

WL: Today is November 2, 2011. I am William Leidig and we're here today in Cowle's Library with Linda Bryant.

Umm...so uh where were you born and raised?

LB: Well I was born in Kansas City uh...I was raised in St. Joseph, Missouri.

WL: Uh where did you attend high school?

LB: In St. Joseph Central High.

WL: Um how did you happen to decide upon Drake?

LB: Like you, a program that was here that I was interested in, in organ performance and church music and Russell Saunders who is still a very revered name was here at the time.

WL: Um did you have definite career aspirations and uh what were they?

LB: Ah yes, definitely. I was interested in a career as a full time church musician, uh organ performance and um teaching and anything related to organs.

WL: What can you remember about moving into a dorm and your first week of classes?

LB: Uh first it was it was pretty hot and we had to lug all of my stuff up to the third floor of Carpenter Hall uh so that was kind of a big deal. Um we also had to go through um...kind of a uh orientation week in which we were required to wear blue and white beanies and uh upperclassmen could stop you and uh harass you a little bit. Um you know so it was, it was uh kind of intimidating to be here first and you were, it was very obvious that you were a newcomer on campus and uh you know so it was, it was a little bit intimidating.

WL: Um do you recall a favorite professor...

LB: Russell...

WL: who and why?

LB: Yeah, Russell Saunders and Carl Stablem both were my organ professors and um as I said earlier I came here to study with Russell Saunders and at the end of my sophomore year he accepted a position at Eastman School of Music and uh I was absolutely devastated. I cried for, and cried and cried and I didn't want to come back to Drake and I you know all kinds of things, but I did and he was replaced by Dr. Carl Staplin who proved to be a jewel of a teacher and uh I still have a very warm relationship with him and uh so it all worked out

just fine. But those are the two professors who really are outstanding in my memory.

WL: Did you feel you were prepared for Drake?

LB: Ummm...

WL: Why and why not?

LB: Yes and no, I was uh I was pretty well prepared academically in terms of English classes that I had to take and those sorts of things but when it came to the music department um I discovered that I wasn't as well prepared as I'd hoped, as I thought I was. Um my high school training and my private piano study and all of this had left some pretty big gaps that uh didn't necessarily get filled while I was here either. Uh because I don't think any of us realized that they were there. Uh it really wasn't until I was kind of out teaching on my own that I realized there were some, some things that we hadn't quite discovered were issues that I needed to deal with so I've tried to deal with those since I left Drake and uh...

WL: Um, what were some events that you attended that were particular, particularly memorable?

LB: hm...I remember uh a recital by Pierre Coucheroux of France, who at that time was one of the great uh performers. Um President Sharp was installed while I was here and I have some recollection of that. Um I enjoyed going to a lot of the football games and things like that too, Drake Relays was always fun. Um...

WL: Um what were Drake Relays like at that time?

LB: Um, well not terribly different from what they are now except they weren't as big and of course we didn't have the facility that, that we have now uh for that uh so uh but there still were big names at the time who, who came um.

WL: Uh, what rules did you have to follow to live in the halls?

LB: They were by today's standards pretty strict and in fact even at that time they were pretty strict. We had a um, uh a house mother who really kept close tabs on uh where we were, we had curfew hours during the week I believe it was 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock, something like that and I know that as a music major we to attend a lot of recitals and often that was a problem because they would, by the time the recital started and ended and getting back to the dorm by curfew was, was sometimes a bit of a challenge. Um as far as having contact with male friends in the dorm we were limited to the, the lounge area, the public area. Um, then we had room checks um, and I

remember at one point getting reprimanded a little bit for having too much trash in my wastebasket. Uh (laughs) which seemed pretty trivial to me, but and I think it was, but it was, it was a very strict time. We also had dress codes um we could not wear uh pants in the dining hall or in class. We could wear them in the dorm itself but if you're going to eat or you're going to uh go to class you had to wear a skirt unless it was zero, then we could wear pants, if it was zero. (Laughs) So it was, you know, it was a different time um I think there was a lot more of the, the parental oversight view about um what we were about here. So, it was, it was a different time.

WL: Um, what were the rules um that you had to follow um in a sorority house?

LB: Well I didn't actually live in a sorority house. Um, Mu Phi Epsilon which I belonged to but it did not have a house okay so, I lived in dorms uh through my junior year and I lived in an apartment my senior year.

WL: Uh, which dorms did you live in?

LB: Carpenter and then uh I was here over the summer several, two summers because I had a position that was a year round kind of thing and uh I think it was in what's the one that's next to Carpenter that starts with an 'H'?

WL: Herriott

LB: Herriott, I was in Herriott for a summer I think.

WL: That's where we both live.

LB: Yeah.

WL: Um, Tell me about uh Mu Phi Epsilon

LB: Mu Phi Epsilon? Uh, as a professional sorority it was uh, entrance requirements had to do, I mean we were all music majors, either music education or performance majors or something big to do with music. Uh, we did a lot of service projects that often involved things like going to nursing homes or hospitals and doing music programs and uh...it, it helped us to, as far as giving us more performance opportunities we, we sponsored recitals um, doing them ourselves we had to perform um, and uh a lot of camaraderie a lot of fun but we didn't live together on a floor or in a dorm or anything else, it was uh more like a club kind of thing than it was a sorority in the sense that you think of a sorority as being.

WL: Other than that uh the sorority, what other activities or groups were involved in?

LB: Um, I was particularly involved in the campus ministry program here. In fact that's where I met my husband and there are several other couples that came out of that group of us there that we're still uh connected with. We had, there was a house over by the little round chapel, back behind it, where the campus ministry was housed at that time and uh, we had um study groups and um ate over there on Sunday nights when we didn't have meals in the dorm, I don't know if that's still the case or not, but there were no, I don't know what the college, or the university expected us to do for Sunday dinner but it wasn't offered in the dorm, and uh so we, we often ate over there on Sunday nights and uh it was just kind of a gathering place for all of my friends and uh...

WL: What activities did you do off campus?

LB: Hm...not a lot. (Laughs) Not a lot really, uh one of the things you have to understand, I don't if it's still true for music majors but at that point we were practicing at least in, as a performance major we were, we had to practice three to four hours a day. I had a church position that required Wednesday night rehearsals and Sunday two services and so that took a lot of extra time. We had a organ master class once a week that didn't show up on our class schedule in addition to all the classes, hours and all that, it was just you had to be there but it didn't show up on your schedule. We had to attend two recitals a week at least. Um, and we had to uh be there for the community chorus rehearsal. So all of these things, you know, and plus practicing three to four hours a day, which was a requirement because we had two lessons a week so, extra time, it wasn't a whole lot. And extra energy was kind of in short supply too, so I didn't do a lot of things off campus.

WL: Describe one of your close friendships with another student.

LB: Um...um...You'll get a kick out of this one I think. I had my routine down for getting to my eight o'clock class and it involved having a friend of mine who was a pharmacy, oh uh not a pharmacist a uh med-tech major, she has been at Mercy Hospital here ever since she graduated and um, anyway we still are in touch with each other. Uh, but the deal was 7:20 in the morning she called me on the phone, in the hall (laughter) and um, and I could get out of bed, I could shower, I could get dressed, I had this all laid out, and have breakfast and get to class all by eight o'clock. So forty minutes, so that was, that was just one kind of silly little thing that we did that was one thing. Uh, another of my organ colleague friends uh, is a little bit older than I am, she was working on finishing her masters when I came in as a freshman and so she was one of those people that I looked up to and said "I'll never be able to do what she does." I did but at that time it seemed impossible and we are still very close friends um, uh we see each other and go out to lunch now that I've moved back to Iowa, so um...I think uh, the professional side. Cheryl was not a music

major she was, as I said, she was in med-technology so she was a real close friend outside of my major area and still is.

WL: Could you share a special memory about dating or social/sporting event?

LB: Sporting event? I don't know about a sporting event, about dating, uh as I said earlier I met my husband here um, in fact our campus minister at that time I think, kind of threw us together. I was here a year before he came, he transferred in as a junior and so I was beginning my sophomore year and um, uh we were getting ready to get a dinner together, over at the, the campus ministry house and uh, Gene had popped in there, he was a pre-ministerial student, and so he had popped in there and Wayne, I had a car, so Wayne uh sent us off to the grocery store together to get groceries to fix the meal that evening and uh, that was how we met (laughs) and you know, that's kind of the beginning of that story, uh so...

WL: I'm sorry I think I worded that wrong...

LB: But that's not a sporting event.

WL: Yeah, um a special memory about a social, or about dating, a social, or a sporting event.

LB: Well, that's how I met my husband, okay? We've been married for forty, almost 43 years now so, anyway. Uh, so that would be, and he proposed to me at the end of the bridge to Carpenter hall.

WL: Uh, was that a pond at that time?

LB: Umhmm, yeah that was a pond.

WL: Um...so uh do you have, did you attend any sporting events?

LB: I went to some of the football games, and I think a few basketball games. I enjoyed you know watching, going to sporting things uh, but that was when I had a little spare time.

WL: Um, what was happening in the rest of the world while you were here at Drake...

LB: Oh my gosh...

WL: That left an impression on you?

LB: Oh well, Vietnam for one thing was going on big time and uh, one event I remember passionately for, for several reasons was the day that Martin

Luther King , Jr. was shot. Um, because uh Gene and I had tickets to go hear Itzhak Perlman, a very young Itzhak Perlman, perform I don't remember if it was, I think it was at Bet's Auditorium, but I'm not, someplace downtown. And um, I remember just being devastated by that event and of course uh Mr. Perlman walks with a, with the hand cane thing because he's uh sort of paralyzed, and he came out on stage and he said I'm going to change my program tonight because of what happened and uh, it was just such an emotional kind of thing. Um, Gene teases me and says that I spent the Vietnam war in a practice room, which isn't that far from the truth but uh, so I wasn't involved in it in terms of any of the demonstrations...