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Ben Sperry '79-Donna Richmond Carleton '64

Benjamin Sperry

Donna Richmond Carleton

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Ben Sperry: Okay, this is Ben Sperry. It's June 1st, 2024. It's about 3.30 in the afternoon, and I'm a member of the class of 1979, and I'm doing the interview today. Would you introduce yourself?

Donna Carleton: Yes, my name is Donna Richmond Carleton. I'm the class of 1964. I graduated that year. My sister graduated in 1971. My first daughter graduated in 1991. My second daughter graduated in 1995, and my son-in-law is also a member of the class of 1995.

BS: Oh, wow, so quite a legacy.

DC: Quite a legacy.

BS: So were you here for four years, or did you transfer in? No, I came here in September of 1960 and graduated in, I think, June of 1964.

DC: And where did you go to high school? I went to high school, Newton High School ...

BS: in Massachusetts.

DC: In Massachusetts. The last year that Newton was one high school, in 1960, a class of over a thousand.

BS: Had you grown up in the Boston area the whole time or ...

DC: The first seven years, I was in Brookline, and then the rest were Newton.

BS: Okay, and how would you describe yourself as a student in high school? Were you a diligent student or ...

DC: I would consider myself a conscientious student that worked hard, wanted to get good grades, pretty much got good grades. I'm more of a concrete learner in that sense, so I put forth the effort, and being a good student was important to me.

BS: Yeah, and when you were thinking about going to college, what sort of criterion did you set for yourself? What kind of college did you want to go to, and why did you choose Connecticut College?

DC: Okay, I considered going to a liberal arts school. Predominantly in those days, most of them were separated into women's schools and men's schools. I wanted to go. My first choice probably would have been Wellesley. I did not get accepted. I did not do well in the SATs. My second choice was Connecticut College. I didn't really know that much about it, but my mother had mentioned it and went down for an interview, and I was accepted, and I'm very glad for that.

BS: Yeah. So, you got here in the fall of 1960. This is an all, of course, all-women's college. Where did you live when you, and during your freshman year?

DC: So we came here, I had never been away from home, so this was a first experience, and I was assigned to be in a triple on the second floor of Plant House, and I'm still, one of my roommates is with me today, and the other one I happened to see two weeks ago when she visited the Boston area for a grandchild's graduation.

BS: So, you've maintained close friendships with them?

DC: We've maintained very close friendships. When we graduated in 1964, we really didn't get together as a group of seven. We had- we called ourselves the CC Seven. And the first time we got together with all seven of us was in 19- when we were 50, so that would have been 1992. And one of, one of our classmates had a home in Vermont and we spent a long weekend in that day- at that time, and then we had another reunion when we, when we were 60s It was called 60s in Seattle. And the women and the husbands went, one husband did not go and we did activities there. The men went off fishing in Sitka. Then we got together when we turned 64, and that was held in Virginia -- Lexington, Virginia -- and then- no, 64, I'm sorry, was held in Colorado, and then we turned 70. We all met with husbands, too, in Lexington, Virginia.

BS: So you've had, you've maintained some close friendships.

DC: We have, and as of now, we lost one. One of our classmates died in 2020, not of COVID, but since that, since COVID hit, we made it a point to get together on Zoom every Monday, first Monday of every month. So, there are three of us here this weekend, and the other three will

be waiting to hear the reports. They couldn't- two came from the West Coast, and one couldn't come from this area.

BS: Now, as far as, tell me what a women's college experience was like in the early 60s. Now, did you have to check in? Like, were you allowed to have boys in the dorm, or like, what kind of rules in terms of how much freedom and independence you had? Just talk about that for a moment.

DC: Okay, the rules were quite strict, I thought, but I didn't know any better, so I followed the rules. But we actually had to take, -- we got a handbook -- in a certain amount of time we had to take a test on the handbook. We had, I believe, six times to leave the campus. We had to sign in, we had to sign out. If we didn't do that, we're on the honor system, we had to report ourselves to the Honor Court, to the...

BS: Six times you could leave, in other words, to go to town, or to leave for the weekend?

DC: To leave, as an overnight.

BS: Oh, okay.

DC: Yes, that's, I hope I'm remembering correctly, but I think that's...

BS: Six times per semester.

DC: Okay. And that got a little better. There was a code. You had to wear skirts, girls had to wear skirts to dinner. You had to attend chapel a certain number of times during the week, a month, or whatever it is, I can't remember exactly, but that was, yeah, that was considered. You had to give, I remember giving an hour a week for bell code, where we had to answer the phone, and we had to give a similar amount of time to work in the kitchen, or serving, or...

BS: What about male friends? Were they allowed in the ground floor of the dorm?

DC: Ground floor in the dorm. But not to visit you in your room?

BS: Not into the room, although while we were there, I think they were able to sign in to go to the room, but they just couldn't go up.

BS: Yeah. Now, this was the 1960s, so there must have been some pressure to change some of these rules, right? Was there kind of a revolutionary feeling on campus at all?

DC: Not against the rules, but this was a time when civil rights was different. We were not able to vote at that point, because we didn't, for the most part, there was an election in 1960, and we were basically 17. I came in 17- I was 17 years old during that election, but the next election would have been 1964. So, we were there during President Kennedy's time, and the beginning of President Johnson's time. And there were, there was an exchange program, so we did have students of color in exchange from, I believe, Spelman College, who would come up for a semester. Some of our students went down and protested and, you know, that sometimes the outcome would have been arrest, and that did not happen with my group.

BS: What about, what about the student body itself here? Were there many African Americans?

DC: No. No.

BS: So the students, the Black students on campus were transferred, were exchanged students from the Black college?

DC: Pretty much.

BS: What about things like music, like the Beatles music? Do you remember that there being a lot of hubbub about rock music and so forth?

DC: Just coming in, Elvis.

BS: Elvis was big.

DC: Yeah, the Beatles were, I think, around 1964. Right. So this is a little bit of ancient history. When I look, when we marched in the parade, we were the third oldest class that attended, so.

BS: Were you on campus the day that Kennedy was assassinated?

DC: I was in a car, driving with a group of people to Lehigh for a blind date.

BS: For the weekend.

DC: On the weekend. So, obviously, that was able to occur when we heard that. My political affiliation at that time, of my group of seven, I was probably the only one that might have been a supporter of Kennedy. And I remember having a poster in my- in my room and sometime before I left, someone put a little mustache on it. No one confessed to that up to this point. I was active in student government. I was elected at the end to be president of the senior class. So, I enjoyed that. It gave me an opportunity to have more of a relationship with then-President Shain and Dean Gertrude Noyes. I thought they were both wonderful and helpful to me. Yes. And I enjoyed that.

BS: What area did you study? What was your major? And what courses did you particularly like?

DC: When I came to school, I figured, I didn't really know. I figured maybe science was a possibility. Maybe French, because I had taken advanced placement in that. Maybe biology, maybe science, maybe history. And you had a number of required courses. I thought the academics- coming from a good high school, I worked hard and did fair. I mean, not what I did in high school, but it took me time and- but, what I did, and the way we worked, and the pressure. We had reading week and exam week and all that intensity. And so, my first semester freshman year, academically, was not what I had had in high school. But the second year, I seemed to have teachers that I could relate to. I seemed to have more of a choice. And I took an economics course just because I needed to fulfill a requirement and I kind of- I liked it. And out of our group of seven, four people majored in Economics.

BS: And you were one of them.

DC: And I was one of them. I wasn't sure of a career path after education, but I tri- there wasn't a major in American Studies at that time and if there would have been, I probably would have majored in that. But I managed to take courses in American history and English and American art to kind of make that.

BS: So, you had your own kind of American studies background, it sounds like.

DC: Correct. And when I graduated from Connecticut, I really didn't have a direct career path, except that guided by a thought by a teacher in junior high and by Dean Noyes that education would be a good path for me, but I wasn't certified. So I applied for a program, went to Tufts here, Tufts for a year after graduation to become certified in 7 through 12 English and Social Studies.

BS: That's what I did, yeah, in Cleveland. Where did you teach?

DC: I taught at Newton. My first job was at Newton at the Bigelow Junior High School, I taught ninth grade English and social studies. And I left after three years because I got married. Married in 1966. Met my husband in 1965, a blind date. There were some Connecticut College students involved in that. He was studying medicine in Boston and we got married in 1966 and he had to, he was in his internship and training, working many hours and I was actually, when I was dating him, it was my first year teaching, so I was working many hours. And then after three years, he had to give two years -- it was kind of mandatory for physicians to give two years to the service -- so we moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he did research for the Apollo program.

BS: Huh. Did you teach down there?

DC: No, I was pregnant and on Christmas Day of the first year -- I'm not- I'm Jewish -- I said -- and this little baby was due December 24th -- I said, I kind of hope -- I didn't know if it was a boy or girl -- I said, I kind of hope it's not the next day. I don't want to ruin the doctor's holiday. And lo and behold, Elizabeth Joy Carleton was born in San Antonio, Texas.

BS: On Christmas Day?

DC: On Christmas Day. And every year now, we celebrate Liz-mus. And she's now 55. Do you have other children? I have another daughter, Melissa, who went to Connecticut College and did not date her husband there, but she went down to the DC area for a master's degree where he was from. They dated and then not connected and then dated again. And now they've been married- they were married- they got married in 2000. So they're married 24 years.

BS: 24 years? And where do Elizabeth and Melissa live?

DC: She's now Liz. She was Elizabeth, I wasn't- no nickname, but in second grade, her teacher- I went in for a conference and said, well, "Liz something." I said, "Liz?" So they live in Westwood, Liz and Larry, live in Westwood, Massachusetts. She's a social worker and they have two daughters. One daughter, Lauren, is 23. She graduated last year Magna Cum Laude from Brandeis and now has a job in environmental and related to environmental studies working with the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, which is located -- non-profit -- not too far from where I now live and she works from home, but works in the office one day a week and then on her way home stops and does her laundry at my house and has dinner with me. And her sister Jacqueline, it will be a junior at the University of Vermont, majoring in biomedical engineering.

And Melissa and her husband Dave, both Connecticut College graduates, live currently in Barrington, Rhode Island. They just bought a home in Florida. Uh-huh. I think they're going to escape the winters and ...

BS: go down there ...

DC: and he can work from, he works from anywhere. So, I think that's the plan. And they have two boys. And I never had a brother. I never had a son. But these boys are terrific. One, the older boy, Asher, is 21 and he spent the last semester of his junior year in Barcelona, having the most wonderful time traveling countries and came back. And he will be a senior next year at the University of Colorado, majoring in communications with a specialty in sales. And his younger brother, Noah, will be a sophomore at the University of Maryland, majoring in business and ...

BS: So that's a total of how many? Three daughters and ...

DC: Two daughters.

BS: Two daughters. You mentioned Jacqueline, Liz, and Melissa.

DC: Noah. Melissa's a daughter. Liz is a daughter. Jacqueline and Lauren are granddaughters. And Asher and Noah are grandsons. And the significant thing that happened in my life is that last November 11th, I lost my husband Bill. We've been married for 57 years.

BS: This was last November?

DC: Last November.

BS: Was it expected? Was his death expected?

DC: Yes, but the time limit was, was undefined. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2002, but we managed, and he still worked as a physician for five more years. And when medical records became part of the lifestyle, he decided that would be a good time to retire. I retired in 2004. You were still teaching at that time? I stopped until 2004, and he was diagnosed in 2002. And you know, we live in a- and we moved in 2011 from Sudbury, Massachusetts to Wayland, Massachusetts, which is very close and we live in a condo community, which is great. No age. And we had- we lo- we had a Cavalier for 10 years, Cavalier dog, King Charles. And we have our

second Cavalier, [unclear] dog, Rusty, and he's been a wonderful source of comfort, as have all my friends, my Connecticut friends. I've been very supported.

BS: I know- I'm happy to ask you more personal questions, but I don't know how much of this you want recorded. What things about your grief and your grief process do you have- just what is it, what is the journey without your husband been like so far? Are you, do you have a grief support group, or ...

DC: I knew that at some point his ending would come, and I knew, and I knew that over time, especially this last, the last year of 2023, things were a little more difficult. I had arranged, we had arranged to have long-term health insurance, which I started to put in place maybe five years before he died, six years before he died, just so I would have a sense of support. In order to benefit from long-term life, you have to put in 90 days, and then once you've done -- it can be any number of hours -- but then you have- and then the reimbursement will kick in. So, I started in the fall of 2017. So, I- I had been taking lifelong learning classes. I take them at Brandeis and I did that since I'm retired from teaching, that's one of my outlets. I play bridge. And we were able to manage pretty well and when it came time, I didn't think it would be the end at that time. I knew there would be an end at some time, and I knew that as time went on, Bill, you know, I knew his wishes. So ...

BS: Was he older or younger, or your age, or ...

DC: He- he is- was two and a half years older, so he died at 83. And I try to be as positive- I think my skills from teaching in special ed were helpful for me in life, in other words, being able to stress the positive, because the students that I had were defined as intellectually impaired, but they had a- I had a subset of program in the high school, Acton-Boxborough High School, so they took functional academic classes. They had jobs. They knew they wanted to be like everyone else, so they knew that they had difficulties, and that could be very frustrating. So, we always tried to emphasize what was positive, make a list. If something was difficult, you know, let's list the positives, let's list the negatives, make sure the positive list was always longer than the- than the negative one. And I said, I can do the same thing. We all have mistakes, and you're, you're important, and you're good, and you have strengths, and that's been kind of my motive. I had very supportive parents growing up. My father was an eternal optimist. He died young. My mother was the dedicated at-home mother at that time. So, those were- those have been ingrained in me, and also through special education, you learn to do task analysis, so anything that has to be done has to be broken down to its smallest part. So, in dealing with Parkinson's,

it wasn't the Parkinson's, I think it just was a body that was- had been housing this disease for a long time. Bill being a doctor knew what it was, and, you know, there were difficulties. When he was down, and I tried to work each day to make positives in each day, and I could manage him. You know, if he fell, which was not that frequent, and he didn't really hurt himself, you know, at the end, he would get on his knees, put his hands on the table, put a leg out, and I could just lift him. And then maybe 10 days before, that process broke down a little bit.

BS: Right. Was he, with Michael J. Fox, you call it hyperkinesic, is that right, where he has these involuntary reflexes?

DC: He did not have the tremors.

BS: The tremors, yeah.

DC: But he did qualify to have the deep brain stimulation surgery, which was- his head was bent down, and the surgery was designed, hopefully, to improve that. It- that didn't work, but in a sense that we might have liked it to. But when he went in to see the doctors, and, of course, he saw other doctors, especially his neurologist, they would have very good conversations, and he would be insightful. And the doctor, recognizing that he was a doctor, this particular one, treated him with respect and empowered him in the decision-making process, so we tried to include that as much as we could.

BS: Going back to Connecticut College, well, just generally, what kind of experience would you say you had, both socially and academically? So, what did it do for you in terms of your development?

DC: I think that Connecticut College was one of the greatest experiences in my life. I came in as a very naive 17-year-old, and I remember four years later, walking down from Plant to Crozer-Williams, and as it was coming to an end, I said, I wish I knew now- I wish I knew then what I know now. But I guess that's the process of college, to become more independent and a thinking person. I would say- I would say, academically, I got a good education in terms of thinking and being able to problem-solve and have a thirst for knowledge and being able to delve in and write questions. At that time, I don't know if you had to pass comprehensives to get your diploma?

BS: No, not undergraduate. I did later on in graduate school.

DC: Okay. Well, we had to pass comprehensives. I don't think my sister had to do that seven years later. And the friendships, as I said, have been incredible. In terms of teachers that I connected with or professors, they were good. I would say I was not maybe intellectually inspired or passionate. Maybe I was more concrete in that way. I didn't dislike anyone. But the personal quality, I think I had more with the administration because I was class president, so that was a good feeling for me. Socially- socially, we had, you know, good experiences, but because I was a minority for my religion, I didn't have a fulfillment of faith, but that didn't ...

BS: You didn't have a fulfillment of what?

DC: I didn't have a boyfriend in college.

BS: How are you connecting that with being a minority?

DC: I'm Jewish.

BS: Were you not included in certain things?

DC: No, it was my choice. My choice was that my preference, I would go out, but my preference was that I probably would like to marry someone Jewish, that was my background, more of the thinking of that time. So, four of my friends got married the year after they graduated and I was two years later, so I ...

BS: But you said you were on your way to Lehigh the day- so, you did some dating and stuff.

DC: Oh, yes, I did go. I was fixed up and I went, so I was on -- you have a great memory -- I was on my way to Lehigh, being fixed up by one of my friends with a young man who happened to be Jewish. And it was some big weekend, and on the way down, we got the news. And when we got there, of course, everything was shut down, so we just managed, and so social events, everything, so it was a somber weekend. And coming back, I came back probably through- I drove down, I had a ride down, but coming back, I probably went on the train or the bus, because I remember being, to get the train to go back to Connecticut, that was when Lee Harvey Oswald was shot. So, and then when I came back, it was very close to Thanksgiving and, you know, I was, and my family, you know, we just were- it was unbelievable.

BS: Devastated.

Because I remember in the fall of 1963 or '62, when he was shot, but the fall, Cuba, when Kennedy was on the television, we were in Hamilton listening to that speech, so we lived history. There were marches, Martin Luther King wasn't as prominent as he was after I had graduated.

BS: The issue of being Jewish that you mentioned, were you, was that like a big deal in terms of the social scene here? I mean, it was like, were the Jewish students and the non-Jewish students in different circles? I mean, was it like an issue?

DC: No. I think it would depend on different people, but I would say, I mean.

BS: Were you excluded from ...

DC: No, I was not excluded from anything. But at our 50th reunion, we- I had a chance, I went down to the Hillel house on campus and I remember, it was our 50th, I remember one of my classmates, we were talking about what went on, and I remember her saying, this is amazing because there was no such thing, you know, on Connecticut. And I remember, you know, I didn't sense any anti-Semitism, but I saw myself as, you know, I wanted my friends to respect me for what I was, and they could learn from me as I could learn from them and so I saw that as an advantage. I thought maybe my being or having them live with someone of that would be a good thing. That's how I ...

BS: You mentioned compulsory chapel. Was it like a Episcopal service? Or was it like a Christian service?

DC: I think it was. I mean, there were, I'm trying to think if there were crosses in it. Whatever it was, I went and I participated. I did not feel uncomfortable. I saw it more as a requirement, not an imposition on my religion.

BS: OK.

DC: You asked about the original, the questions of rules and regulations.

BS: Yes.

DC: I would like to say that coming here for this weekend was the first time that I have left my house for an overnight in six years and part of it was related to COVID. You know, four of it was COVID. The year of 2019, my husband had pneumonia, it wasn't Parkinson's, so that wasn't a

good time to come. And I really- oh, and then he passed away and I was determined to come and so I hadn't driven that distance for a while and I came. Waze helped me get here. And when I drove into the college, it's like I felt lifted up. I just felt wonderful and I'm staying with a friend another family is there, so I'm not living on campus. Are you living ...

BS: No, I got a free room at the Marriott, so I took that option.

DC: OK.

BS: Yeah, I do some fundraising for our class and the guy who's in charge had a bank of rooms, so it's a nice benefit.

DC: Right. So just being here, and I realized that there were only going to be a handful of women from my class. I thought, that's a little disappointing, but the 10 of us now are having a session in another part of this Shain building, which we've done over the years, just a sharing and caring session and people that I might not have been as close to or had to look at their name, it's like we invented the name of a firster -- firster is a friend and a sister -- and this community of women is wonderful. I'm sorry we're all out there, but I'm grateful for those that are.

BS: Say more- say more about the feeling of feeling uplifted as you drove in. Is it- is it nostalgia, or is it connection with something?

DC: Well, as I mentioned, we have all these family members. I picture the visit. I picture my parents' visit. I picture my grandmother. I drove by the buildings. You know, being in Palmer, I remember walking across. We were supposed to have the first outside graduation, but it rained. I've been here. I was thinking a little bit, Bill was part of the group.

BS: Where did he go to college?

DC: He was a smart- genius. He went to Yale Undergraduate and Harvard Medical, but very humble, very dedicated doctor, a very generous person, and my one and only, so ...

BS: Sure.

DC: You have family? I have a wife, and I have two grown daughters and they're both married. It's a perfect pyramid: Susan and I, and then two daughters, and two husbands, and then they each have two.

BS: So, we're the same.

DC: And what do you have for grandchildren? Eliana is seven, and it goes down to Lyle, who's one. So they're seven, three, two, one.

BS: Where do you live?

DC: In Cleveland Heights, Ohio, which is an eastern, east-side suburb of Cleveland.

BS: Right, one of the roommates that passed away was from Shaker Heights.

DC: That's right next door. I walk my dog in Shaker, it's just right- right nearby. What was her name?

BS: Her name was Sue Hackenberg. Trethewey was her maiden name.

DC: Do you know where she lived in Shaker Heights?

BS: She was one of four children. I don't know. I was in her wedding. She was in mine.

DC: So, you've probably been to Shaker, if you've ...

BS: I was there for- yeah, I don't remember.

DC: My daughter lives in Shaker. Yeah, it's right next door.

BS: So, you have both your families close by?

DC: Yes, I do.

BS: That's pretty wonderful, isn't it?

DC: Pretty wonderful, yeah.

BS: And your grandchildren, how?

DC: Boys, girls, a little of each?

BS: Eliana- three boys, and Eliana is the oldest. And then there's Hudson, who's three, Kepler, who's two, and Lyle, who's one. So, yeah, I would say Susan, my wife Susan, gets pulled into babysitting a lot more than I do. She can handle a one-year-old and a three-year-old all at once. I need somebody there with me. I can't be outnumbered by two little kids, because it's like, oh, don't put that in your mouth. But Susan seems to be able to manage, you know, juggling that, but usually, we tag team together.

DC: So you graduated in '79?

BS: I did.

DC: And then you went on after that?

BS: Yes, I have a master's degree from Wesleyan in liberal studies and then I have a PhD from Case Western Reserve University in history. And then before that, I had a master's in creative writing from Bennington College.

DC: And what do you do now?

BS: Well, I'm pretty much retired, although I teach- I teach two nights a week at a juvenile detention center. I teach kids chess. So, I run a little after-school chess program in a juvenile ... So, lately, you know, I've taught history at the college level for a long time, but what I find the most rewarding teaching I've done in the last 15 or 20 years has been in either prisons or jails. Yeah, I mean that ...

DC: Sure, you make a difference.

BS: You feel that, you feel like you're very important to the students and, yeah, so making a connection with somebody who's going through a hard period like that is- is rewarding-rewarding. But I've also taught at Case, I've taught at Cleveland State, sort of more conventional kinds of settings.

DC: Does your wife work?

BS: She still is working very much full time. So, we're not really retired as a household, we're not going to Florida or Georgia or anything in the winter. Susan- have you ever heard of Judson? Did your friend live at Judson by any chance? Judson Retirement? Because the ...

DC: They went to a private school. She went to a private school.

BS: Hathaway Brown or Laurel?

DC: Yes.

BS: Hathaway Brown?

DC: That would be for the girls.

BS: Well, Laurel and Hathaway Brown are the two ones on the East Side.

DC: I think it was Hathaway Brown.

BS: Really? OK, well, Susan went to HB, both daughters went to HB. We're a ... Susan, my wife Susan, a retirement community on the East Side of Cleveland is called Judson and they have three different campuses and in order to facilitate the moves into Judson, they hire Susan. Her business is called Moving by Design and so it's helping somebody with a move and doing the space planning. So, it's often like a woman in her late 80s with a 10-room house in Shaker Heights who has to move in a month and her kids are in California, it's like, ahhhh! So, Judson sends Susan in to help coordinate and do all the details and she calls herself a professional daughter.

DC: OK, well, that's a nice title.

BS: Yeah.

DC: One thing that I want- I want to do something different besides the courses -- and I do play bridge -- so, there was a program at Wayland High School that was advertised with the Council on Aging and it was called Seekers and Sages. So, the Seekers are the high school seniors and the Sages would be anyone over 61 and it's part of the school curriculum in Wayland. I know they have branches of this throughout the country where a- you're paired up. And they had a couple of introductory meetings of sharing, kind of off the cuff and then they had- the second session was like speed dating, where the students would come and have, like, five-minute interviews and then they paired up. And you would have four sessions following that to encourage communication with another generation and for a lot of these students, it wasn't necessarily remedial, it was to be able to speak to someone that you hadn't spoken to before, I

suppose, and to avoid technology. And I thought it was a worthwhile program. I shared some historical things that I had gone through and then their final assignment, students, is to write a tribute to this age, which is very nice. So, my sister did it. She has MS. She applied through her town in Milton, Mass. and was- they had a program nationwide, so her Seeker was from California and she's from Massachusetts, so they did it on Zoom. I know during COVID, Wayland did it on Zoom, but it's much better to be able to do it in person.

BS: Where did you meet your- meet up with your Seeker?

DC: In the high school.

BS: OK. And you would just, was there any agenda when you met or ...

DC: When we started, well, the students had kind of prompts and it was the initial sharing about family and interests and likes and sometimes you talked about travel, depending on the chemistry. As I said, I talked, I brought in some mementos that I had, newspapers that I had saved from Kennedy and The Man on the Moon and things like that. We both had an experience of enjoying time on the Cape and I asked her if she had- and she talked about being interested in signs and things of that nature. I asked if she had ever been on a ghost tour and she hadn't and I found one for her. And they graduate- they graduate this coming Friday and I'll send her a book. I think I'm going to send her a book about Cape Cod or something like that.

BS: Oh, wonderful.

DC: I thought it was a great experience. I thought that there were two groups of 20: 10 and 10, 10 and 10, and two teachers that were ...

BS: How often do you get together with your Seeker?

DC: It was a total of an eight-week period. It was part of, in Wayland, part of a program called Connections, so this was like the third quarter. And it had the practical experience of one-on-one and the writing experience and communication, so that probably would fit under social science.

BS: I've been involved in the Big Brother, Big Sister Program in Cleveland, not so much lately, but like maybe up till about three years ago or so. Actually, COVID was what made it hard to, you know, you had to be so isolated, so it sounds a little bit similar to what you're talking about.

DC: And getting back to Connecticut College, my girls all, "How was it? How are you going?" my sister, they were all texted and I just, I felt so proud that Connecticut College was part of my life and proud of the friendships, lifelong friendships that you can pick up. You know, when we first got together as a group of seven, we were 50, it was like we were just at Hamilton, you know? And that's, and when we get together on the Monday Zoom calls, I mean, they're all- they're all waiting to hear what we're going to say. And, you know, next year, one of them that came two weeks ago for her granddaughter's graduation at BC is hoping- she has, through one of her sons, a place where we could meet in California if we can. Of course, you know, we're in our 80s now, so I can't believe it, but you know, life is for the living and life- you have to take advantage and be grateful for every day.

BS: Yes. Was there one, I know we're supposed to -- it's only 30 minutes, so if you're ready to wrap up, I can -- but I'm curious, was there a teacher here that had a particular effect on you, a particular mentor, academic mentor?

DC: In terms of the academics, not as much. I would say Dean Noyes. She wasn't a teacher, but she had an effect. There was a colorful teacher who was head of the economics department that I think everyone would remember her, Ruby Turner Norris? Morris? you know? And there was a gentleman, and I forget his name, who was the first economics teacher. There was an English teacher, Miss Parker, I thought she was good and made education a little more relevant. But as I said, you had to work at the learning and it was a lot of reading. It seemed to be, it might have been harder for me than it was for my daughters in the sense, you know, that they, or maybe it's just my personality, because I'm a little concrete, as I said and I want to make sure that I had, you know, mastery of the information that was going to be asked.

BS: Yeah, well, it sounds like you worked hard in college.

DC: I did. I worked hard in what I do to get the goals that I want to reach, so I consider that a positive.

BS: Yeah, definitely.

DC: Well, this has been so nice.

BS: This has been great.