



## Seattle Metro Chamber – Under Construction with Mari Horita

**Marilyn Strickland** Welcome to Under Construction. I'm your host -- Marilyn Strickland, CEO of the Seattle Metro Chamber. In each episode, we take you behind the scenes with the people and companies shaping our evolving region. Today we meet Mari Horita, Vice President of Community Engagement and Philanthropy of NHL Seattle. Mari, thanks for being here with us today.

**Mari Horita** Thanks for having me.

**Marilyn Strickland** So -- as you know there's so much excitement in Seattle around NHL, National Hockey League, coming to our city. Tell us about NHL Seattle and what your job is with the organization.

**Mari Horita** Once again thanks for having me and asking about NHL Seattle. I'm really excited to be here. My job at NHL Seattle is to build out the community engagement and impact in philanthropy work for the team. It's one of the first hires Tod made. It's a huge priority to him and the leadership that in addition to the great things we're going to be doing on the ice -- that we have a really significant and positive impact off the ice.

**Marilyn Strickland** Why do you think it was so important for this position to really take precedence within the organization?

**Mari Horita** It has a lot to do with Tod Leiweke. He used to be the CEO of the Seahawks. He hired Pete Carroll. He did a lot to create the community engagement and fan experience around the Seahawks and also did work with the Sounders. He was also at the Tampa Bay Lightning and really kicked off a huge community impact campaign there as well. So he knows how important it is to the success of a team -- to a brand and really to the presence of an organization in this region -- and that's, that's why it was a priority to, to his hiring.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's great. So we talk about NHL Seattle but what we don't have an official name, logo or mascot. And you know that there have been things on social media. There've been articles in the paper -- so are there any team name frontrunners?

**Mari Horita** If there are I don't know. It depends who you ask I guess.

**Marilyn Strickland** Yeah. Do you have a favorite?

**Mari Horita** You know I don't. I, I go back and forth because I keep hearing different names and I like one for a while and, and a different one a different day. But I remember when we spoke actually at CRT recently and the question we had for the roundtable was what should we name the team? And some of those names I don't know if you saw them or they were pretty funny was like the Seattle Process, Seattle Gridlock.

**Mari Horita** So I don't know if any of those are going to make it but it was pretty cute. Seattle Cloud was one of those that came out of that meeting as well.

**Marilyn Strickland** Interesting. So I will tell you that I like Seattle Freeze. I just think yeah it lends itself to a really fun, iconic logo. It's you know the weather -- it's on ice and so my vote would be for Seattle Freeze.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. And I could be the Ice Queen.

**Marilyn Strickland** Exactly. There you go. There you go.

**Mari Horita** So you were recruited to NHL Seattle this past fall and you come from philanthropy in the arts. So talk about why this particular job interested you?

**Mari Horita** Well like you said -- there's a lot of excitement around it right? Where we've got the new franchise 30 second franchise. We are building a state of the art arena which is going to be amazing and also contribute to the revitalization of Seattle Center. And we're building a three- sheet rink up in Northgate which will be a real community hub and gathering place, as well as really the home for the team. To be at the ground floor of any of those in and of them themselves is really exciting. To be at the ground floor of that entire enterprise is extraordinary. But what really convinced me to move -- because I loved my job and it's a great organization again -- was the vision and the leadership behind it. Because you know, it really comes down to people at the end of the day.

**Marilyn Strickland** So true.

**Mari Horita** Tod's vision for the team and the role of community -- and the people that he has brought with him and the ownership. It's a privilege to be part of this team and advance this enterprise so that's -- that was the inspiration.

**Marilyn Strickland** And you really raise an interesting issue. Because you can talk about a position in an organization and the description can be perfect. But it really is about the people that you work with and the leadership of the organization. It sounds like this has had a really strong impact on your desire to bring your talent and expertise to NHL Seattle.

**Mari Horita** It's certainly not my hockey skills.

**Marilyn Strickland** So let's switch a bit to your personal history. Can you tell us about the neighborhood where you grew up? And share some of your favorite childhood memories with us.

**Mari Horita** Sure. I grew up in an area called Meadowbrook which no one's ever heard of. It's sort of between the university and Lake City for lack of a better description. And I had a pretty simple childhood really. I mean my memories were walking my dog at the UW campus with my dad and swimming in believe it or not Green Lake at the time. And I think in middle school we joined swim club and I spent every summer there. And travelling. Traveling. Getting in the station wagon with my parents and driving down to California without seatbelts and you know like camping and. Those are some really good memories.

**Marilyn Strickland** Well that's very cool. So as someone who grew up here -- looking at the evolution of Seattle because you know Seattle has just been Seattle for a long time and then in the last decade or so it's changed dramatically. Can you share your thoughts as you know a native about what you see happening both good and bad?

**Mari Horita** Right and there are both. On balance, it's great.

**Mari Horita** I think it's exciting. The innovation, the progressive thinkers here -- that we are seen as a hub of you know smart, engaged, compassionate people. Doing really cool things and staying current and relevant.

**Mari Horita** The flipside of that is with growth and prosperity, it's not equitably distributed. And so some of the gaps widen. Whether it's the pay equity gap or the learning opportunity gap. Just the cost of housing. The displacement. Homelessness. The increase of that which is obviously very clearly related and tied to housing costs. Those are the downsides and the dark sides of this otherwise positive progress.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** And also maintaining the character really of the city. My daughter and I spent a lot of time in the International District because she loves Asian food.

**Marilyn Strickland** Who doesn't?

**Mari Horita** Yeah. But we were walking through there and I said, wow, this is one of those parts of the city that still hasn't changed that much. Which is kind of awesome. You know?

And it was really we were reflecting on that. Because everywhere else around us -- Pioneer Square. South Lake Union. It's completely different and not in a bad way. It's just different.

**Marilyn Strickland** It's different, yeah. So I read an interview with you from the University of Washington alumni association where you talked about being inspired to attend law school -- after learning about your mother's experience during World War II. And she and her family were among those during the internment of the Japanese Americans. So talk a bit about their experience and what it was like growing up in America during that time.

**Mari Horita** I didn't learn about her experience until I think high school. Because she didn't really talk about it. As you know it's not very well documented in our textbooks. Funny thing. And so then as I got to know more about it I just realized that it was an incredibly difficult topic for her to share. And I started doing a little more research about it. And then got involved in an organization called Densho ultimately. But as I was learning about it -- and certainly through college and like you said it was one of the things that really inspired me to go to law school.

**Mari Horita** When you hear what happened, it just doesn't even sound real.

**Marilyn Strickland** No it doesn't.

**Mari Horita** And to my mom you know? And such a gross violation of civil liberties. And it happened and yet we seem to somehow gloss over the loss of property. The loss of jobs. And it's not like.

**Marilyn Strickland** Putting people in encampments.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. Yeah. That yeah. So it inspired me. I think it would inspire anyone to just try to better understand it. Like how could this happen. Why did it happen. How can we make sure it doesn't happen again. Get a sense of what the laws are so that you have the ability to navigate within them. Both for yourself and for others who don't have that opportunity.

**Marilyn Strickland** Well in this interview you said that after the war your parents did not speak Japanese around the house. So a question I have for you is did you ever learn how to speak Japanese?

**Mari Horita** Yes. I mean not well. But so I did. And they didn't speak it around the house and we moved into really an all white neighborhood in northeast Seattle. There were certain neighborhoods they can't, couldn't buy houses. That's a whole different conversation. But so we lived in an all white neighborhood and didn't speak any Japanese. And it wasn't until I was right after my freshman year in college -- and I didn't want to work all summer. But my parents wouldn't give me the option to just sit around. So I'm like well maybe I'll go back and take a you know Japanese intensive.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** So at the U. So I took the summer intensive at the U. And I loved it and I'm like, wow this is great. And it's also really interesting and through that I actually learned a lot I think about my culture. Because you know you when you actually learn languages, the language itself demonstrates so much of why certain cultures are the way they are.

**Marilyn Strickland** Exactly.

**Mari Horita** So then I continued to take it in college down at Pomona and I studied abroad in Japan my junior year, lived with a homestay family so.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's great.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. And then I've been back since. But I mean it's really probably third grade or not even that. Like preschool level Japanese right now.

**Marilyn Strickland** And I raise this because you know my mother's Korean. And I was not encouraged to learn or speak Korean in the house. And you know, people often ask me, oh do you speak Korean, Marilyn? And I say no I don't. And I kind of say this sadly. Because you know during the time when I grew up in America it's like those of us who had parents whose language -- first language was not English were not encouraged to learn the other language.

**Marilyn Strickland** And so there was kind of this whole idea of assimilation whatever that means. And then you know I think about some of my cousins now. Who are of a younger generation. And they speak fluent Korean because they want to learn it and their parents encourage them. It's kind of interesting. We look at the generational differences between those of us who had another language in the house -- but weren't really encouraged to learn it at the time but have taken on the desire to learn more about our culture and our history as we become adults.

**Mari Horita** Which is a great trend that it's going the other way.

**Marilyn Strickland** I absolutely agree.

**Mari Horita** And certainly in my parents' case they had been punished for being Japanese.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** And that was really the only thing and so all they knew whether they were conscious about it or not is -- OK we are not going to. We are going to do what we can to assimilate.

**Marilyn Strickland** No. No absolutely. So after you finished law school, you worked as an attorney. So talk about where you worked and what did you like about the profession?

**Mari Horita** I started off at Bogle and Gates -- which for all the lawyers out there now know what happened there.

**Mari Horita** But then I went from Bogle to Dorsey and then K&L Gates then Preston Gates.

**Marilyn Strickland** What was your area of practice?

**Mari Horita** I started out as a commercial litigator and then moved over to commercial real estate. Within about a year, litigation for me was challenging. It's like you wake up and you're already adverse to somebody. Like I'm cantankerous enough. I don't need like another reason to be disagreeable.

**Mari Horita** The commercial real estate option and also the people in the department I really like. So once again, you know, who you're working for.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** So I did that instead. What did I like the most about it? The learnings were great. Law school and practicing law. The way it teaches you to just think about things and dissect and diagnose things I think is is great. It's just one more way to approach an issue.

**Mari Horita** But what I loved about it the most of course is the people.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** Even though I didn't love being a lawyer. You know, so that it was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. A lot of my closest friends today are people I met at Bogle & Gates.

**Marilyn Strickland** Excellent. So I know you from the Arts Fund.

**Mari Horita** Right.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's really how we met both, you know even my previous job before I took on this. Before I took on the job at the Chamber. And talk about how you ended up being the CEO of that. And then also just tell our listeners about Arts Fund and what it does.

**Mari Horita** Yes. Well thank you. And I remember Amocat -- the Amocat Awards -- when we got that. And we're like, what does it stand for. I'm a cat. I mean like oh it's Tacoma backwards.

**Marilyn Strickland** So there is an award in Tacoma called Amocat and it celebrates the arts. And it's, it's a clever play on the word Tacoma. Yes exactly. But that's right, that's where I met you Mari.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. And that was great.

**Mari Horita** So first I'll just talk a little bit about Arts Fund. Arts Fund is a 50-year-old nonprofit organization that in a really over simplified sense acts like a United Way for the arts.

**Mari Horita** In that United Way aggregates funds to support the social service sector. We support the arts sector. And so we raise money from individuals and companies and foundations to then reinvest in the arts sector in a number of different ways. I still say, we did three studies -- through programs to trainings and also through some funding. They support about 100 plus nonprofits of all sizes of all genres. I volunteered for Arts Fund as a young attorney at Bogle & Gates. I did a lot of volunteering for United Way and for ArtsFund, did the workplace giving campaign and then joined their official volunteer group and then ended up chairing that. And as I chaired it -- then I got a spot on the board, the one year spot and I really enjoyed it.

**Mari Horita** I enjoyed the people that I met. I thought the cause was a really great cause. I liked how it operated because it was the intersection between the arts and the professional levels. It was a very well-run nonprofit and so stayed involved as a board member as a fundraiser. I got a masters after my law degree so I taught legal responsibilities for nonprofit board members for their training course. So I was involved in it in a lot of different ways for many, many years. And so then when my predecessor -- who was strangely also a lawyer from Bogle and Gates announced his retirement and pending retirement in 2011 -- I just threw my hat in the ring.

**Marilyn Strickland** Very cool. So one of the things that I recall when I was mayor of Tacoma is the economic study that Arts Fund would publish -- that really talked about folks. You know when you think about the arts a lot of people don't think about the actual economic impact. Talk about that study -- and why it was significant to the work that you did.

**Mari Horita** Right. Thank you. Arts Fund issues or produces rather an economic impact study every four to five years. And so the last study we did demonstrates like you said the economic results. So that it's a two billion dollar industry in the region.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** That part of that is the funds -- the monies raised by the organization themselves. And part of it is that that's generated in other businesses and restaurants in hotels. And in this study we would interview the patrons and ask them you know why. What brought them there? And they'd say, oh it was to come to this art exhibit. And then

as part of that we did all these other things. It's significant tax revenue generator. And it's also, it supports tens of thousands of jobs and drives tourism. And tourism from out of the region.

**Marilyn Strickland** Yep.

**Mari Horita** Comes into the region. Spends a lot of money and then goes out of the region.

**Marilyn Strickland** It's bringing outside money into our community.

**Mari Horita** It is. Yeah.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's great. So in an Arts Fund video that you did you talked about opening the mind and you discussed the actually, we're gonna go into science here the neurological impact of jazz. Can you talk about how arts helps cultivate the mind and thinking?

**Mari Horita** And I did that in part because my dad was a neuropsychopharmacologist for the University of Washington.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's quite a title.

**Mari Horita** It is. Say that 10 times fast. And I mean literally when I was little there was you know models of brains lying around the house and so. Yes. So it was always interesting to me and so I was reading an article I forget in what. About how there's been studies and that when people are listening I think listening to jazz or maybe it's playing jazz -- but this shows how part of the brain actually opens up -- and then just creates more opportunity. Greater opportunity for innovation and ideas. So it's like a fact. And it's so important. Because we talk now about 21st century skills. Creativity, compassion and curiosity and collaboration. Whether it's Google or Amazon or Microsoft. Those are the skills they're talking about -- is so important and those are the skills that everyone knows the arts have always fostered. But historically because they're a little softer they haven't gained as much recognition until lately.

**Marilyn Strickland** Interesting. So let's switch back to the NHL for a second. I want to talk about sports. And so do you think that sports have a positive impact on us as well -- both from a societal standpoint but also as individuals.

**Mari Horita** Yes absolutely. And in a lot of ways cause people will go, oh my God it's so different -- what you're doing, is it? Well yes and no. Because in sports like arts -- they are an opportunity to bring people together. And people who might not otherwise ever meet. It transcends culture and generations and languages and socioeconomics and everything. And you sit next to someone and you share in a common experience. And that creates a sense of community and the sense of community helps toward social cohesion. And as we

all know communities and societies function better when there a greater social cohesion. It's a positive thing. You know -- it's something and then it's an escape to get away from the other parts of your day that may not be as fun. And to just sit and be and take part in something bigger. So yeah I absolutely think so.

**Mari Horita** It's also the whole notion of sportsmanship. Which is a term that is used beyond a sport, right. It's real. And I've seen, I have a 14-year-old daughter. And so I know a lot about youth soccer and youth ultimate. But youth ultimate is a really great example especially in Seattle about sportsmanship. And they actually put the responsibility of fair play onto the players. There are no referees. So they self referee. I mean they're saying questionable call -- the two players talk it out and they figure it out. They're forced to resolve it. If there's a good play you high five the other side. When someone else scores you high five them. And at the end there's a group huddle for both teams. And they all lock shoulders and arms and talk about the game. And then they give a Spirit Award out to a member of the other team that exhibited a high level of the spirit of the game.

**Marilyn Strickland** Interesting.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. I mean how awesome is that. So that yes absolutely I think it's a positive.

**Marilyn Strickland** You know when I think about sports -- and especially, you know, young people and you used the example your daughter -- I just think about the way it teaches people to win with grace and to lose with grace.

**Marilyn Strickland** And to help people understand you're not going to win everything -- even if you do exactly as you were taught sometimes it just doesn't work out for you. And how are we able to bounce back and be resilient when things don't go our way? I think that's really for me what sports really teaches you.

And the team sports teaches you to put the group cause above your own. And it can't be I mean you could be a Kobe Bryant but you know even that doesn't really work a lot of the time, so it's about -- how do we -- how are we stronger together.

**Marilyn Strickland** Yep absolutely. So one of the things that I read in Seattle Business Magazine is that you have an appreciation for unique, one-of-a-kind items when shopping and I just for our listeners who can't sit here and see Mari right now -- it's like, she's wearing this amazing, beautiful piece of jewelry around her neck. It is what you would call a statement piece. And it looks fantastic. And so can you talk about any local artists or makers that you would like to highlight or give props to while we're on the air here?

**Marilyn Strickland** Oh -- she just took it off.

**Mari Horita** Well but I first need you to feel it.

**Marilyn Strickland** Oh my gosh.

**Mari Horita** It's like recycled tires.

**Marilyn Strickland** It's recycled tires. And if you saw this around her neck you would think it's like -- how does someone that petite handle something so giant around her neck? That's amazing.

**Mari Horita** And this is actually from Buenos Aires. A little shop in Buenos Aires. It's a local Argentine artist and I stumbled upon this shop that was all local. They're local artists -- and so brought that back. Local art is why. So I do a lot of shopping at the Seattle Art Museum jewelry store. Highly recommend it. Really the gift stores from any art museum. They're great. Sarah. I think it's Sarah Lerchner was one of the local artists who did a piece that I wore and get compliments on every single time I wear it. It's really interesting and she's here.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's very cool.

**Mari Horita** And the Seattle Art Museum features a ton of local makers. So I love that.

**Marilyn Strickland** So do you have any special paintings or artwork around your home that you proud of?

**Mari Horita** I wouldn't call them high art for sure. But I do love them.

**Marilyn Strickland** But it's your art.

**Mari Horita** Yeah it's. I pick up things from traveling around. So whether it's pictures from the photographs in Park City -- or this I think pretty awesome painting from Prague that sort of depicts a Prague square and alleyways. Or I picked up. Well it's a picture of a young monk in Bhutan. But I got it in San Diego at the National Geographic store. But I like to get things that remind me of places or experiences I think.

**Marilyn Strickland** Absolutely. So we know that you are passionate about civic engagement. And you served on numerous boards in our region including our own Seattle Metro Chamber board. You've been on the board of Cultural Access Washington, the Downtown Seattle Association and the University of Washington Alumni Association. So can you just talk about why this board service is important to you?

**Mari Horita** I think it's not just for service. Nor are you suggesting that it is but it's volunteering, it's showing up, it's getting engaged in some way. And so board service is one of the ways to do that. I mean a lot of the organizations you mentioned the Chamber, DSA are focused on our city and our region and really trying to figure out how to make it a better, healthier, safer, stronger region. And then some of these other organizations are focused on a smaller issue -- or a smaller cause but they're really important.

**Mari Horita** And so you know -- the nonprofit model is an American phenomenon. It started when I mean de Tocqueville talked about people banding together to deal with an issue and it's unlike other places and so that's part of how our society has always progressed. That's how we've advanced. And I think it's really important that people you know lean and speak up and get engaged with things. Because there's a lot of need. And it's easy to look the other way. But I think it's important to find things that each person cares about and to plug in in some way. That works for their busy lives.

**Mari Horita** And it's incredibly rewarding.

**Marilyn Strickland** Indeed.

**Marilyn Strickland** So I want to switch back to hockey for a second. And you know that when there was the announcement about the ticket availability it sold out -- very quickly in advance. So you know there's a fan base here. But in your work -- in community outreach you know, how are you going to help grow team support even outside the fan base?

**Mari Horita** Sure. And obviously there's a huge focus like you said on the fan base and what's great about our team is we all work like with marketing. And we work across the groups to make sure that we're all doing toward a common goal. So in addition to the fans and our corporate partners you know -- a big focus is maybe not the diehard hockey right. And just to make sure that we're showing up as a good corporate citizen -- that we're making a positive difference. And so it is going to be, well we have a long term 10 million dollar commitment to Youth Care, a partnership. We work on youth homelessness. And so that's going to take time.

**Mari Horita** It's going to involve financial support, in kind support, internships support and really partnering with them and to see how can we leverage our assets? And our platform to support their organization. And really you know make a dent in youth homelessness and make a difference. We are going to increase access to hockey and especially youth hockey for kids that are from populations and communities who historically have faced barriers to engagement. And so whether that's underserved kids, kids of color, girls -- just kids who haven't -- people who haven't seen themselves represented in the game. Because you know it's not the most diverse game historically.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** But there is definitely a movement from the NHL to try to become a more inclusive league and game. And so we here at NHL Seattle want to help advance that.

**Marilyn Strickland** So you you talked briefly earlier in our interview about the three sheet ice facility in Northgate. So can you talk a bit about why you chose that location? And how you hope that will be a community asset?

**Mari Horita** I can't really speak to why because I wasn't part of that decision. Although I think it's great that it's there. You know the whole mall's getting revitalized and I think it's going to be fantastic. But what's wonderful is we don't have any ice in Seattle.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** And so there's all these leagues that are playing to the middle of the night in I don't know Renton who are from Seattle. And there's not enough playing time. And certainly if you're trying to do programs to create access, you don't really have that opportunity very readily. So this will be I think a real community hub.

**Marilyn Strickland** Right.

**Mari Horita** It's going to have two public facilities, practice utilities, practices are going to be open to the public.

**Marilyn Strickland** Oh interesting.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. And a friend of mine who, in town -- Paul Hollie-- He was saying he grew up going to, I don't remember where he's from but he's not from here. And he'd go with his mom and watch the practices of the team. And that made him a fan. So I love that that's an access point.

**Mari Horita** So it's really going to be a, a center and a hub. And Sound Transit's right there too, which is fantastic because the transportation piece, as we all know is a huge barrier.

**Marilyn Strickland** Well no, and it's interesting you say that -- because I think that one of the things that I'm really pleased that we're seeing here in the region is that we're making the connection between mass transit and access. Whether it's to housing, to jobs and, you know to a facility like this. I know that we're making large investments in mass transit but you know -- as a former member of the Sound Transit Board I would say that it is, it is worth every penny. Because those are the types of projects that are transformational. And they make things more equitable and more inclusive.

**Mari Horita** Yes.

**Marilyn Strickland** So when will the hockey team actually start playing here in its new arena?

**Mari Horita** '21. So our first season is the '21, '22 season. From October to the regular season is through I think late April. And then the playoffs are in May, May and or late April, May and into the Stanley Cups in June.

**Marilyn Strickland** That's a long season.

**Mari Horita** Yeah, no, you're doing the math. There's 40 there's 80 season games which 41 I think home games.

**Marilyn Strickland** Yeah, just shorter than an NBA season.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. So they'll. It'll be that fall.

**Marilyn Strickland** So you know when I remember that Premier Hogan was down here from Canada. With Governor Inslee and we hosted an event and they were talking about the connection between Washington state and Canada. And were of course you know joking about our rivalry with the Canucks. And so when we think about the Vancouver Canucks and Seattle's natural rival -- do you think that that's something that's going to endure for a long time?

**Mari Horita** Oh yeah. I mean you see that with the Sounders and the Whitecaps. And I think it's going to be great. I went up to a game there last month. And people there are super excited about this. Even you know like Nordstrom's was like, Oh my God, we're so excited. And in a positive way because of the, it's a, it's gonna be an intense but you know friendly rivalry.

**Marilyn Strickland** Absolutely. And you know those rivalries are always a lot of fun.

**Marilyn Strickland** So we know that one of the things that will happen with the NHL team is that KEXP is going to be the official music provider. So talk about that relationship.

**Mari Horita** Well that's a really great relationship. I mean KEXP is a neighbor. You know they're such a cool station. They have a livestream in 150 countries. I mean it's they're everywhere right now. In outer space as well evidently. And so we're really excited about that.

**Marilyn Strickland** So I want to go to the lightning round or what I call get to know you better.

**Mari Horita** Yeah.

**Marilyn Strickland** So you've had this amazing career at Arts Fund, you're an attorney, you're now going to work in the NHL. What would surprise people about you if there was something that they learned about Mari?

**Mari Horita** The one thing that seems to surprise everyone I know well -- and even people I've just met is I've been to Burning Man.

**Marilyn Strickland** See? You saw the look on my face. So did you go to Burning Man before it got taken over. Way back in the day? Or kind of at the tail end?

**Mari Horita** I went a couple of years ago. Yeah.

**Marilyn Strickland** So that's still a thing.

**Mari Horita** It's still a thing.

**Marilyn Strickland** I've not heard much about it.

**Mari Horita** And I even had to hitchhike to the airport to Reno. Because our bus broke down on the way back. So no kidding I'm standing on the side of the street with a sign that says Reno.

**Marilyn Strickland** That is a Burning Man story.

**Mari Horita** That is a total way to cap a Burning Man experience.

**Marilyn Strickland** So. So are there any sports teams that you follow and watch?

**Mari Horita** Well I follow. I laugh because I follow my daughter's sports teams.

**Marilyn Strickland** As well you should.

**Mari Horita** Yes. And I also follow -- largely because of her, the Sounders. And we've been going religiously for the last I don't know seven years. Now that she's 14 and has other interests we don't go quite as much. I go to the Mariners. I go to the Seahawks. I mean the Huskies. Big part of my upbringing and my mom. Oh my gosh she's an avid Husky, I mean bordering on a rabid Husky fan.

**Marilyn Strickland** That is amazing.

**Mari Horita** She would follow all the the players into their professional careers. And if if one of them got in trouble for you know like an ethical violation, she was so disappointed you'd think it's like her kid or something. So Husky, Seahawks, Mariners and Sounders. Sonics when they were here.

**Marilyn Strickland** Oh my God.

**Mari Horita** Yeah.

**Marilyn Strickland** My favorite team ever. The Shawn Kemp, Gary Payton Sonics.

**Mari Horita** And of course the Storm is great.

**Marilyn Strickland** Our championship team. Yeah, that's great. So tell us about. Everyone has a motto -- like words to live by. Their favorite thing. What are your words to live by, Mari?

**Mari Horita** So I would say that in the spirit of just going back to what you first asked, why did I go make the decision to move? And I said it was really the inspiration of the leader. Inspiring leadership. And so I guess I would say you know -- seek and find inspiration, and seek to inspire.

**Marilyn Strickland** Yeah I like that. So in all your busyness with your daughter's sports, your new gig. What do you have time to do? So what's the last good book you read?

**Mari Horita** So the last book that I read.

**Mari Horita** I actually re-read was a book by Pema Chodron -- who is a Buddhist mon, a Nova Scotian Buddhist monk.

**Marilyn Strickland** Very cool.

**Mari Horita** And it's a book that a friend gave to me. I don't know why but I have several friends who sent me a bunch of Buddhist books. So I guess they need more spirituality or something. Anyway -- but it's just like a little book. But it's, it's really lovely and it's just sort of a non-preachy way to just approach life and think about things. And then I read a you know David Baldacci book on the beach in Mexico.

**Marilyn Strickland** Nothing wrong with that.

**Marilyn Strickland** So what is your favorite food?

**Mari Horita** It's, it's a tie I think between really excellent sashimi and really excellent French fries. Although now that, I am definitely a snob about both. But now that I'm in the hockey world, it might have to be poutine and I have to gravitate over to like really excellent poutine.

**Marilyn Strickland** So let's -- let's press pause for a second. I want to hear about how one is a French fry snob. Now I know that I cannot stand fries that have like coating on it. So let's talk about tiers of French fries. How one is a French fry snob.

**Mari Horita** Well I tend to like the ones that are crispy on the outside, right. But not too, but not, not just hard all the way through not like a shoestring one. So Cafe Campagne has great fries. I think French restaurants tend to have really good French fries.

**Marilyn Strickland** OK.

**Mari Horita** Sort of ironically. I don't know. Someone said it's because they fry it in duck fat. I don't know if that's true or not. I don't know.

**Marilyn Strickland** That would be really expensive.

**Mari Horita** But so it's that balance and of course like a lot of salt. Not a significant amount of grease. But yeah I am a.

**Marilyn Strickland** French fry snob.

**Mari Horita** I am.

**Marilyn Strickland** I like that, I like that phrase.

**Mari Horita** A little oxymoronic.

**Marilyn Strickland** Totally. So do you have time to binge watch anything on Netflix or on Amazon Prime? Or your favorite shows.

**Mari Horita** The last binge watch I did was The Americans.

**Marilyn Strickland** Oh that's so good.

**Mari Horita** Yeah. Yeah. So that was the last one and then, I don't know if it's embarrassing, or not, but I also watch reruns of West Wing -- which totally dates me.

**Marilyn Strickland** No, that's what my husband is obsessed with West Wing. There are like three episodes that he watches all the time.

**Mari Horita** Which three?

**Marilyn Strickland** It's the one where President Bartlet reads this woman the riot act because she's being hypocritical.

**Mari Horita** Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah.

**Marilyn Strickland** I think that's probably his favorite episode and the episodes where he got shot.

**Mari Horita** Yeah yeah yeah. I'm right there with him.

**Marilyn Strickland** All right. Well, Mari -- thank you so much for being here. We are so excited that you have been engaged with the Chamber for a long time. And now you're over at NHL Seattle. We look forward to great things over there -- and having you as a member of their team is going to be great for the organization and great for the city. So we're so excited that you're there and we wish you the best.

**Mari Horita** Well thank you. And thanks for everything you're doing at the Chamber -- and we are excited about our partnership with you guys.

**Marilyn Strickland** Thank you.