.

SICULAR: So tell us, did you get to work on many runway shows?

JOHNSON: I did.

SICULAR: And did you enjoy it?

JOHNSON: As a matter of fact, I was one of the first young models to do that also. I remember being accepted to do a Halston show, and all of the models, the runway models, like, “You’re a big model, doing editorial! Now you’re going to come over and get our money, too!” I’m like, “No, I just want to see how everything is working.” [24:00] I
wanted to see how it was done, you know, and working with designers actually designing the clothes on you. It was so fascinating and thrilling. So I had a hard time there. The runway models, that was a whole different world.

SICULAR: I know, because the generations before -- your generation started to change, but whenever we asked the models in the past if they did runway, they would look down their noses and said, “No, we weren’t associated with that. They had lesser known models, house models, that would do that.”

JOHNSON: And I was discouraged from doing that, because it was told that I was going to [lessen?], but I had to, because I wanted to know how that worked. I remember Valentino flying me over and doing the Valentino show, and he was so amazingly chic. He had these wonderful dinners at his palatial home. Then to work with him in the studio and see him [25:00] create a dress around me. I also did the photography for it, in the Italian Vogue, besides doing the runway. It was just fascinating. Then I did the Calvin Klein shows and the Ralph Lauren, so that was a time when we, kind of cover girls, started to do the runway. I never did get the walk down.

SICULAR: (inaudible) how you walk at all?
JOHNSON: Well, I couldn’t do that walk. I mean, Pat Cleveland and even (inaudible) --

SICULAR: But they had their own style.

JOHNSON: They were magic on the runway. I couldn’t do that. I mean, I finally, kind of. But because I was a star, I got away with it, because the audience was happy to see the cover girl.

SICULAR: I’m sure that you got large applause, rounds of applause.

JOHNSON: It was wonderful, but the walk, that’s an art. The runway is an art in itself, it really is.

SICULAR: I think each portion is, whether it’s television or runway or print, everything is special and unique in its own way.

JOHNSON: [26:00] Yes, it is.

SICULAR: So you’ve had the most well rounded career. What are you doing now?

JOHNSON: I am a businesswoman, and I have the Beverly Johnson Wig and Hair Collection that I’ve had for the last 12 years.

SICULAR: Do you design everything and oversee all the production?

JOHNSON: I design. Oh, it’s so fabulous. It’s so much fun, with all the trends. It’s really great.
SICULAR: And what age group do you sell for the wigs?

JOHNSON: Well, 60% of our business is hair extensions, so you know I came right in when it was booming. I knew it was going to be big. And we do maybe 50% of that business with blonde extensions. So that business, it’s very creative and it really keeps me with what’s going on in fashion. Recently I created a hair care line with Target. Target has welcomed me into the Target [27:00] family, and I have a very exclusive restorative hair care line that I think is really cutting edge as far as black hair care lines go.

SICULAR: And why is it different? Why is it cutting edge compared to other products?

JOHNSON: For one we don’t have paraben in it, and paraben has been known to cause cancer. Paraben is a chemical, it’s a preservative that is in most cosmetics, and it’s very hard to make the product without it. But we’ve done -- it’s not in our product. They think it’s been causing women breast cancer, so we don’t have it in our product. By not having it in our product, we really worked hard to try to get the same consistency, and we got something even better. It’s funny how that happens. So that’s what’s really thrilling about the line.

SICULAR: [28:00] And is that shampoos and hair colors? What kind of products are they?
JOHNSON: They’re all restorative. They’re conditionings and gels. Eventually, of course, we’ll go, they asked for four more products, Target, but their anti-breakage serums, hair shine sprays, detanglers, you know, conditioners.

SICULAR: Do you use the products?

JOHNSON: Oh, my God, yeah.

SICULAR: I guess it works.

JOHNSON: Yeah. It’s the best. It’s the best. It’s really great.

SICULAR: And if someone wants to look in on these products, how can they find it? What’s the website?


SICULAR: Got it. And do you have any last thoughts?

JOHNSON: The last thoughts are I’m so happy that you’re doing this.

PASSERO: Can you re-do that last thought, because we got a [beep?] (inaudible)

SICULAR: Did you want it before? Is that shut off one sec? Did you want to talk about, and we can edit it, how you were treated by some of the models when you first went on location? You weren’t always treated nicely. Did you want to speak about that or not?

JOHNSON: Oh, I can speak about [29:00] some of the things.

SICULAR: Can we talk about -- we can edit this, right?
PASSERO: Yeah. Yeah.

SICULAR: So would you like to -- when you started in your career, were you treated -- I know after your cover came out you were treated like larger than a queen or an empress, but beforehand, starting out, did you have any prejudice faced your way or were you treated equally and fairly?

JOHNSON: Well, what happened when -- I remember going in for a job, and I won’t name the company, and they used to have layouts as to where the girls were going to be standing. They would have the blonde with the yellow, and they would have the redhead, and then they would have the brunette, and then they would have like a black spot. And I said, “I guess that’s where I’m supposed to stand.” I found it very offensive.

SICULAR: It is offensive. I find it offensive.

JOHNSON: And there was a time, quite a few times on different shoots, where in Florida they wouldn’t [30:00] let me swim in the swimming pool. You know, what’s really funny --

SICULAR: What year was this? I mean, that’s amazing.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Late ’70s, yeah.

SICULAR: Late ’70s? Terrible.

JOHNSON: It’s very interesting that -- I had totally forgotten about the incident. It was Shelly Smith that reminded me
about it, and then I remember one time going to -- we went way out in the farm country in England, in London, you know, it’s beautiful countryside, and we were going to ride horses and do this big huge editorial shoot. This was Glamour magazine. And they came back and said they couldn’t shoot there if I was going to be a part of it. I said, “We’re out here in the middle of freaking nowhere. Are they kidding?” But anyways, so there were always those kind of challenges. What’s really interesting, I think, when you’re young, for myself I was very resilient, and I was Teflon. Nothing really stuck. I was so hyper focused on where I wanted to go. [31:00] In no way did it affect me in a sense of being bitter or that affecting my self esteem. It’s only now that I realize really how awful that was and how, if it were someone else, how that would maybe affected their entire lives, the outcome of their entire lives.

SICULAR: And when the crew members found out the way you were being treated, did they move on to another place, or did they stay?

JOHNSON: Oh, absolutely. They were horrified. Yeah, they were horrified. They wouldn’t put up with it.

SICULAR: And did you come across any of this after your Vogue cover came out?
JOHNSON: Yes, oh, sure.

SICULAR: Really, still?

JOHNSON: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It’s a sad, old story.

SICULAR: It’s a very sad, terrible story.

JOHNSON: And unfortunately that story is still persistent today, existing today. You know, hopefully [32:00] we can put that story to rest until all the love in the universe is that all cultures have to give.

SICULAR: That’s right. Did you have any last thoughts?

JOHNSON: Oh, yes.

SICULAR: Oh, wait, I have a question. What’s the biggest surprise of your career?

JOHNSON: Surprise?

SICULAR: Yeah. I know the biggest thrill of your career was your cover, your Vogue cover, but any surprises?

JOHNSON: Surprises. I can’t really think of any surprises. I think that it was a real gift that I was afforded this opportunity. I mean, modeling, it made me who I am today. That’s why I’m sitting here in this Dolce and Gabbana playsuit. It made me who I am, and it’s a career that took me all around the world and [33:00] afforded me this lifestyle that who knows if I would have had it. Meeting so many interesting, wonderful people, kings and queens,
movie stars and musicians right around the world, it’s been a terrific ride.

SICULAR: And professionally how would you like to be remembered?

JOHNSON: I talk to my daughter about my legacy all the time, and I think that that’s why I’m still out here. I think it’s really important to remember whose shoulders you stood on to get to where you are, and it’s really important that the girls that are coming up behind me, you know, all of the young ladies, the Tyra Banks and the Naomi Campbells, who give me wonderful homage, [34:00] but to remember how it was done and to really appreciate our body of work. That’s what’s so wonderful about what you’re doing. It’s a big undertaking, but it’s something that I think will, hundreds or thousands of years from now, people will be able to look back and say, oh, this is how they lived and this is how it looked.

SICULAR: That’s right. This is your era.

JOHNSON: And it’s wonderful to be a part of a legacy that is going to be there for many generations after.

SICULAR: Do you have any last thoughts?

JOHNSON: Last thoughts?

SICULAR: Or anything that you’d like to add?
JOHNSON: No, there’s no last thoughts. There’s just thoughts going on [35:00] all the time.

SICULAR: Well, we’ll come back, and we’ll come back with our camera and Daniel any time you have more thoughts. We just thank you so much for taking the time to be with us. It was a thrill. Ms. Beverly Johnson. Thank you.

JOHNSON: Thank you.

PASSERO: [claps] And (inaudible). When I say roll them, we’re just getting the tape going.

SICULAR: Oh, sorry.

PASSERO: We’re not in -- action.

SICULAR: Hi, my name is Patty Sicular, I’m director of -- (inaudible).

PASSERO: Want to move?

SICULAR: No, OK.

PASSERO: Just look at me. (inaudible)

SICULAR: Hi. My name is Patty Sicular. I’m director of archiving at the Ford Model Agency in New York City. Together with Professor Karen Connell from Fashion Institute of Technology, we are archiving the history of fashion, beauty, photography, and Ford models. We’re at the Celebrity Vault in Beverly Hills --

PASSERO: Let’s try that again. I’m sorry, ladies, you’re just --
SICULAR: We’re trying to film here, and it’s a little noisy.

Maybe upstairs --

PASSERO: And action.

SICULAR: Hi, my name is Patty Sicular. I’m director of archiving at the Ford Motel Agency [36:00] in New York City. Together with Professor Karen Connell from Fashion Institute of Technology, we’re archiving the history of fashion, beauty, photography, and Ford models. We are here at the Celebrity Vault in Beverly Hills. Today we’re so happy to be interviewing the wonderful Beverly Johnson.

Today’s date is July 22, 2010. So welcome, Beverly.

PASSERO: Perfect. Great.

END OF AUDIO FILE