JS: Okay, so today is July 22nd 2009, we are doing alumni oral history interviews in the Archives. Could each of you state your names?

ADW: I’m Anne Duncan-Welke.

JDW: And I’m James Duncan-Welke, her son.

JS: And what years did you graduate from Lawrence?


JDW: And I graduated in 2009.

JS: And why did each of you choose to attend Lawrence?

ADW: Well it was an obvious family connection and truth be told, I did look at other colleges and compare them to Lawrence and actually was going to go to another University and decided, kind of at the last minute that that wasn’t going to work for me so I came to Lawrence instead. I had some concerns about going with the same university where my parents taught, but that turned out not to be an issue at all since I was not going to be a music major.

JDW: I suppose you could say, very basically, that Lawrence offered me the best package, meaning money. Of course I looked at different schools because I was a little nervous about going to school in my hometown because I had been here since the age of two. So I looked at other schools –

ADW: Something like seven.

JDW: Yeah, seven other colleges, and compared them all back to Lawrence because this is what I knew. When it came down to the decision, Lawrence was just the best of the seven, regardless of the fact that it was in my hometown. It was the best school. So, I just decided to go with that and Lawrence made it that much easier by offering the most lucrative financial package as well.

ADW: And the thing that I discovered was when you live on campus and go to school here, it was like a completely different place than Appleton. The only difference was I knew where the restaurants were and the bars, but it was not the same as being in Appleton and commuting from home.

JDW: Agreed.

JS: So would you say the transition going from high school to college was a smoother one, because you were in the same town as where you had attended high school? Or were there some surprises now that you were a college student living at Lawrence?

ADW: I think it was an adjustment, as there would have been on any college campus. I don’t think it was made any easier by being in Appleton. That had very little to do with it. It was more the adjustment of going to high school to a college program. I came from a high school that was college prep basically, but I don’t think I was really prepared as well as I could have been for the depth and the intensity of the study at Lawrence. But having gone through it, I would say that the trimester system was extremely beneficial; it worked really well
for me. Having fully embraced that I cannot imagine juggling five, six classes, well you couldn’t have done it at Lawrence, it would have –

JDW: Killed you.

ADW: You would have had a nervous breakdown. But yeah I would say the adjustment to Lawrence was probably no different than it would have been on any other campus.

JDW: I think socially it was just a little easier because, when you go to school in a different town you have that uprooting factor, now I don’t know where anything is, here’s my dorm, where is the rest of the world in relation to my dorm. But going to school in the same town means that yes, now I’m in this different part of town, I’m looking at it from a different lens, but I still know where the pharmacy is and where to go to church. So that was easier but it definitely a big transition as far as the actual academic content. And I must confess I was really, really ready to get out of high school.

ADW: He was.

JDW: I was so fed up during my last six months.

ADW: He was done.

JDW: And the only reason I didn’t check out was because I respected my teachers.

ADW: I think you may have had a better preparation for the college experience than I did.

JDW: Well I had AP classes.

ADW: Yeah, there were no AP classes when I went to high school. So it was Freshman Studies, deep water, or in those days Freshman Seminar, same thing.

[00:04:40]

JS: Well speaking of Freshman Studies, who were your professors, what were the works that you really enjoyed, really despised, and how do you feel it helped you? Not even while you were a college student, but even after you left college.

JDW: Do you want me to start?

ADW: Yes.

JDW: My first term I had a lecturer from the Spanish department who only stayed one year, Nancy Gates Madsen, really a very good Freshman Studies instructor. She facilitated discussion very well. She was very non-confrontational. And we started with an existentialist Italian novel, Italo Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*. Which I loved, I still have my copy, it’s dog-eared now because I read it over and over. Most other students did not like it because it was out there and it was circular and it was written in the second person and it was really weird. I liked it a lot. We did Plato, of course, which put me to sleep on a couple of occasions. I remember one, I don’t know when exactly it was, my roommate came in and I was lying on the bed with the light on, Plato here by my side, asleep. And I woke up in the middle of the night, fully clothed, with the light off and Plato by my side. And I asked Pete the next morning “What happened?” and he was like “Oh, you slept with Plato.” I did it twice, as a matter of fact. So I remember Plato, well you remember Plato, too.

ADW: I had Plato, Plato’s *Republic*. 
JDW: I hated the Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*. Not because the book is wrong, it makes very interesting arguments, but Dawkins is a jerk, so I did not enjoy reading his book very much. But I still have it because I respect the argument. What else did we have? We did Macbeth, which was okay, fine, I had done Macbeth before. We did the poems of Elizabeth Bishop, which I really liked. I should have you read those, you’d probably like them. Zhuangzi was the last thing we did. Second term I had Judy Sarnecki from the French department, who also kind of mentored me in my first two years of “I want to do a self-designed major but I don’t know what,” so she was very positive. So we did the Zhuangzi with her, we did *Obedience to Authority* was first term. That I liked, even though I had done it before, it’s really important. What else? I’m missing some. The film, *Brazil*, Coltrane. There is probably one or two more that I’m forgetting. *The Sand County Almanac*, which I had read before. That was decent; I don’t know that it had enough rigor to be in Freshman Studies. Anyhow, I liked Freshman Studies and I liked the variety because it was all very different readings and also we had to analyze them in a way I hadn’t done before. I had taken AP English and stuff like that but, we never had to read full texts, draw them together in a paper, compare/contrast, have an intelligent argument that goes beyond a summary. It was a bit difficult at first, but I got used to it and I write pretty well today, I dare say so myself so.

ADW: You must have better recall than I do.

JDW: Well it was only four years ago.

ADW: I don’t actually remember all the works, but I do remember Plato’s *Republic* and I remember *Civilization and Its Discontents*. But other than that I don’t really, I read so much, because I was an English major so it kind of blurs together for me and at that time it was Freshman Seminar, I think it was not maybe as quite the same as Freshman Studies. I don’t remember the variety, I guess you would have to go back in the records and look at what was being taught in 1975, the fall of ’75. I don’t even remember.

JDW: Was it two terms?

ADW: Yes.

[00:9:10]

JS: Did you have the same professor for both terms?

ADW: No. I think I may of have Elizabeth Forter for one, but I can’t remember the other one. I would have to check my records.

JS: What dorms did you live in while you were a student here at Lawrence?

ADW: Ormsby and Plantz.

JS: And this was when genders were still separate in the dorms?

ADW: By floor.

JDW: The way it is pretty much today. I didn’t live in any of the places she lived.

ADW: Which not by design, it just sorted of happened.

JDW: Well you can’t get in Ormsby if you are a guy unless you are a demigod or something. I don’t know how they do it, but I was a freshman in Colman, I had my sink. And then my sophomore year I was in Kohler and I had a single with a sink which was great! And then I went abroad junior year so I got totally sent to the end of the line as far as housing was concerned, so I went and lived in Swing House instead which is an old Phi Kappa Tau, in a broom closet, not quite, but pretty close. And my senior year I had a very nice single looking over the
river on the third floor of Sage. That was probably the best room I’ve had. It was big, it was airy, it was loud because of all the construction.

JS: Construction for Warch Campus Center.

JDW: But sunlight!

ADW: It was very worth it.

JDW: Very much worth it. Also very interesting, I faced a different cardinal direction each year. I’m really weird like this. I was in Colman 306, which faced east. And then I was in Kohler 306, which faced north. And then I was in Swing 208 which faced west. And then I was in Sage 318 which faced south. So I made a circuit. And always on the third floor except that year.

ADW: And where are you living next year?

JDW: Next year I’m in a University of Chicago owned building on the third floor, facing south, just like this past year, no river but –

JS: But sunlight.

JDW: I asked them for a room with sunlight so my plants would grow.

JS: Now when you were a student were there curfews for women?

ADW: No.

JS: So that had long since gone.

ADW: Oh yes.

JS: Good.

JDW: That was one of the first things LUCC got rid of when it was founded in 1967.

ADW: I think I was at Lawrence during somewhat of a transitional period. Technically the Vietnam War was not over. Not that that was necessarily an issue for the students here but some of us had older siblings and school acquaintances that it was an issue for. Of course I grew up very much aware of that issue because of everything that happened here on campus during the preceding four or five years.

JDW: Grandfather and the student resistance, what happened with that?

ADW: Well I was not made privy to everything that went on, but as I understand it the president’s office was taken over. And one of the people that were involved in that desired to speak with Professor Duncan, he acted as a sort of intermediary to calm the situation down. I guess this was a student who he had had in class, and felt comfortable with him. So he did some sort of intermediary type of work to try to resolve the situation peacefully. Which I guess it did, but that was a very different situation, campuses in those days were really, they were pretty much hotbeds of unrest. And that was a very different experience than I had. Some of that was still there, but I kind of was in college when we were transitioning out of the Vietnam years and into the disco years, basically when the hideous ‘80s began.

JS: In those ways and what other way did events in the country and the world, how did those affect Lawrence students? How did Lawrence students and faculty react to them? Were there any events held on campus that you remember strongly that reflect what was going on in the world at that time?
ADW: Yeah I remember, well my awareness of Lawrence as a very small child, I was taken to Commencements as a small child too, because my parents couldn’t find a babysitter. They were either all graduating or they had already left town, my babysitters were usually college students who needed to earn a few extra dollars and so they would just bring us to Commencement. We would stand on the lawn and watch. There are many pictures of me, all in black and white of course, as a little three and four and five year old child with all these black gowned people, which was kind of funny. So I had as a small child the vision of a university, a little bit like it is on a Hollywood set. It looked lovely and the students were all proper and then of course as we moved into the sixties, pretty much the hair just got a little bit longer until 1968, which was when the world just exploded. And I remember Cambodia, and I remember the strike signs, the large strike sign in particular hanging on the front of the chapel. I remember Kent State and the moratorium that came after it and the protests. There was a lot of unrest on all college campuses, not just Lawrence. I mean other places just exploded in violence, that didn’t happen here, but there was unhappiness and upheaval. I also do remember, I have a vivid memory, I was in first grade when John Kennedy was shot and I remember my mother coming to get me in the middle of the day, shortly after one o’clock when we were let out of school. She drove me past the chapel and the flag was already at half-mast and I remember being told that that was why the flag was at half-mast. I knew that the president was dead, but the reality just hit me. From that point on my generation changed, the kids that age changed. And of course later on, Martin Luther King and RFK being shot the same year. 1968 was an extremely difficult year. My life bookends all that. Your turn.

[00:16:37]

JDW: I think my generation was really shaped by the Bush years, I don’t think you can deny that. I was thirteen when he was first elected, so my entire high school experience and my entire college experience, with the exception of the last months, was under George W. Bush. As a liberal, among a group of other liberals, we always find ourselves relating ourselves and our experiences and our efforts to what was going on in Washington. So there was this constant, whatever we saw coming out of Washington was inevitably something negative, conservative, something we were opposed to. So we ended up setting ourselves up in opposition to that. There’s a certain sense of distrust of the establishment, because we don’t think it works or think it’s been co-opted or we think that it serves political purposes. So some people’s reaction was to become ultra-liberals and third party people and whatever else. And other people’s reaction was to become apathetic and disengage entirely from politics and others like me spent our time waiting for things to change. Now they’ve changed but I still find myself thinking that the government is incapable of looking out for people and all that because that’s what I’ve been thinking for the past eight years. So I think there’s a sense among people my age and in that bracket that the government doesn’t work so we need to go make it work. So we need to get qualified and learn and get into positions so we can make things work. I think that’s a little grandiose, but it’s also a sense of a mission and maybe we’ll get something done, thinking like that.

ADW: We’ve actually had discussions like that in our house about how my generation was kind of, not at the end of the baby boom, but we were following up all the anger and the protest. And yet we watched what happened in the eighties, we watched Reagan, we watched the two Bush presidencies, and we sort of saw all the hope that had been present in the ’70s and ’60s, the hope for change sort of evaporate and we slid into that sort of...

JDW: We used consumerism as a panacea during the ’80s.

ADW: Right. We bought. And now the party is over and as I said to him, the party is over and it’s your turn.

JDW: We have a mess to clean up. But that’s why we came to Lawrence so we could get good educations and become capable.
ADW: If I can ask a question, how do you think your generation having been the one, I mean you were, I think a freshman in high school when 9/11 occurred, do you think that changed the way you all came to college and your view towards what would happen after college?

JDW: To a point. I don’t think that influenced our view of college so much as it influenced our view of society.

ADW: The world view?

JDW: Yeah, because at least the understanding I have of at least the ‘90s was a fantastic time when we had vanquished the Soviet Union, we had no real enemies, capitalism had triumphed, we have the economy going well, and okay, the president can’t keep it in his pants, but we all have money and are all doing okay. Then 9/11 happened and suddenly we have enemies everywhere! Everybody hates America, they’re sending terrorists after us, and we’re being bombed down in foreign invasions, what happened? So we have this, almost like a siege mentality, and I think the government capitalized on that. The party in power used the fear and siege mentality to cement their own political positions. Which did unravel, as we have seen, but five six years of that will make an impact on your mentality, especially on the formative years of your late teens. So I think there is still a sense of, maybe distrust, I don’t know if that’s the right word or not...

ADW: I think maybe you all are much more wary of manipulation.

JDW: And we don’t want to be manipulated by the government and think we’re also a little wary of the international situation because we remember, a not terribly distant time when Europe was angry at us and the Middle East wanted to kill us, but the Latin Americans ignored us, etc. etc. It was a time of isolation. So I think that makes us a bit, it tarnishes a little of the idealism, and yet on the flip side of the coin, we got out for Obama like nobody’s business because we wanted that idealism. So there’s this tension between youthful idealism and the fact that we’ve seen some nasty things already.

ADW: And for me, what was most heartening about this past election was the young people. It made me think that “yes, there is sense in the world” and maybe it’s time for the torch to pass. That was my feeling, it’s a natural progression. It’s time.

[00:22:27]

JS: Speaking of the world, I was going to ask you both about your experiences with going abroad. You went to Germany for a term and the different trips you may have taken outside of the country, like when you went with your parents to Vienna.

ADW: My experiences going abroad were that my parents took a sabbatical in 1966, and my brother and I did take a sabbatical also. I guess it was about a two or three month sabbatical out of school. Their sabbatical went into the summer, but we missed about two or three months of school, which was great! I didn’t mind it. And frankly, I think I learned a great deal on that trip. I wish I had been a little bit older. I was eight and turned nine in Rome. I would have loved to have been about maybe three or four years older, I would have remembered more. However, I had lots and lots of memories and lots and lots of experiences in places at a very young age that I think opened my mind to the fact that other people ate differently, dressed differently, spoke differently and there was lots and lots of different kinds of art and music all over the world. I learned to be adaptable, I learned to travel well. In fact one of the things my mother was very fond of telling us, and at that time it was much cheaper to travel to Europe, this sounds so gross, but it was cheaper to travel on an ocean liner than it was to fly. It was considered extremely luxurious to fly to Europe. Only the very wealthy could it, so we took an ocean liner from New York. I remember her telling us that she got compliments from people aboard the ship asking her “Are you American?” and she said “Yes, we’re professors on sabbatical” and “You can’t possibly be American, your children are too well behaved!” But John and I had a really nice time aboard the ship, The Michelangelo, which docked in Naples and then we made our way through continental Europe and Great
Britain, which is where we sailed for home on the S.S. France, which was also equally delightful. But there was lots of road travel in-between. No train travel, we did get a car in France. It was a small car and we drove it around with this large ever-increasing ton of luggage on top of the car and the car got lower and lower and lower, but that’s the beauty of traveling by ship, you can just put it away. It goes below deck and you can ignore it until seven days later in New York. And the car we did bring back and it promptly rusted within two years, it was undercoated for Wisconsin weather and it fell apart. I learned a lot and I learned to try to fully put yourself in the moment. I think kids do that anyway. We learned how to handle things like my brother having an earache in Rome on a Sunday and finding a pharmacy that would sell to my parents with my father’s limited Italian and how to explain that his son had an earache and he needed something now. I think we managed to get that well under control. We traveled all across Europe with a picnic basket and my mother would stop and buy some bread and buy some cheese and buy some meat and fruit and she’d grab a bottle of vino and two fantas for us. We’d have a picnic anywhere by the side of the road with maybe a cow or sheep watching us. It was lovely. The only down side to this was I came back from Europe with four cavities from not having had milk for three or four months because we would not drink the unpasteurized milk, being little dairy children from Wisconsin we were spoiled with what milk should be like. But that was a wonderful experience. My only regret is that I did not have it as an older child. It was wonderful. I did not go to Europe then until I was grown. I went to London and what a wonderful place. I had a wonderful experience there. We went back when you kids were little, several times.

JDW: Twice.

[00:27:18]

ADW: Traveled once with the boy choir to Prague and stopped in London on the way back. And of course my father’s favorite city in the world was London. If he could have somehow made it possible to live in London for his retirement years I’m sure he would have. He loved London. Your turn.

JDW: Well my only really Lawrence-related travel is my study abroad term junior year. I studied at the IES European Union Center in Freiburg in southwestern Germany. There’s also a German program there, but I was in a European Union political science program much to the horror and frustration of the German department here, but I was an international relations major first and a German major second. Herr Peterson is not very happy about that. And that was very interesting for me because it was the first exposure to a semester. IES structures their programs on semesters while we have trimesters, three classes a trimester. They have five classes a semester. I nearly had an aneurism because it was really difficult balancing five classes as well as commuting to school, which I had never done before, and cooking for myself. It’s not that I can’t cook, but I never had to deal with food plus commuting, plus five classes all on top of each other plus I’m not in a country that speaks English. I speak German just fine and that was no problem, but dealing with culture shock and academic shock, living situation shock, was very difficult at first. I got used to it. I feel like had I been there for a year I would have gotten much more used to it but it was very interesting. The best part of the program was the traveling we did within Europe. We had four or five separate trips beyond my trip actually getting there so we had field study trips. They took us to Berlin, they took us to Estonia, and they took us to Budapest and Krakow in Poland and Prague. They took us through Luxembourg and Brussels, Belgium and Paris. And they took us to Geneva and up hiking in the Swiss Alps. And this was all included in the original fees for this program, so it was not just an academic program but also this is Europe! Welcome! And it was very interesting, especially the countries you wouldn’t expect to go to. Tallinn, Estonia was not on my list, but it’s a very beautiful city, it’s very interesting, the political situation is very interesting, we learned. Things like that. I had never expected to go to Krakow. I really hadn’t projected that I would be in Luxembourg. Interesting things like that. So it was really eye-opening and to see all the different cultures and foods. It also made me really grateful for learning a couple European languages. I don’t speak Polish or Hungarian but I spoke German and French and a little Italian. We had a mini-vacation to Florence, some friends and I. So it made me really grateful for learning languages because so many of the American students I was with didn’t speak a foreign language and
those who did generally spoke French. Hardly anybody spoke German, so I’m here in Freiburg with 45-50 other Americans, about six of whom speak German. So it was very interesting.

ADW: One of the things that I think was interesting when he traveled was having done, how many? Was it eight countries?

JDW: Oh gosh, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, and Italy. That’s eleven.

ADW: One of the things that was interesting was as he was doing this as he would email us and tell us where he went and what he had been doing. And I would say “I remember, I was there, I remember that.” Of course, not Estonia, not some of it, but it was interesting to watch him go to all these places and have the memories that I had and you did. You were able to rendezvous with Edward Smith, who was one of my mother’s students, the harpsichordist.

JDW: That was a different trip.

ADW: That was a different trip. But you did do it, yes. And they met, where?

JDW: In Venice. Which is good because it is hard to find your way around Venice without a guide. There are no right angles in the entire city.

ADW: But what’s interesting from my perspective, having made that trip as a child and then to see him have all these experiences, and our daughter also went to Germany and Austria in her high school German exchange program. She loves Austria and I told her when she got back, “Your nana loved Austria as well. Particularly Salzburg.”

JDW: She beat me to Austria.

ADW: But it’s kind of fun as a parent to see your kids have so much.

JDW: She beat me to Germany too.

ADW: Yeah she did.

JDW: It’s funny because I was the first one in the family to start learning German and Kate started learning because she saw me learning it. I thought “Oh, okay. Cool.” And she beat me to Germany and she beat me to Austria.

ADW: On the other hand you made the, my husband is almost 100% German, and his mother was still alive when you were a little boy. And I taught him when he was about two to sing “Oh Tannenbaum” completely in German. You must have just memorized it by rote, I would just sing it to you and he would sing it back. And we had him do this for her one Christmas and she was just mesmerized. And I could tell, well daddy says that she was back in her mind to when she was little child and they would sing it in German around the Christmas tree. So even then you had this knack for languages.

JDW: I forgot all the words though and then really learned them in high school.

ADW: It’s in your blood, the German.

JDW: Well, languages are what I’m good at.

ADW: And Kate, Kate is drawn to the French but there’s French on the Duncan side [inaudible].
JDW: Huguenots.

ADW: Yeah, Huguenots. So that’s kind of interesting.

JDW: We got a bit off track.

[00:34:18]

JS: That’s ok! Well coming back to the Lawrence campus, now that we’re going through the transition of Memorial Union, is no longer the Union; we have the Warch Campus Center. I was wondering if you could share stories about what you did in the Union while you were a student. And then James. And then I’ll ask you the second part of the question, but just your favorite memories of the Union and what was popular to do back then.

ADW: The Viking Room.

JDW: The Viking Room.

ADW: At the time I was in college it was legal to drink at 18. So of course my memories of being in the Union were being in Downer on Friday nights in the 1970s, was not a happy place. We did not like some of the Friday night entrees, there was no such thing as pizza night.

JS: What were some of the entrees they had on Friday night?

ADW: Grouper, which I loathe. Seafood Newberg, which could actually be pretty good. But there was always some strange unidentified flying fish and the typical drill was to head to the Viking Room between 4:30 and 5, and at that time, if I recall correctly, Olympia beer was making its push into Wisconsin. They had really good sales on the Olympia beer pitchers and I remember there would be six or eight people around a table and two pitchers of beer, have a couple glasses of beer, and then going on about the third one, it was decided that grouper would not be a good idea. So the whisper would go around, shall we hit Sammy’s? And we usually would hit a pizza, and it was either Sammy’s Pizza East or West, and that was the typical Friday night. The Viking Room is very near and dear to our hearts, I know that. And also one of the things you should probably know about is that sometime during that era is when the murals from the Viking Room were stolen. They sort of disappeared for about 2 or 3 years. The scuttlebutt was that some from Fraternity had lifted them off as a prank and they were much missed and we’re all very glad to see them back. That was an integral part of the Viking Room experience.

JS: Did they just mysteriously reappear one day?

ADW: Yeah. I guess it was after I graduated though so that’s my memory of the Union.

JS: And with the Grill back then, did the professors still go there for lunch and have their special table?

ADW: Oh yes. And you could get your greasy fries and your greasy burger there. The Grill in those days was basically like stepping back to 1959. And I loved the boomerang Formica and the ceiling cutouts and everything, it was a lovely place. Basically the whole place had been frozen in 1959 and we loved it that way. The other memory I have of the Union is sliding down Union Hill on trays from Downer. And at that time there was a kind of shoe called an earth shoe, I don’t know if anybody even remembers those but they slanted backwards, I believe that’s correct and you could slide down Union Hill on those if they were slick enough on the bottom, but Downer trays were better.

JS: And the hill back then, it went straight down.

ADW: It went all the way to the river.
JS: Did anyone ever fall in the river?

ADW: Not that I know of, you’d roll over before –

JDW: If you were smart.

ADW: If you were smart. But this usually occurred after dinner on a Friday or Saturday night. There had to proper lubrication for this to occur so, that’s what I remember about the Union.

JDW: We have good memories at the Viking Room too. Probably my best term, or the term I had the most fun was, fall term of senior year. I was LUCC president, I was in a pair of easy German classes, and then, well easy because German is easy for me, and a government class. So I had Comparative Fairy Tales with Hans Ternes 3:10, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. So Friday at 4:20 a certain subset of us would just go straight from Ternes’ class down from the fourth floor of Main down, down, down, down to the basement of Memorial. By the time we got there the VR would be open. We would have beer, our friends would meet us there and then we’d go have pizza at Downer. And that was a great thing.

ADW: We needed it.

JDW: We needed it after week 2.

ADW: The intensity of the education is such that you need to let your hair down. I will say this though, and no criticism intended, but the Viking Room is much louder now than it was then. The whole volume is a lot louder.

JDW: The bar is louder.

ADW: But you know, I don’t really think there was, to my knowledge, I never saw excessive drinking except during Rush Week.

JDW: I don’t think that happens much at the VR because you have to pay for it. I have good memories of that; I also have good memories of Riverview because I did LUCC there, four years. I guess I was the last president to have everything in Riverview. So I have good memories of that room. I also have some, maybe not good, but I have memories that are interesting of LUCC meetings that dragged on late into the night. Things like that.

JS: The LUCC party.

JDW: The LUCC 40th Birthday Party. A phenomenal success that. I hope they do it next year. I’m hoping that essentially that becomes the inauguration party. Although it happens before the inauguration. Might have it after, depending on how you position it, because that would be really great publicity activity, so put that bug in someone’s ear.

JS: I will. I’ll say something to Kaleesha.

JDW: What else? The Grill. The Grill is a great thing. Though I think the new one will be pretty good as well.

ADW: Yeah I toured the new campus center and I’m just absolutely blown away. I would give my teeth to come back and take advantage of the campus center as a student.

JDW: It is the sleakest.

ADW: It is unbelievable. And you know, I don’t know, I’m a little bit envious of the students having as much choice and as much beauty around them and so much accommodation. I mean the theater and the ability to sit and look out at the river to study. I mean it’s, I’m sure the students deserve everything that they’re getting, it’s just I wish I had such, my experience was much more Spartan and less accommodating I think.
JDW: College was different.

ADW: It was different. We’ve talked about that too. About how prior to the time I was in school, it was basically a 1940s, ’50s experience. And I was in the transition of out of the angry ’60s and into whatever it became in the ’80s and ’90s. And it has morphed into what it is now. The new century.

JDW: And coming in I hadn’t expected that Lawrence would change so quickly but now that I’ve graduated it’s already going to be different next year. So the Lawrence that will exist for the freshman coming in is not my Lawrence. It’s a different Lawrence, and that’s not necessarily a bad thing, because I had my Lawrence experience how it was, and that’s a new component.

ADW: And I have talked to many of my parents’ former students who come back and they talk about how it was when they were at Lawrence, and it was very different from my experience and certainly from his experience and will be different from what it will be in the future, but they all love Lawrence. And they love and value, I think, the experience that they were given by being at Lawrence during those four or five years, that allowed them to go out into life and do whatever they chose to do.

[00:42:55]

JS: Well James I was going to ask you, speaking of the Warch Campus Center, about the committee you served on for planning this –

JDW: Which one?

JS: Any of them. Do you want to name the committees you were on?

JDW: Let me think. I have served on the Faculty Committee on Instruction, as a non-voting student member, obviously. On the Planning Committee for the Light! More Light! Kick-Off Weekend, the on-going capital campaign. On the City of Appleton’s College Avenue Bridge Redesign Committee, that’s not the right title –

ADW: Reconstruction.

JDW: Reconstruction or redesign. Or something design, I don’t know, but you know what I mean. LUCC, of course.

ADW: You were a hall representative too.

JDW: That was LUCC. I’ve been on LUCC’s Committee on Environmental Responsibility and theme house selection committees and formal group housing committees and all sorts of things. So, Judicial Board Selection, Honor Council Selection, I’ve done a lot. Which one did you want to know about?

JS: I guess the More Light! Committee, because that was the one where Warch Campus Center was really a big part of it. And were there any decisions you were a part of as far as the Campus Center was concerned?

JDW: Well the scope of that committee was really pretty huge. We had people from literally every different discipline within the University staff. And there were technically two student representatives, but because most of the planning happened in the summer I was the only one. So we were trying to plan all these different events and where to put them and what to do. And because the Campus Center wasn’t even close to completion at that point, we couldn’t bring anything inside. We could have a few guided tours, but that was really about it. So I ended up spearheading the students’ efforts for that weekend. So we planned out a student activities portion and miniature student activities fair, so visitors could see what kind of things students do. But it was such a huge weekend that there were all these different things going on. I’m still not fully aware of everything that went on, but we all got together to do some brainstorming for the logo and
where could you hold these dinners, and that’s when somebody came up with the idea of holding dinners in Main Hall, which I think was quite interesting. But we didn’t do a whole lot with the Campus Center proper because it was in an unfinished state.

**JS:** Your class was the first class to go in and actually have an event there in the Spring, the ice cream social. Could you talk some about that? What the reaction was to this beautiful new facility?

**JDW:** Surprisingly I think a lot of students were overwhelmed, and not necessarily in a positive sense, more like a “what are they going to do with this?” because we’ve always managed with so much less space and so much less, I don’t want to say glitz, but we’ve managed with far less than the campus center will offer us. And for us it’s hard to manage, what do we need with all this space? And if you actually know all the things that we do, it makes sense. Like if you are involved in the planning process and know everything that’s going in there. But for students who had just seen the Union and Downer, and that’s always been adequate for them, why would you need a change?

**ADW:** I wonder if that’s how other alum felt.

**JDW:** I think that’s quite possible because it’s such a jarring change. And I’m sure a lot of people reacted “Will we really need this?” So I wouldn’t say that the reactions were negative, but I would say that some people probably didn’t know how to react. So their first reaction was more of surprise, if anything else. But if asked to comment on the actual aesthetics of the building, people think it’s a beautiful building. And it really is going to get us a lot of attention.

**ADW:** The reaction I heard from people, alumni, I’m speaking of alumni weekend. They just can’t say enough about it. They are overwhelmed with how gorgeous it is. And I think most of the people that are there for alumni weekend are far enough away from their own college experience that they realize things have changed vastly since they went to college. I certainly am far enough away from it that I, as I say, am a little envious but I don’t begrudge it to the students, I think it can only be a positive thing for them. And I will say having looked at colleges, both for myself when I was a student and then having the experience then for both of our children, going and looking at campuses, even without the Campus Center, the physical plant of Lawrence is overwhelmingly beautiful and compares to other colleges of its type, very, very favorably. And with the student center it’s just unparalleled.

**JDW:** I remember touring other schools that shall remain nameless, but certain buildings would look run down and they would be from the 1960s and they would look it. They would need new carpet or whatever and you could just see that it felt a little more run down. And because of all the renovations we’ve done and all the new buildings we have, this campus is so well preserved. And we’re moving on to the dorms and doing the same things to the dorms, so that will come in time as well. But if you come to Lawrence in the spring when the flowers are out and the grass is green before everything gets scorched.

**ADW:** Or during the fall when the leaves change.

**JDW:** It could be a movie campus. It’s just so perfect. That did not influence my decision, but it’s a very aesthetically pleasing campus.

**ADW:** It is.

**[00:49:08]**

**JS:** Well you named all the organizations that you were involved in, or the majority of them, but what student organizations were you apart of?
ADW: Really I was not really involved in much at the time. I was keeping my nose glued to the grindstone. I did sing in a concert chorale for The Messiah when I was freshman, but I chose not to be heavily involved in campus organizations. That was a time when it was not a terribly popular thing to do.

JDW: We were just looking in these books earlier and the German club is three people, the French club is four people.

ADW: I’m sure why that was, but I do think the campus was in a state of transition. I think people didn’t quite know whether they were fish or fowl at that point.

JDW: I think it was the manifest purpose of college. It was education, that’s why you come here, that’s all you do. And now we talk more about the college experience.

ADW: And to be fair there was a great deal of pressure on students in the mid to late seventies, “Why are you spending all this money on your education, what are you going to get out of it, what are you going to be when you are out?” And one of the questions that all of us had graduated in the mid to late seventies had to face was “Well how practical is this degree?” It was an extremely daunting and somewhat difficult and depressing job interview experience for most students I think that maybe didn’t graduate at the top of their class. But you know, I mean we went to Lawrence, we had a Lawrence degree, but we weren’t summas, we had had the Lawrence experience and that was tough time to try to sell a liberal arts education.

JDW: But now it’s almost as though we’ve gone more postmodern, because it’s not just the degree itself and what thing you studied, but also these different abilities you picked through the experience.

ADW: The renaissance person.

JDW: Essentially, do you know physics and French? But you also can write and speak and think critically and formulate arguments and things like that, that you acquire en route, rather than from a specific curriculum.

ADW: What’s interesting is even if you don’t have a huge career per se, I mean my personal experience has been I’ve sat on innumerous committees in the community, mostly involved with the school district, and did a lot of volunteer work, eight or so years of volunteer work in the public schools and my Lawrence experience has come in constantly, over and over. I have been reminded about how valuable that experience was, to think quickly, to draw ideas from very many areas in my life and make connections.

JDW: And to think outside the box.

ADW: Yeah.

JDW: If you are taught in the box, you will think in the box. At Lawrence there is no box.

ADW: And in particular, my experience with the talented and gifted program in Appleton, advocating for kids, the Lawrence experience was very helpful in that regard. And I think for you also.

JDW: I didn’t major in English to become a writer, but I can still write. And I didn’t major in Communications so I could speak, but I can still speak. So these are things that I picked up, along the way and really it wasn’t necessarily from classes. A good part of this was being the LUCC president, you cannot be a shrinking violet and be the LUCC president, it won’t work. You need to be able to speak extemporaneously. I could before, but I really got a lot better as the president, to a point where I scheduled a visit for the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, given five days’ notice, set the whole thing up. Did an impromptu welcoming speech and off we go.

ADW: And it was a success!
JDW: It was a success! And had someone told me two or three years ago that I was going to do, I’d say, “Are
you crazy? Me? I’m going to go back to my room and read.”

ADW: And that is, in essence one of the valuable things about the Lawrence experience. You may see the
fruition of that experience when you are here or you may see it five or ten years down the road, maybe even
twenty or more years down the road. And all of a sudden a light bulb comes on and you think to yourself, well
how do I know how to do this? Well I guess some professor somewhere back at Lawrence planted that idea in
my head that “gee, maybe I ought to think if there is a connection between these ideas that doesn’t appear to
be obvious.” But it may be there nonetheless. And I will say this: I was not a music major, I was keenly aware
of the value of the arts, in particular of music, while at Lawrence. And I think for some students who, although
they don’t major in music, and may not even participate in any of the musical groups here. The ability to walk
across the street and hear music for nothing or next to nothing in the case of the Artist Series, it’s unparalleled.
I can’t think of any other place you can do that.

JDW: That’s what makes this so unique. Is that you aren’t just learning your academic discipline, you’re seeing
all sorts of different things, there are way more disciplines here than anyone could have possibly know things
about. So you’re interacting with people who have very different backgrounds, who have very different
interests, who study very different things, and have very different talents and then you throw in the fine arts,
and not just the music, but we have an excellent theater program and we have very talented studio artists in
residence. So we have all these different arts interacting with all sorts of other academic disciplines, smashed
together. We have people who do it. I’m acquainted with someone who is a double degree in Biology and

ADW: And I remember in particular my mother, I believe it was in the seventies, becoming very interested
because she did a lot of consulting for churches that were getting organs. She had to learn about acoustics, so
she went to the physics department, talked to the Professor Cook and learned about the physics of music. And
there actually was a class, a course, taught here on the physics of music. Still is. And you know having grown up
with two professors who were primarily musicians, people used to approach me and ask me, “Are you going to
be a musician?” And I remember thinking “Yeah I’d love to be, if only I had the talent.” And I realized very soon
that you have to have a) the talent, b) the drive, and c) the desire. And if you don’t have one of those three,
you can do music, you can enjoy music, you can have it as a hobby, but you better have all three of those
things if you want to make a career out of it. Having said all that, I had parents who were interested in more
things than just music. And my father in particular was interested in teaching about the appreciation of music,
about the aesthetics of music, about literature, about art, and about history. And my mother also too, but I
mean for my father, in particular, I think, he could have been a writer had he not been a musician. And we
talked in our home about how there are some places which shall remain nameless where music is almost a
competitive sport. It’s a driven thing where people are competitive to see who can get the first chair and that’s
fine, there’s a place for, institutions for –

JDW: If that’s how you want to go about doing.

ADW: But there are also institutions like this. Where music is not just glee club, it’s more than glee club.

JDW: But it’s not necessarily gladiator combat.

ADW: Right. It’s not competitive blood sport. And I think any Conservatory student would probably agree with
me that their minds outside of music were developed as well at Lawrence as a musical space. And vice versa.

JDW: This is coming from two people who are not Conservatory students.

ADW: Right.
JDW: Because we are both musical but we are not in music.

ADW: Well you are more of a musician than I.

[00:57:59]

JS: I was going to ask you about LUCC and ask what drew you to being a part of that group and deciding to go on and becoming president and what some of your favorite recollections are of the whole LUCC experience?

JDW: I'm really not sure what drew me to it.

ADW: Lust for power?

JDW: No.

ADW: Teasing.

JDW: I knew what drew me to the presidency. Peter Gilbert and I had some very Machiavellian discussions about... No, somebody came in to our all-hall meeting during Welcome Week and presented about LUCC and for some reason I was interested in it. So I got a paper from him and I ran for the position of hall representative seat and was an unknowing freshman in LUCC. And promptly waded into a battle I think had been raging for a few years before I got there about LUCC and its interactions with the Board of Trustees. And as you may remember LUCC passed a resolution that suggested that the trustees needed to reevaluate their oversight and that they had conducted themselves in an inappropriate manner. Not exactly something LUCC ought to be doing. The little freshman from the west side of campus was the only person on the council who argued against this piece of legislation and was attacked from all sides. And of course it was passed, and nothing happened, but that was my first real experience with the kind of political maneuvering and I liked it to a certain point. I also recognized how important it is that you know what's going on and be willing to speak up for certain viewpoints. That was what I tried to start doing, and then I realized after that administration moved out and was replaced by a less well prepared administration, LUCC's public presence began to decrease, its profile began to decrease, its prominence began to decrease, and students started to forget about LUCC could do. And all the things it does, and to be frank, LUCC did stop doing some of the things that it had done, because the people in power were not familiar with how LUCC worked. So why did I run for president?

ADW: Because you did that when you returned from Germany?

JDW: I hadn't really made the decision until I came back from Germany.

ADW: Fell in love with America all over again.

JDW: Well I kind of did because I went to Europe thinking “Oh, Europe is perfect! They have nationalized health and they’re all liberal!” and no, no, no, no, no. The Czechs can’t form a government, the Belgians hate each other, the Germans have this problem and that problem, the French are racist, whatever. Those are all generalizations, but these are all aspects of Europe that I saw, that no, the French are all the progressive wonderful people moving towards the future. They have a nasty xenophobic party that came in second in one of the presidential elections. So I thought, Europe is not perfect. Oh wait, then America doesn’t have to be perfect either! A little leftist that I was. So I came back to America with renewed appreciation for the fact that although our democracy has its faults, it still functions. So then I looked at student democracy and said “well, I should be working to make this function too, because that’s what the people who are represented by this democracy deserve.” So evaluating the plate of contenders, I was at that point going into the election of 2008, I was the candidate with the most experience. Nobody else had been on LUCC for as long as I had, with the exception of Nancy Truesdell and she’s not eligible for office. Nobody else, I was the only one who had been on
there for more than a year. So I got my signatures and I sent out my friends and all of that and I was running
unopposed. So LUCC decided it was going to extend the deadline for candidates because they didn’t want an
unopposed election because Jeff was running unopposed for vice president too. So had we both been
unopposed, it wouldn’t have been an election. And I admit that is a bit strange, but that shows you how low
LUCC public profile had gotten that nobody knew about or cared enough to run for the executive position. My
first election in 2006, there were four candidates for each office. That following election, there were two for
president and one for vice president. And then my year there was one each, well they found another
presidential candidate who was a freshman who had never been on LUCC. And I actually spoke with him and
he’s on the cabinet now, he’s the public relation secretary. And I spoke to a few months ago and he said “I
don’t know what I was getting into and I’m glad I didn’t win.” And he didn’t. There was something like 67%
and I got 90% of the faculty vote. So there I was and then I realized that I wasn’t really prepared, and I had
been on the council, but my predecessors had not been prepared because their predecessors hadn’t been
prepared. They didn’t know what they were doing. So I was reading through the by-laws one evening or
something and realized that there had been this re-recognition process that Steering Committee was supposed
to do to re-recognize student organizations each year to make sure they were still functioning. That hadn’t
been done for two or three years. So Finance Committee went and did the budget, had to find a list of groups
first. I’m really geeking out right now, so long story short, nothing was functioning in the way it was supposed
to. So Jeff and I went at it with a will and we started this and we started that. We publicized this and publicized
that. I began to sound like a broken record because I kept on haranguing about openness and transparency,
the visibility agenda to make people aware that we exist and what we do. It was very nicely parodied in the last
April Fool’s edition of the Lawrentian, the visibility agenda and the openness and accessibility. It was really a
very interesting time because I had to go from slightly reclusive bookworm to, “I am the face of this
organization and I need to speak for the organization.” Going into that senior year then, things got even more
visible I guess because President Beck asked me to present at the Matriculation Convocation and then Sheree
Rogers at Communications asked me to help open the congressional debate in late October and things like
that. So I had to write and give public speeches and running meetings. The Chief Justice visit in whenever that
was, February I think, so preparing that kind of thing. The LUCC banquet and helping with the party and all
that, so I grew a lot. I also like to think that we helped LUCC out, and I say we because it was not me single-
handedly. I did do certain things single-handedly like the Chief Justice thing, but I couldn’t have done it without
Curt, without Jeff, without the rest of the cabinet. Without Nancy helping and the council helping out. So I
think we raised the profile, and I’m highly encouraged by the fact that we had three candidates for the
president in the last election. I think that we are on course to get back to a more visible and a more
participatory, because this democracy will only work if it’s participated in. So yes, voter turn-out was maybe
40% but that is up from the high 20s two years ago. So we are working on it and we are making progress. I
need to break myself from saying “we” when I refer to LUCC. Oh well.

[01:07:15]

JS: And did you get to keep your gavel?

JDW: Yes, it was given to me as a parting gift. I have all of my papers. They are in my closet. I’m still geeking
out, I’ve told Kaleesha and Allie that if they need to contact me for anything they should do it.

ADW: So you could say you are a loyal alum.

JDW: I’m a loyal supporter of participatory democracy.

JS: I was going to ask the two of you about the professors that you liked the most when you were students?
The one the influenced you the most. Not just while you were here at Lawrence, but when you graduated
and went on, professors that you stayed in contact with, or that you will stay in contact with?

ADW: Do you want to go first?
JDW: I think the first one I have to name is Judy Sarnecki because she was the first one who said “Yeah, you can self-design a major, let’s sit down and talk about it.” And she encouraged me a lot with that because I didn’t fit nicely into a category. Though I’ve had several who I am really indebted to. David McGlynn for helping me gain confidence in my ability to write and not just write papers, but to write fiction because I would love to be an author. I don’t know if that is going to happen but you hear about so-and-so writing a novel and such-and-such is doing this for her honor’s project. And I wasn’t an English major, but Dave McGlynn said “Yeah, come on in to this advanced fiction class, you don’t need the pre-requisite, you write well enough,” and that was really a confidence booster. Todd Becker, the visiting Scarff professor this past term who took me and two students to Washington, D.C. for a day and took us to the State Department and took us to the European Commission Delegation and got us meeting with these officials so we could discuss policy ideas with him was simply amazing. I may end up doing that kind of thing, and I think it would be highly ironic slash hilarious if I end up coming back to Lawrence as a visiting Scarff professor, because he doesn’t have a PhD and I’ll have a master’s next year, I could do that. I think Herr Ternes, he’s my German advisor and although Peterson was the chair of the department, Ternes seems to have more fun with it. Peterson doesn’t seem, I’m sure he has fun, but he doesn’t show it. He doesn’t let himself show it. Herr Ternes was just having fun with folklore and fairy tales and all that stuff. He helped me with my senior project to a great, great extent, I’m really grateful to him. I suppose those four. Who do I keep in contact with? Well it’s only been a month since I graduated, so.

ADW: Everybody.

JDW: I still see Nancy Truesdell around. I was at her table for senior dinner.

ADW: I had Professor Jones for my advisor. When I came to Lawrence I was going to be a French major and I changed my mind and was assigned to Professor Shutte, Bill Shutte. And I took Shakespeare courses from him which I greatly, greatly enjoyed. I had had some Shakespeare in high school but not the full experience, which I had at Lawrence. I truly, truly, truly enjoyed his classes. I also had a great fondness for Herr Ternes. I took his irrationality courses and wrote some dandy papers for him.

JDW: And you know this is one of the spooky parallels. Thirty years to the term, after Mom wrote a paper on Kafka for Ternes, I wrote a paper on Kafka for Ternes. Different languages, but thirty years to the term.

ADW: The courses I took from Ternes were not in German as his were. I do not have the fluency with German.

JDW: You would have liked the fairy tales class.

ADW: I would have. I did take the Kafka course from Professor Ternes and enjoyed it greatly, and also I remember writing a paper, it seems to me, around the Kafka story, “The Judgment,” and I believe King Lear. Which according to the scuttlebut I found out later, it was a good paper. Apparently the word got through to my mother that I had written a good paper. I was not aware that it was as good as it was. I was pleased to find that out later on. The other person that I remember taking courses from was Elizabeth Forter. I took her Shaw courses and enjoyed them mightily, very, very funny, very dry wit, and she was an expert at teaching Shaw, and I remember being invited to tea at her house at the end of the course and discussing Shaw and Shavian things. Enjoyed that quite a bit. I took various things, I took some education courses which I enjoyed a lot. I also took several courses from Doug Greenberg, who did not get tenured here, which is a sad, sad thing. This is a professor that one should not have let get away, believe you me. He went on to Princeton. He was a brilliant American historian. Had he stayed I think there was a possibility I might have student-designed an American Studies major. It was more difficult in those days to create your own major, my loss, not just Lawrence’s. In retrospect it would have been a happier major for me, I was an English major, an okay English major, probably not the strongest. I think I might have been happier as an American Studies major or perhaps American Literature. I did take a lot of courses from Peter Fritzell and I enjoyed him a lot too. That’s what I remember. Of course I stayed in touch with many of these people, some of them through my parent’s deaths and various reunion type things here at Lawrence. I knew a lot of the professors and many of them have moved on now,
retired or died themselves. It’s a very different university now than it was when I went here, and all for the better. Although I will say that I did not know Rik Warch when he came here, but he became a very dear person to our family and still is, I would say. He has been one of the wonderful that has happened to Lawrence in the last thirty years.

JWD: We are very fond of Warch.

[01:14:57]

JS: I was going to ask about traditions that were popular when you were students and that you may or may not have participated in such hiding the rock or the annual celebrate festival that Lawrence used to have or winter carnival, senior dinner, senior streak, things like that?

ADW: I remember as a child Winter Carnival. I remember as a child coming by the campus and seeing ice sculptures and snow sculptures. I don’t think, I don’t remember that when I was a student here. I’m not sure that they still did it and if they did that it wasn’t done to the degree that it was done in the early ’60s. It was like a fairyland, to a child it seemed like a fairyland. I do remember there was always an ice skating rink in front of Ormsby and that’s where I learned to ice skate as a little city of Appleton resident. That was the closest rink for me and in those days you could let a child of 5 walk to an ice rink alone and I did. My brother and I learned to skate on the ice rink in front of Ormsby. I do remember when I was in college here there was always broomball there. I remember at that time we had a great many students from New England and they all brought their Lacrosse sticks and there was always a Lacrosse game going on, usually on that end of the campus. I remember Celebrate!, I actually remember the first Celebrate!, which was in the early seventies. I was not on campus then but I went to celebrate and I believe the first Celebrate! started as a medieval fair. And I believe that this may have been the year that they had human life-sized chess figures with a life-sized chess board. I think it was in the back of Main Hall. This was very cool, they had medieval dress and everything. And everyone came, all the students and all the faculty and all their families and it was a family event. When I was in school here it still retained some of that family atmosphere. It was not so much a medieval fair then as it was an arts and crafts fair, and the celebration of spring, and a grill-out and things like that. It was still very family oriented. I don’t think it necessarily retained as much of a family atmosphere as the years went on. It became more about the party at the base of Union hill, which I didn’t live in Appleton when that occurred, when that transition was made. That’s what I remember about Celebrate!. The tradition that I do remember, other than sliding down Union hill on trays, which I think probably every Lawrentian since there have been trays has done.

JS: Since there has been a Union.

ADW: Yeah. There was in my day, a tradition of streaking usually on the coldest night in January from Plantz to Main Hall and back. This was not participated in by everyone, usually male members of the community, who chose to, I don’t know what they did to get primed for this, perhaps a few beers or shots or something. I don’t know, but it was always done late at night, around midnight and it had to be on a very bitter cold night because it didn’t count otherwise. Usually two or three maybe five at the most, sometimes would take off from Plantz and run across College Avenue and around Main Hall and back again. I did not witness, I saw only the backsides of those who were participating, that was enough. The other thing that I do remember being done at Plantz I don’t know if it was done at other dorms, this was guys who would do this, the girls were too civilized. The guys would hang an entire dorm room out a window, by a rope. Everything that could come out, including the bed and mattress was hung out the window, which is very funny. It was quite funny. The other thing that I remember being done, two of the things, and people from the mid-seventies will remember this, we set up a dorm room on the median strip in Main Hall, I mean on College Avenue. A complete dorm room was set up on the median strip on College Avenue, which was pretty funny. We also set up a bedroom in the shower in Plantz, which was a gang shower, which was converted. The entire dorm room was in the shower
room, which was funny. We used to put potted plants in the urinals to decorate, other than that. Yeah, I think that’s what I remember. Also, because it was legal to drink at eighteen, and it was not approved to have a microwave or a refrigerator or any appliance in your room or a phone. One phone in the hall folks, that what we had. No individual phones and you had to have special permission and pay a rental fee to get a refrigerator, it was a very big deal so almost no one had one. We kept our beer on the windowsills, sliding windows we had to wind it up, or the wine. Sometimes you’d see sacks suspended out the window on a rope, that’s what it was. Other than that, those are the traditions I remember.

[01:21:01]

JDW: We don’t have a whole lot of traditions that survived.

ADW: When did the senior streak thing begin?

JS: At least since the ’80s.

JDW: As long as I remember ever having heard about it.

JS: At least since the 1980s.

JDW: That is the week following senior dinner. It used to be, I was told by a source who shall remain nameless, that senior streak used to be the night of senior dinner and senior dinner used to be held at Lucinda’s. People would get, they would start to prepare for senior streak at senior dinner. They would get very rowdy and get very drunk and occasionally have to be taken out by security. It was made known on the part of the university that they would rather not have senior streak happen on that same night.

ADW: Well that’s probably a good idea.

JDW: So it was moved to the following week and of course it happened this year. The police were there and it was actually a decent night. Very interesting.

ADW: See I don’t remember that. I don’t think that existed.

JDW: Perhaps not.

ADW: In the warm weather there is not challenge to that. You have to do it when it’s cold.

JDW: But everyone is there, that is the challenge.

JS: They run into buildings including the library.

ADW: Oh, dear.

JDW: Well this one was after the library had closed.

ADW: And most everyone participates?

JDW: No, but everybody turns out to watch. So the running the gauntlet is everyone is here, but I’m so drunk I don’t care.

JS: Students, not faculty of course.

JDW: Well the faculty are asleep. Trivia I guess is another tradition.

ADW: Trivia, I forgot trivia. I broke my ankle during Trivia.
JDW: I have been on the teams placed in the top three for three years running. We never won.

ADW: I broke my ankle. I jumped over a desk to go answer an action question. I leaped off the front desk and came down on my ankle and it broke. And the question was, “What is the Octopus at the Octopus carwash holding in its arms?” Hands? Arms?

JDW: Tentacles?

ADW: Whatever. What are the objects? Everyone leaped to their cars to drive down to the octopus and I was unable to leap. I spent February until May in a heavy leg cast, a heavy plaster leg cast. Which was very difficult because it was a very icy winter and I had a class on the third floor of Main Hall at the time, without an elevator, on crutches. It was not fun. And then I had to get from that class down the steps at Main Hall and across College Avenue to the Education building, which was over now where the Conservatory addition is, and up to a second floor there. It was treacherous, fortunately the crutches lasted I believe about a week and then it was a walking cast. It was still treacherous, very icy time of year and showering was awful because I had to wrap my leg in a garbage bag, which is slippery in a shower. And I had to slit my pants up the inside seam to be able to get clothes on, and then of course after all that time in this cast my poor ankle was pretty atrophied and stiff, so I had to do all these exercises to try to loosen it up so I could walk without falling. We survived. I guess it was worth it even though our team did not win.

JS: It’s always worth it for Trivia.

ADW: Well Trivia, I liked it, frankly I don’t know what the experience is on the internet, I have not done that, but it was a live radio broadcast in those days, it was very different.

JS: Can you think of any more traditions or…?

JDW: We don’t really have very many.

ADW: Yeah, sad.

JDW: The April Fool’s Day Lawrentian is kind of a tradition.

JS: Yeah that’s a good one.

ADW: There used to also be a concert given at the Conservatory which was pretty funny if you were a musician and had knowledge of why it was funny. Certain professors or their teaching styles or certain musicians were mocked. It was pretty funny. Yeah I remember that. I remember when I was also a small child, I do remember an Easter egg hunt that used to occur here. I’m not sure if the eggs were hidden on Main Hall green or at the bottom of Union hill, but there was a party for faculty children and it was held in the Union in the Riverview Lounge. I remember students would do magic tricks and sing songs. I remember someone singing Puff the Magic Dragon, this would have probably been in the early ’60s, and balloon animals being made. I remember Easter eggs and there would be bunnies and little things like that.

JDW: We have lots of bunnies. Squirrels too.

ADW: And I am told there used to be a big Homecoming party. I don’t think Homecoming in my day meant what it did probably in the ’50s or ’40s. I used to hear from older alum about how when they came to Lawrence after the war there were so many students coming back on the GI bill, there weren’t enough places for them to live, they lived in Quonset huts, they put classes everywhere they could find to put a class. Some of the students were married and they ended up renting rooms from various people in the community, so they would have their own place to live. Matter of fact at this last reunion, my husband and I met someone who graduated about that time and he met his wife I think on campus here and they were telling us about their
experiences on campus as war vets returning and getting their degrees. That must have been pretty interesting. A lot of the faculty that I remember when I was a kid came like my father did in ’47, ’48, ’49. There was a huge, there were all these students coming back to college and they needed to be taught by professors, so both many students, and it’s my sense that faculty may have grown quite a bit in the late ’40s and early ’50s because of all those students and the baby boomers all getting ready to go to college.

JS: I just have one question because you’ve been talking and everything and giving such great information, but both of you have lived in Appleton for so many years and I was wondering what your opinion is of the whole Appleton Lawrence relationship, do you feel like they are two segregated communities? Do you feel like they’ve become more involved with each other throughout the years?

JDW: I don’t think there’s any single half or a straight line, I think we have fluctuations. I think it would be fair to say that the relationship has been stronger than it is at present. One of the things that is kind of frustrating for us is the general perception when you talk to people in Appleton is that Lawrence is a music school. And the reason for that obviously is that the things that members of the community can participate in are musical performances, that’s what they can come see. They can’t come see us do physics or economics or whatever, so we understand where the perception comes from, but no, it’s not just a music school, you don’t have to be a musician to get in, etc. etc. In the past Lawrence has been better integrated with the city and I imagine that that will return to a certain extent, some events have been discontinued that provided a place for college and community to mix. I’m sure other things will arise to replace that, it will just take a matter of time.

ADW: See I look at it and I think that what I see is that Lawrence has always been looked at as kind of a very special place by the city of Appleton. I think that you have to look at just the demographic across the United States, more people go to college now than used to back in the ’40s and the ’30s. I think in the ’50s Lawrence was seen as Lawrence College, not so much Lawrence University. There are many people that I know of who came from other places other than Appleton, not necessarily outside of Wisconsin, but outside of Appleton, to go to Lawrence. And I will say this, I think one of the things that James is referring to is that for a while, and maybe this was the perception of people in the high schools, it was considered un-cool to go to Lawrence if you were from the Fox River Valley. People simply did not understand what a really truly great institution this is. It’s like having a great wife or great kid, you take them for granted until you don’t have that wife or that child around and you realize that “Gee, I really miss that person.” Or “This was an extraordinary human being.” That’s how I think –

JDW: It’s also like a hometown artist is never appreciated in his hometown or until he or she is dead. So nobody, or how should I say that, many people do not appreciate Lawrence because it is so familiar.

ADW: Yeah the familiarity. In Appleton I think, in the ’40s and ’50s there may have been an attitude of that school is for people who are really smart or really musically gifted. If you are really musically gifted, it’s great to go there, even if you are from the local area. If you are really, really smart, why would you pay all that money to go to Lawrence? You could go to Madison and get that degree. And there is nothing wrong with Madison, it’s a great school, but I don’t think that Lawrence is, particularly the college, was appreciated for being as fine an institution as it was. I think the Conservatory has always been appreciated for turning out truly excellent musicians. I think it was much more acceptable for people to go there. That being said I do think that, I think I disagree with him a little bit because I perceive that there is much more of an open attitude towards the University than there once was. Not that the community was closed, they very simply did not understand it. And I think there is more understanding of education and all the varieties of education that you can get from a technical degree to a large university degree to a liberal arts institution that is smaller like this one with all the kinds of degrees you can get. I think also there is much more appreciation on the part of the community for what this can offer, this institution can offer people who are not enrolled. In other words, the Lawrence Arts Academy, the musical presentations that are both by the students here or visiting artists who are performing here. There are many people in the community who don’t have PAC season tickets who will come to Lawrence
to hear things and speeches. I can’t tell you how many people I personally know who are blown away by the convocations we have. Absolutely blown away. I mean I myself sometimes have to pinch myself to think about the people who I’ve heard speak at convo here in Appleton for nothing. It’s absolutely shocking.

JDW: I think the city has become more cosmopolitan, more open to education. I think though that we need that to be reciprocated, Lawrence needs to become more open to the city.

ADW: Yeah, in particular I think students need to stop making assumptions about how Appletonians are. We really are not dumb farmers. There are a lot of people in this town who have moved from other places and a lot people who have stayed here for generations, who are really very intelligent people. They probably don’t appreciate being categorized as “those townies.” So a little bit of give from both sides I think would probably help heal the situation. I don’t perceive that there is a big problem.

JDW: No, I would not say that there is a problem with the town relationship, but I do think it could be better.

ADW: It can always be better.

JDW: I think there are things that we could do to include the community more.

ADW: And honestly when I said that I disagreed with him about this, what I meant was I think there have been times when this relationship has been much more difficult. I’m thinking in particular the ’50s and the McCarthy era.

JDW: McCarthy vs. Wriston.

JS: Pusey.

JDW: Pusey. Pusey, sorry.

ADW: There was some questioning of some of the books that were being taught here at Lawrence. This was an issue. I don’t see that sort of thing happening anymore. And I hope I never do. I think that things are a lot more open and flexible between the two. I see a lot of opportunity for growth. I mean when James came to Lawrence, you were one of, nine?

JDW: Something like that.

ADW: Not just from North.

JDW: No, eight or nine from North.

ADW: Appleton North, to come to Lawrence. Now I don’t know how that stands up in following years but this broke a huge tradition. As a parent of a student in high school, I know that there would be large universities coming in and they’d have college days and universities would appear and it was really kind of a hard sell to get people to look at Lawrence. There were nine brave students who said “We don’t care that it’s in Appleton. We’ve had these AP courses and we really would like to do something more than just go to the school that everybody else is going to because their friends are there, we think we can get something out of this particular institution that we won’t get other places.” And they took the plunge.

JDW: It might have been eight, but the point stands.

ADW: And I think there will be a ripple effect from that. I know our daughter was one of three from North that came, the year that she came. I don’t know what it is in the other high schools.

JDW: It’s better than none at all.
ADW: And there was a time at Lawrence when I don’t think this was as much of an issue. Obviously in the ’40s it was not. People did not go as far away from home to go to college. It was not considered a rite of passage to go at least a full state or at least a six-hour drive away from your parents in order to have the grown up experience. For some reason some students think these days you must have this. If you need it, fine, but not everyone does.

JS: Is there anything else you can think of that we haven’t talked about?

JDW: We talked about a lot.

JS: Yeah I know.

ADW: The only thing I can think of to add is that, I won’t say I’ll be a cradle to grave Lawrentian, because that sounds so kind of dire and creepy, but I will tell you this. I have been told by my mother that when she was expecting me she went into labor on the organ bench, taught a lesson, went to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, had me in six hours and as soon as she could get out of the hospital and get back home, rescheduled her lessons and taught with me in a Moses basket on the floor next to the organ bench. So from pretty much infancy on, I have been around this institution, seen professors come and go, heard a lot of wonderful music, seen a lot of students both as babysitters and just former students of my parents and you know fellow students and now alumni. And I would say that Lawrence has kind of changed in that it has broken out of the more traditional mode of what a college is. It’s had its turbulent period during the ’60s and ’70s, it’s had its disco era, but I do think that going into the future it probably has allowed its students to have much more freedom in the educational experience with still retaining the rigor and the discipline of the liberal arts institution. I think it’s a very important institution to preserve. I think it has been important in the past and will continue to be in the future for both those students who are at the university and in the community. Anything else to say?

JDW: Not really.

JS: Was it a good experience?

JDW: Yes. Very much so.

JS: Okay, then I’ll go and turn this off then.

[01:40:27]