RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DONALD B. COOK

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Donald B. Cook on August 13, 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Mr. Cook, thank you very much for coming in today.

Donald Cook: Thank you, Shaun.

SI: To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

DC: Yes, I was born in Perth Amboy, January 4, 1936.

SI: What were your parents' names?

DC: William, and my mother's name was Gladys, her maiden name, Ludwigsen. My father was of Scottish descent and my mother was of Danish descent. My dad died, unfortunately, when I was about two years old, and I actually grew up with my mother, my grandmother and grandfather and two uncles in Perth Amboy.

SI: Do you know anything about your father's background or what he did for a living?

DC: My father was, and I know just from stories and what I've heard, but he was primarily, I believe, a designer, interior designer. One of the things my aunt told me is, he designed some of the staterooms on the [SS] *Normandie,* which, at that time, was *the* luxury cruise liner. I think he went [to NYU], for a brief period, but I'm not sure whether he graduated from NYU.

SI: Was he born in the US or was he born in Scotland?

DC: Both parents were born in the US. His mother and father came from Scotland and I believe my grandparents, on the other side, came from Denmark, my great-grandparents.

SI: Did you have any contact with your father's side of the family?

DC: Yes. His sister was very close to me, my aunt, and so, I split time between Perth Amboy and Rumson, where they lived, and my family in Perth Amboy, but most of the time being in Perth Amboy, where I went to the public school system.

SI: Do you know how either side of your family came to settle in Perth Amboy?

DC: Not really. I know … Perth Amboy has a big Danish community, and so, I'm sure my grandparents came, or great-grandparents came over, as part of that Danish movement at the time, and, actually, a member of my high school class, her name is Joan [Seguine]-Levine, I think, has written a history of the Danish community in Perth Amboy and has done a great deal of research on that. So, it was a strong Danish community. I really don't know much about my grandparents on the other side of the family, although I think they said my grandfather came over from Scotland, I believe it was Glasgow. … Everyone had always told everyone that he was an architect, and then, one of my cousins did some research on the family background and said that

he was actually a plasterer. [laughter] So, there's a little exaggeration on what his profession was, but, as far as I know, that part of the family came from Glasgow, Scotland.

SI: You listed your mother as being a bookkeeper. Was that before she got married or while you were growing up?

DC: While I was growing up, she was, I suppose, assistant manager and a bookkeeper, accountant, for a large liquor store in Perth Amboy called Zucker's, and that's where she spent most of her time in terms of the working. My grandfather worked at General Cable in Perth Amboy and he was also, for awhile, the fire chief in Perth Amboy, for about four years. So, growing up, I got to see a lot of significant fires in that area. One famous one was the Hurley Lumberyard fire, and I remember him taking me in the fire chief's car and not knowing how big it was, and then, somebody had to come get me, because it lasted a couple of days.

SI: Really?

DC: Yes. So, I was a big deal with the kids, because I could ride around in the fire chief car for awhile, and, in those days, you had a bell in our house, and, when there was a fire, that bell would go off in our house. So, all of a sudden, in the middle of the night, you'd be awakened by this bell gonging, and, based on the number of gongs on that, it would tell you where the fire was located, and then, the volunteer fire department would go to that location.

SI: For the lumberyard fire, you just got in the car and watched this whole thing unfold.

DC: Well, I watched part of it, and then, somebody picked me up, because he realized it was going to go on for a long time.

SI: Were there a lot of industrial accidents, and so forth, while you were growing up?

DC: I remember several large fires, I think. One was a movie house called the Ditmas Movie [Theatre], which was across from my high school, eventually, but that was the most significant one. I can't place the year, but I think, unfortunately, Perth Amboy got on the map a little bit when there was a major munitions explosion in South Amboy, which was on the other side of the Raritan River. [Editor's Note: Mr. Cook is referring to an accidental large-scale munitions explosion on May 12, 1950.] … That was significant, in terms of our windows blew out and things of that nature, and that made headlines in most papers at the time.

SI: Was that during the Second World War or afterwards?

DC: I think it would be in the Second World War; I'm trying to think. What were the years of the Second World War, basically?

SI: The US was involved from 1941 to 1945.

DC: Yes. … It probably was in that period.

SI: Can you describe the neighborhood where you grew up? Was it a Danish neighborhood or Scandinavian?

DC: No. Fortunately, Perth Amboy is a melting pot, which I think was good and which I was happy about, in those days. It's become more, ethnically, now, I think, a Puerto Rican community, but, in our days, I think it was totally a mixed population, with no dominant population. I grew up with families next to me, on one side, across the street; so, there are a lot of my family there. There were a lot of Danes in that area, but it wasn't a predominantly Danish [community], I don't think, but there were a lot of Danes there. … I think there were other parts of town, maybe, where there were more Danes. If anything, I went to Number Seven School in Perth Amboy, the elementary school, and that was a great mix and, probably, it was a school where the Jewish community went. So, a lot of my early friends, and still to this day, are Jewish friends that I'd met going to Number Seven School.

SI: I recently had the opportunity to interview another Perth Amboy native, who was Catholic, and he talked a lot about the churches, each one kind of setting up the neighborhood. Was the church, which, I guess, would be Lutheran, that important?

DC: … [An] interesting story about the church is, a little anecdote about my mother, which I always admired, when I look back on it now, so, when I was about thirteen years old, my mother said to me [that] she wasn't going to fight with me every Sunday to get me to go to church and to Sunday school. … Of course, that was to the Lutheran Sunday school, and I didn't have any friends there, really. Most of my friends were playing basketball for churches; we had no basketball court. So, she told me, … for the next four Sundays, I didn't have to go to Sunday school, and I thought, "Gee, maybe I'm winning," and she said, "But, I want you to do something for me." She said, "You decide what church you want to go to, whether you want to go to a Jewish synagogue, whether you want to go to a Catholic church, you go and decide what church you want to go to. … After four weeks, you tell me, and then, that's the church you're going to go to and we're not going to have this argument all the time." So, I always kid everyone that I read the Bible from the front page to the back, but the truth is, I went out and saw where all my buddies were. … They had just built a new basketball court in the Presbyterian church and we were there in the city league, and I played a lot of basketball, and so, I became a devout Presbyterian, based on the basketball court. So, I converted, I guess, from Lutheran to Presbyterian and my mother went along with it, and she truly meant I could have gone to any church I wanted to, as long as I went. So, it was a pretty liberal attitude on her part and a very wise decision, I think, for her, and it turned out to be well for me. I sang in the choir there, played basketball there and was there until I left for Rutgers.

SI: You were born at the beginning of 1936 and you were about six, going on seven, when Pearl Harbor happened.

DC: I guess, yes. …

SI: Do you remember Pearl Harbor at all?

DC: No. You know, it's sometimes difficult for everyone, I think, to think, "Do they really remember it or do they remember what they were told?" I think, probably, I remember what I was told. I don't really think I can remember Pearl Harbor *per se*. I remember the end of the war in Europe and the fire trucks and celebrating that, but I can't say I remember Pearl Harbor. I do remember reading in papers, or, sometimes, you'd see the battles [in newsreels] or you would hear it on the radio. … Most of the time, it was really the European Campaign that you heard about, but I don't remember, *per se*, Pearl Harbor.

SI: Growing up in that period, the end of the Depression and the beginning of World War II, in general, what are some of your early memories of that time?

DC: Well, Perth Amboy was, I think, a good town to grow up in. I think we had some excellent teachers that were very influential in my life and prepared me for future years. I think there were a lot of sports that were generated among the guys themselves. You didn't have organized Little Leagues. The city would have a league, but you got a bunch of guys together and you went and you played. So, sports was a big thing, school, and then, when you came of age to work, … [you] had little jobs, … probably delivering telephone books and things like that, but, then, I guess it must have been when I was sixteen, I think that's when you could get your working permit, I became an usher in the theater, in a movie house.

SI: Which theater?

DC: The Majestic Theater in Perth Amboy, which was the largest theater, I believe, in the Walter Reade chain. So, the State Theater in New Brunswick was part of the Walter Reade chain, and we would always get their results, and the Red Bank Theater and the Asbury Park Theaters were all part of that chain. … So, we'd seat about nineteen hundred people and, in those days, the early days of movies, those were when people would line up around the block to get into movies, and so, that was a great experience. That was my, really, first, real working experience, and, fortunately, I worked my way up to head usher, and then, assistant manager and, when it became time to go to college, they had offered me a manager's job of … one of the smaller theaters in Perth Amboy and I thought that was great. My mother would not hear of that. She wanted me to go to college. So, that was a decision she was firm on, and, of course, she was right, I think, in what she did, but, working in a movie house, in a theater like that, was very, very influential on me, both the films you saw and we had some summer stock things. So, you'd see plays, with *Oklahoma*, *Mister Roberts*, *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo,* and some of the stars that, later on, Florence Henderson, who later became big in television, was in *Oklahoma,* Alicia Alonzo became a great ballerina, Igor Youskevitch, I guess you would say, a ballerina. So, you had an opportunity, at a very early age, to get involved in the artistic, if you will, part of that, and, to this day, I think theater and movies are important in my life. …

SI: Can you describe what an usher would do in that time period?

DC: Yes, for you young guys, like, you probably don't know what this would be, but … I remember the first night I went over there, the first movie I worked was *African Queen,* with Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn. … They'd give you a uniform and, being a little short, my uniform jacket probably hung down to my knees and you had big braids on [it] and

you had your flashlight and, primarily, people would come in and you'd show them down and say, "Here's two seats in there," and you'd show them into the aisle, and a little bit like they do at a baseball game. You go there now, you still have ushers [who] take you to your seats, but, in this case, you're in a dark theater and you're walking down and trying to show people where they're going to sit. If anything happened that was out of the ordinary, you would try to take care of it. One time, all of a sudden, during a religious movie, a guy sitting next to a couple started to strangle the guy next to him, and so, we, the three of us, had to run down and pull him off him. Obviously, he was deranged, and things like that could happen. You practiced fire drills. There were some good lessons. You learned that you would never run, or even walk fast, or look excited, because you could cause a riot if people misinterpreted it. So, you always had to … appear calm during most circumstances, and we had a lot of fun. There was a lot of camaraderie among the ushers and we had a lot of good times. … Oh, you'd do things like taking garbage out, which would be, like, eighty cans of garbage up four flights of stairs, and cleaning and filling Coke machines, and, probably, the toughest duty was, films used to come in large lead cans and large reels, and the Majestic … had one of the largest balconies in the state. So, you'd have to walk up, well, heck, maybe up all the steps of Rutgers Stadium, lugging these lead cans with these reels in them, and they were heavy and you'd take them up. Then, you got to know the projectionists, who were real professionals in what they did. The projection booth was always red hot, because … you had carbon rods that were used to project the film, and you'd go up there and it was very warm, and they were nice. They'd show us how it was done, and it was a real technique, to have a small changeover from one camera to the other and the reel from one to the other, one projector to the other. So, that was good.

SI: Did they still have promotions? Maybe twenty years earlier, they gave away things like dishes to get people to come to the movie theater. Did they still do things like that?

DC: Then, they did, yes; not as much. That had started to fade, I think, at that time. Occasionally, it would be [brought back]. We did have 3-D movies, [when the] first 3-D movies came out. You'd have the glasses that you'd get, and then, collect, and, theoretically, you took them back, put them in this machine and it blew some stuff in them, which, supposedly, cleaned them and sterilized them, but heavens knows what that was. So, you would do that. I think that first movie was *Bwana Junction* and it was the first 3-D movie. It was pretty exciting. I mean, to this day, 3-D movies, if they're made well, are pretty exciting.

SI: Was TV starting to cut into the movie theater business?

DC: Yes, it was, during that period, not quite as much as it eventually would, because going to the movies was more of a social thing than the functionality of sitting around just with your family to watch television. This was when everybody was out there and people would meet there and it was a social event for people to go to the movies, and television [stations], in those days, weren't showing great movies. They were showing programs, but not, primarily, oriented to showing movies.

SI: To go back over your childhood, you mentioned the importance of sports. For instance, you said this basketball court was very attractive. Did you have a lot of facilities for sports or was it mostly a matter of making your own games?

DC: Well, you'd make your own games up, but the facilities were good. Perth Amboy had a lot of good baseball stadiums that we could play in, and the leagues were pretty good for that. Basketball courts were pretty much open to us. We'd play at different schools, and, sometimes, churches, and they had a good basketball league. So, certainly, as far as basketball and baseball, the facilities were pretty decent for that town, but there was very little adult participation, you know. You didn't have mothers, fathers, family out cheering. This was more a bunch of guys from a neighborhood forming a team and going out and playing. The city would send an umpire with two baseballs over and he'd umpire the game and that would be it. You wouldn't have uniforms. Once in awhile, maybe, a candy store on the corner would sponsor you and buy you T-shirts, but that's mainly what that was about.

SI: Was basketball your favorite sport?

DC: No, probably baseball, and then, maybe basketball.

SI: What positions did you play in those sports?

DC: Baseball, I played second base, shortstop, pitched a little bit. Basketball, I played guard.

SI: Were there any rivalries within these city leagues?

DC: Oh, yes. Perth Amboy had a team called the Jeffry Pirates, and those were older guys than we were, and I remember, one year, we just happened to have some good young guys and we upset them and won the championships. That was a big victory for us, and then, there was a very good baseball team called the Meade Street Aces, and they were very good. … Some of those guys left and some of them came to Rutgers, I think, and guys I played with came here. Ray Koperwhats was a good shortstop, and his older brother was an All-American at Rutgers, and then, he came here and, certainly, was All-Big East. … Well, we weren't in the Big East then, but it was whatever conference, and he was really a very good shortstop. So, both his brother and Ray both graduated from Rutgers. Mike Basarab went to Woodbridge, became a good friend. He was a lefty pitcher, pitched a no-hitter against Lehigh here. So, he was a very good baseball player that I played with. [The] guy that formed our basketball team, we played on a basketball team, also came to Rutgers and was a brilliant engineer, graduated in civil engineering, Jim Kovacs.

SI: Before we get into Rutgers, I wanted to ask, in World War II, do you remember any changes on the home front? For example, Civil Defense, do you remember Civil Defense drills, blackouts, that sort of thing?

DC: Yes, I remember putting electrical tape over the top of the headlights on the cars and I remember having your little stickers … for your gas rationing. I remember that on the cars. I remember, my uncles got deferments because of some physical ailments, but my other uncles [were] going into the service, and, after Brokaw's book came out, [*The Greatest Generation* by Tom Brokaw], I found it interesting to say, "You know, my uncles never really told me much about it." So, I put together a little family luncheon at the Frog and Peach [Restaurant in New

Brunswick] and I made a point to start asking them. … They still don't tell you a lot about it, but I know one of them was in Guam and the other one was over in the Battle of the Bulge, and so, we talked somewhat about that. … My other uncle, my grand uncle, he passed away, but I know he was in the Navy. Another uncle was in the Coast Guard, took me aboard a cutter, I remember. …

SI: Was it during the war period that you went on the cutter?

DC: Yes, I think it was, yes, during that period.

SI: Jumping ahead, did that have an influence on you going into the Coast Guard?

DC: Maybe a little bit, but I'll talk about that later, because I think my relationships in college had more of an influence on my doing that. …

SI: When your uncles went into the service, do you remember them leaving? Did you correspond with them?

DC: We corresponded with one, and then, there was a nurse that was a friend of the family and one of my uncle's friends that went in the service, and we did correspond with them. We got letters and they sent us pictures and we would send letters back to them. I remember that part of it, and, fortunately, they all came home okay.

SI: Was having them in the service hard on the family?

DC: Since they didn't live with us, maybe [for] their immediate family, it might have been harder than it was for us. Obviously, we always wanted to know if they were okay and all that, but I can't say they were like, you know, "Oh, my gosh, isn't So-and-So over there and isn't that where they are?" I don't recall that.

SI: What about rationing? Did that have an impact on your life?

DC: I think the rationing, mostly, I remember was gasoline rationing, and you do remember that in terms of car usage and when you could get gas and what days you could get gas and things of that nature. I guess I remember a little less in terms of food rationing. I think, growing up like that, you started to get used to a diet and you didn't realize, maybe, it had been changed somewhat because of rationing.

SI: You do not remember not being able to get sugar or anything like that.

DC: No. I think there were some substitutes that they were using, oh, I guess margarine instead of butter, for some reason, something along those lines, but I don't remember much about that.

SI: Were you involved in any youth groups, either through the church or the Boy Scouts?

DC: Yes, I was in the Cub Scouts, and then, the Boy Scouts, and I can't say that I was a vigorous pursuer of either. I guess I was; you earned your merit badges and all that, but I don't think they were driving forces in my life. I think I grew tired of them after maybe going from Cub Scouts into Boy Scouts, and then, probably, I was only in the Boy Scouts a couple of years. I think they were doing hiking and things of that nature and I guess I was more into baseball and basketball and stickball, that we played a lot of, and a little bit [of] tennis.

SI: You mentioned that your education and your teachers were very good. Your first school was the Number Seven School.

DC: Yes.

SI: What do you remember about your time there?

DC: I just remember developing a lot of friends, and, of course, you could walk to [school]. All the schools I went to, you could walk to, and that was about three blocks away from my house and I think it was just … a warm feeling. You got to know, again, all ethnic groups and it was a very mixed group of people, and you learned more about, I guess, life, without knowing you were learning it. You got to know different things. I remember going to one of my Jewish friend's birthday party and coming home and saying I hated the hot dogs, and my mother explained to me that they were probably kosher, so, they tasted a lot different than what I was used to. [laughter] So, I think we had a bicycle club and, of course, those were the ages when you finally learned how to ride a bicycle, and bicycle transportation was big in those days. That's how you got to the baseball games and all of that stuff.

SI: Did you follow any professional or semi-pro teams?

DC: Yes. You normally do what your parents do and my grandfather was a [Giant fan], and, as I said, I lived with my grandparents and my mother, and they were Giant fans, and so, I became an avid Giant fan in baseball, and I guess a football Giant fan, but not as much. Baseball was the big sport at that time, and I guess that was the one that I was most attuned to. … Later on in life, Willie Mays became a big hero and [I was] fortunate enough to go [to games]. I guess even in high school, what we would do is go up to the games and we'd take the old, they used to call it the "rat trap" or "rattle trap," up through Staten Island, and then, we'd get to New York and take the subways and go to the stadium, just the guys on their own, and get there way, way early. … One of the big times was always [when] Willie Mays came over and chatted with us and signed an autograph for us and was very, very, just the nicest guy in the world, and another time we got there, Joe Louis was sitting, oh, down about fifty rows from us. … I quick grabbed my program, went down and got him to sign my program, and then, by then, the ushers saw that everybody was bothering Joe and they wouldn't let them go down anymore, and I went back and, lo and behold, he forgot to give me my little Bic ten-cent pen back. [laughter] So, I went down there and I said to the [usher], "No, no, he's got my pen," and Joe Louis looked around, smiled and said, "Send him down," and he was very nice. … You could tell he could barely write, because, when he did an autograph, he slowly wrote, "Joe Louis," on it, where, you know, all the other guys would just scribble something. So, that program would be worth quite a bit of money, but, when I went off to the service, it was stored in my desk and they moved the desk, because,

moving in houses, or something, it went in … [the] basement of my aunt. … Then, my aunt wanted to tell me, she nicely had cleaned out my desk and made sure she threw out all the old junk and everything, and I never had the heart to tell her, wow. [laughter]

SI: That is too bad.

DC: So, that disappeared, but … those were fun days. We would go to the Polo Grounds, … mostly, and see the Giants play.

SI: One of the interesting things, for me and for our students, in hearing these stories is that kids just had a lot more freedom in those days. You hear often about young kids going into the city on their own. It sounds like that was how it was in your experience.

DC: Yes. It wasn't our parents taking us in, and we'd get permission, we'd go up there. [I] got fired from my job in the Majestic, but, then, got rehired when I went back and apologized, but, at the time, the largest ship in the world was the SS *United States*, I think. … Three of us decided we would go up, three ushers, and we went up to New York to see this ship. … Little did we know, we got up there, the line was, like, four hours long. So, we got in the line. We didn't know it was going to be four hours and, after about two hours, we were due back at work and, now, we were in that line so long, we sure [were not leaving]. Well, it just turned out that there's a great movie playing. They were buried and half of the staff was up there looking at a ship, [laughter] and so, we all got fired and my mother said, "You can quit a job, but you're not going to get fired from your first one, so, go back in there and apologize," and I did. … They took us all back and that was overlooked, but, yes, we did go into the city on our own.

SI: You mentioned Perth Amboy being a melting pot. It sounds like everybody got along. Were there ever any divisions or problems between groups?

DC: No. I don't ever remember being near any gangs, or, you know, you had rival baseball teams, like we talked about, but they weren't ethnically-based.

SI: They were geographically-based.

DC: Yes. … You played different schools and things of that nature, but, no, I don't honestly remember any ethnically-based gangs.

SI: Going back to your education, what were your interests in school, in grammar and high school?

DC: I really liked architecture, very much, and took drafting courses and did that, and did pretty well in class. … So, when I applied to schools, I wanted to study architecture, and, I think, because of, maybe, the Depression, which I don't remember, but paramount in your thoughts were, when you're going to go to college, it had to prepare you to get a good job after. So, I knew I wanted to be an architect or an engineer. So, I applied to Georgia Tech, Princeton, Rutgers, and the mayor of the city, who was pretty good friends of the family, Mayor [James J.] Flynn, [Jr.], who, for a long time, was big in the Democratic Party, but my uncles had grown up

playing baseball with him, so, he knew the family well, thought he could probably get me an appointment to West Point. I think I'd done well in school. Of course, my father wasn't living, … but I decided I didn't really want to do that, and so, I got accepted to Georgia Tech. … In those days, you didn't go down to see a school, because you didn't travel that much, but I'd heard of Georgia Tech and the engineers, and Princeton, of course, was close by and I'd seen that and I got accepted to Princeton, and then, I got accepted to Rutgers. … My family, it would have been a hardship on them, I wouldn't have even known how much, … to send me to Princeton, and I applied for a scholarship and got a scholarship to Rutgers, and it was a Chevron Oil [Scholarship], I think, at the time, which I guess was California Oil then. I'm not sure. I think it was called California Oil, and they gave one to Perth Amboy High School, one to St. Mary's, the parochial high school, and one to Woodbridge High School, and I won the one from Perth Amboy High School, and it was a significant scholarship in those days. It was tuition and books, and I was invited up here by; actually, the minister in the church had gotten a fellow that was from our church, who was the … president of the Glee Club and he was in Theta Chi Fraternity, [to host me]. … Anyway, he invited me up to show me Rutgers and I remember coming up and it had snowed and the campus looked so beautiful, and so, I fell in love with Rutgers and decided, with the scholarship and with that wonderful late afternoon/evening I had up here, … and I was invited over to have dinner at the fraternity, that this is where I wanted to go. … So, that's how I made my choice about coming here.

SI: That was the Theta Chi Fraternity.

DC: Yes.

SI: Were you pre-pledged before you came?

DC: I can't remember whether we actually had pre-pledging; I guess maybe they did. I either was or I pledged the first week I was here, and so, yes, I became a Theta Chi very quickly. … Then, even though I had sung very little, well, I sang in the church choir, but never considered myself singing, and, since the president of the fraternity, Bill Gillis, was also the president of the Glee Club, he convinced me to try out for the Glee Club, did that and joined the Glee Club, which, of course, was a great experience.

SI: I will definitely ask you about that. Glee Club members are very …

DC: Very loyal to the Glee Club, yes.

SI: Yes. You mentioned a number of people who had gone to Rutgers before you, baseball players; did you know much about Rutgers before you made that trip?

DC: No, not really. The ones that I knew [who] went to Rutgers were primarily that went with my class, … and the only person I guess I knew was Bill Gillis, who was two years ahead of me, that the church had said, "If you want to look at Rutgers, let's call Bill and see if he can invite you up," and so, that happened. So, I can't remember a lot more people that went to Rutgers.

SI: Among your class in high school, was going to college a common thing?

DC: No, I don't know what percent. It was an objective for a lot of people, but I don't know what percent of our class went to college. I'm guessing not over twenty-five percent. I mean, I know some of them. The one fellow I'd seen, was a good friend, went to Princeton, became a good lefty pitcher there. We had played baseball together, and friends I'm still with, I think one went up to Tufts and I think a couple to Lehigh, maybe.

SI: The Korean War had also occurred, mostly during your high school years. Does anything stand out about the Korean War?

DC: What were the years on the Korean War? because, when I was filling the questionnaire out, I'm trying to put, … chronologically, this stuff together. …

SI: It was mid-1950 to mid-1953.

DC: Yes. It was that early, huh?

SI: Yes.

DC: Because it seems that some of the people who were involved in the Korean War that were later classmates, I don't know, I guess [were] maybe in the occupation after the war, but I don't remember. No, that's not true. I can remember quite a bit about the Korean War, in terms of what [I saw in the media]. By that time, you're starting to see television and you certainly were hearing the big controversy as to whether we should invade China or not, and some of the affairs that had occurred. Understanding all the ramifications and the diplomacy and all of that stuff probably was not in my realm at that time. [laughter] So, yes, certainly, we're all aware of the Korean War, but it didn't have the impact that the Second World War had. This was, like, I guess, to us, a skirmish, way off somewhere, and I don't think I know of anyone, at the time, that was serving in the Korean War.

SI: This was the beginning of the Cold War. People were fearful of Communism at home. Do you remember any of those discussions around your house or in school, the idea that Communists were infiltrating America or that we have to fight Communism abroad?

DC: Yes, I remember those discussions. I think I remember some of the McCarthy hearings and, at the beginning of those, as so many of us [did], thinking, "Wow, I can't believe how he's [doing this], all these Communists that he's finding and where they are. My God, this infiltration's terrible." Later in life, when you look back on that era, you're a little embarrassed by sort of being duped of a lot of things that were going on, but I remember, to a lot of people, he was sort of like the hero, rooting out all these Communists that were infiltrating the United States. … By the end of those hearings, I remember, what was his name, Welch? finally calling his bluff and realizing, I think, how wrong this guy was in so much of what he was doing. [Editor's Note: During the televised hearings of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in 1954 known as the McCarthy-Army Hearings, Joseph Welch, the lead counsel for the Army, skewered Senator Joseph McCarthy, an exchange often referred to as the beginning of the end of McCarthy's political career.] So, yes, there was the worry about

Communism. There were the preparations for atomic attacks and people, some, you know, having shelters and things of that nature and that Communism was trying to take over the world. … Those things were, you know, occurring, and the whole idea that we had to stop [the] Communists in Korea. … Yes; was it something that I personally had fears about? I don't think so. I knew it was there, but … I don't think I was very paranoid about it.

SI: You mentioned shelters. Did many people in Perth Amboy have shelters or was that just something you heard about?

DC: No, … I don't think they did. I think some people, … and maybe even we had some canned goods and things, in case anything happened, but I don't recall that.

SI: Did your family follow politics or get involved in politics at all?

DC: No, not much, maybe local politics, a little bit, but, no, I cannot say they followed politics a lot. They were, I think, for the most part, Republican, but we'd always vote for the Democratic mayor who was a friend of the family. So, there was some independence there.

SI: Before we leave high school, does anything else stand out about that period? Were you involved in a lot of clubs or activities?

DC: No. Some clubs in, I guess maybe it was the math club, physics club or something, in high school, can't remember which one. Oh, I was active in the theater and was voted the class actor, the class thespian. I'm amazed, and I suppose somewhat proud, of the fact that, yes, I was working like, maybe, twenty to thirty hours a week as an usher and still played a lot of [sports]. I couldn't play on the high school teams. I didn't have the time to do that, but I'd play on the neighborhood teams on weekends, and whenever I could, and I still was active in the theater, I still got good grades, … but I was working twenty to thirty hours a week, certainly for the last two years of high school.

SI: Did you work in the Majestic in the summers as well?

DC: Oh, yes, all year, and it was big pay, fifty cents an hour. [laughter]

SI: You had this very picturesque first experience with Rutgers. What do you remember about coming to live on campus for the first time, those first few days and weeks at Rutgers?

DC: Little homesick, never really having been away from home. You know, I look now and I realize I've traveled around the world at least twice and, up until getting out of Rutgers, probably the furthest west I'd ever gone was Quakertown, Pennsylvania. During high school, our parents let us take a trip to Niagara Falls as a senior trip that we took on our own. Our senior class trip was to Coney Island. So, I could not say I was well-traveled, and so, there was a loneliness, living away from home for the first time, in the first couple of days, and, you know, learning how to do things you never had to do, your own laundry and all of this stuff, which everybody's had that experience, and I remember checking into Demarest Hall and having a corner room. How many guys can live in New Brunswick, go to [Au] Bon Pain, look up and still see their freshman

room, up in the corner there? … In the corner rooms, you had two roommates and I walk in and there's this tall guy sitting there with another buddy. … They were drinking red wine, and he said, "Oh, God, here's this other guy coming in now. Where's he from?" and so, I uttered a few comments to him, and I thought, "God, this guy could kill me," but it just bothered me, his attitude. Well, long story short, of course, as so often happens, we became great friends and our third roommate was a very conservative guy, who I look back on, his father forcing him to study chemistry and he loved English, and it's funny. You can look back on it now, parental influence there probably ruined this guy, and we were very protective of Bill, and so, we became good friends, and Lee Lusardi, I remember, was our preceptor. … So, you know, the first couple of days was sort of the loneliness, being away, and then, you start to get all wound up in all this stuff that's new to you, you know, taking classes, going to buy books, getting your post office box at Winants Hall. … Although I was only thirty minutes from home, it felt like it could be [many] miles from home and you didn't have cell phones and computers and all that, and the only thing was … the pay phone in the hall. So, it was those times, and I must say that, probably, the fraternity was very good at that time. So, sometimes, when they look down on fraternities, and the University, it seems, has tended to try to deemphasize fraternity life, it was a smaller group unit that had some camaraderie that helped you during those early days, and they also hazed the hell out of you, but, you know, … that provided a little warmth that you were missing since you left home.

SI: Not talking about fraternity hazing, but was there any kind of hazing or initiation period as a freshman at Rutgers?

DC: Yes. You had to wear your dinks and I think a tie, until you had a match against the sophomores with this big ball behind the old College Avenue Gym, and, if you won that, you could finally get rid of your dinks and your ties. … Every year, the freshmen won, because ninety percent of the freshmen would show up and about two percent of the sophomores. [laughter] So, that was sort of a rigged contest.

SI: What do you mean by "the big ball?"

DC: There was this huge ball and you just had to push it and get across the goal line on one end or the other end, and, of course, we must have had 150 guys going out there and they had about twenty. [laughter] So, that wasn't much of a contest, and then, you could get rid of your dinks. The hazing, primarily, I did not remember, other than in the fraternity, because there wasn't much place to be hazed. In other words, your classes were [with] other freshmen, your dorm rooms were freshmen. So, there wasn't an environment, which would be different, I guess, in the military academies, and the only place where you really commingled a lot with upperclassmen was in the fraternity itself, and they had … hazing, now, which I realized was dangerous. … I look back on it and get a kick out of it, but I realize it could have gone the wrong way.

SI: Is there anything you could share?

DC: Oh, yes. One time, … there were three of us and we sort of didn't kowtow to everything the senior brothers would tell us and, you know, you'd always get these questions, "Is Brother Shuler fit to sleep with pigs?" Well, there's no answer to that, so, one way or the other, you're

going to do twenty-five pushups. [laughter] … We were sort of cantankerous, and so, they'd kidnapped me once and dropped me somewhere up by, oh, I forget what the dam is, way up in the Watchung Mountains, at about ten o'clock at night, with no money, and then, they took off and there I was, on that road. I had no idea where I was, and you hear dogs barking and all that. Finally, I made my way down to Route 22 and got in a car with some guys from Newark. There were all these guns in the car and everything and they were hunters, fortunately, … and I didn't tell them what had happened. I said, "My car broke down." I didn't think it would be a good idea to say I was a college guy, [laughter] and I finally got back to somewhere, a diner, and I called. One of the guys came out and got me. So, you look back and you realize, sometimes, kids could get in trouble these days, and you say, "Aren't they terrible?" but we did some pretty [bad things ourselves], and the other hazing, … you know, wasn't that bad. We had to try to sneak our dog into the Princeton game, down in Princeton, and that was not easy, because this was a big boxer mix, and he was a great dog. … We'd have to do stuff like that, and, yes, most of that stuff, and some of it was pretty interesting. You had to do a scavenger hunt and go out in the campus. We had to find the Kilmer Oak, which is always interesting, and some of that turned out to be pretty educational, but the fraternities were good. They were, I think, the first step in trying to learn, maybe, slightly more sophisticated manners than you had growing up in Perth Amboy in a middle-class family. We had to wear jackets and ties to dinner. Housemother would come in, you'd all stand until she sat down, and you would learn those things, and, in the parties, when you brought somebody over, you had to go and introduce her to the housemother. So, it was the start of, I guess, learning some social skills, also.

SI: Were there other traditions, like singing?

DC: Well, we had a lot of Glee Club members at Theta Chi, and so, we did a lot of singing there. … One of the rooms in the basement was the singing room, and we'd go in there, long tables, drinking beer for the parties, and how the house didn't burn down; it's no longer there. It was on Bartlett Street, and you'd take a candle when you'd go and you'd put your date's initials and yours up on the ceiling in this carbon, and, as long as they didn't look around too much to find out all the other dates with the initials, you were okay. [laughter] … We would sing, and I mean we would sing for hours, and people had them [memorized], and then, we actually had songbooks that we had made up, so [that] everybody could do it. … Then, you played beer games, thumper, and you're allowed to have beer in the fraternities. You know, I don't know if they still do or what, … I guess not now, but we normally had a keg of beer on tap. In a way, I think it was pretty good, because it was there and you weren't sneaking to do anything. So, I guess the excitement of drinking wasn't an excitement. If you felt like a beer, you went down and had it, and I think we had experiences with some guys that, you know, couldn't or didn't handle it and got drunk, and badly. … I mean, there was a lot of drinking, but I think, for the most part, with it being available, it wasn't totally abused by ninety percent of the guys. … We did go on social probation one year. … One of the guys got feeling really good, and, fortunately, they were all happy drunks, and the proctor had pulled up outside in his car. …

SI: Who was the proctor, a member of the administration?

DC: Yes, he was the campus cop. I think we only had one in those days, maybe, and he was a pretty good guy. He's like an ex-Marine, big guy, and he left the car out there and he came in

and the guy that was drunk got in the car, locked the doors and wouldn't let the proctor back in the car. [laughter] So, we were out there, begging him that we'd take him to a diner called the Silver Meteor, down by the train station, if he'd get out of the car and let the proctor get back in. [laughter] So, finally, we convinced him to do that. We took him down there, but we went on social probation for a semester. So, there were some, yes, abuses, but, no, singing was a big part of the fraternity and intramural sports were a big part of it.

SI: Okay. The intramural sports you were involved in were related to the fraternity.

DC: Yes.

SI: Was that a source of pride for the fraternity, the sports teams?

DC: Oh, yes, sure. You played in a league against the other fraternities, and we'd play basketball, football, baseball, and then, we had the song contest and you'd also sing in those days. … I know the FIJIs [Phi Gamma Delta] had a lot of Glee Clubbers, and that was the big rivalry between Theta Chi and the FIJI House, who would win the song trophy, and so, yes, that was an important part of life. … You eat your meals in the fraternity and I think there's one night a week they didn't serve meals and, the other time, if they had liver and onions, they would announce it, and you didn't have to eat that if you didn't like it. So, other than that, you would eat lunch and dinner there. So, it was a source of mingling among different classes, and, one year, I stayed in the fraternity. We had a limited number of rooms. I guess we probably had about forty, fifty brothers and probably had about room for twenty, and the accommodations were pretty lousy. So, I stayed there one year, then, went back to the dorms. So, I stayed in the dorms three years and the fraternity one year.

SI: When you say it was lousy, was it just run down or was it the dormitory style?

DC: It was dormitory style. I mean, everybody slept in one huge room and, I remember, we'd leave the windows open and snow would come in and be on top of you in the night, and some guys would come in late at night, and then, you had study rooms and you'd have, like, four guys to a study room. I mean, it was fun and … part of it was really good. It wasn't [that] I disliked it, but I thought it was better just rooming in one of the dormitories.

SI: Was FIJI the major rival or just for singing?

DC: I think just for singing. I don't remember who the major rivals would be, other than in the singing thing. We played everybody sort of equally.

SI: Did the administration come down hard on the fraternities in those four years?

DC: No. You'd go on social pro [probation] if you really, you know, abused booze or, you know, the fraternities, particularly where we were, we were the only fraternity on Bartlett Street, and so, you had residences around you. So, if you went too crazy, you'd get all sorts of complaints about the noise we'd be making late in the morning, or something, late in the evening, but the University was pretty supportive of fraternities at that time. … There was a council for

the fraternities. I think Dean [Howard] Crosby, at the time, was good with the fraternities and very helpful to the Glee Club.

SI: Was he the Dean of Men then or not?

DC: Yes, I think he was, and I think Dr. [Lewis] Webster [Jones] was the President my freshman year, and I think Dr. [Mason] Gross became President after him. [Editor's Note: Dr. Mason Gross was President of Rutgers University from 1959 to 1971.]

SI: He was the Provost then.

DC: Yes. He was Provost first, and then, President.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Did you get involved with the Glee Club right away, in your freshman year, or later?

DC: Yes, right away. As you said before, Glee Club guys want to talk about the Glee Club, [laughter] because the Glee Club was very significant in my life, and for them. [F. Austin] "Soup" Walter was the director, and more should be made of him at the University. I know we had a memorial service. I was disappointed that the President didn't attend, because I believe he was the longest tenured professor in the University. He had conducted the Glee Club for over fifty years. Soup Walter was a remarkable, remarkable person, who gave Rutgers fame throughout the world, and I think more should be made of him and I wish we would have; maybe somebody would do a biography of him. He was a very fascinating man and influenced his boys a great deal. It was a direction I never thought I would go. The Glee Club, it's just as I said, because the president of my fraternity, Bill Gillis, was the president, and I [said], "Oh, let me go see what this is about. It might be fun to do this." Fortunately, I made it, probably barely, and it became a great experience. … There was a great deal of camaraderie, a lot of work with the Glee Club. We rehearsed two nights a week. I think it was Monday and Wednesday nights, and it would be a full rehearsal, like, from six to nine or seven to nine o'clock, but it afforded some opportunities I never thought I would have. First, we traveled around. We didn't take the European trips, like they had later in life. I don't know what our longest trip was, but one of the really nice things was, prior to school starting, we would go to a retreat up in Lake Minnewaska, up in New York State, up near New Paltz, New York. … Those were wonderful, wonderful times, staying at this old resort, serenading, and I guess we would get the rooms and board free, and we would serenade at night. … On one concert, we'd stand on one side of this lake and serenade this huge old lodge on the other side, serenading across the lake, and it was very dramatic. … We always thought Soup, with his conducting, would fall off the cliff. … I always wanted to put a plaque there. Maybe, someday, I'll do that for him, and then, there were some, maybe, ulterior motives, but they had beautiful young ladies from colleges working there and they hadn't seen any guys under the age of, probably, eighty for the whole season. [laughter] So, we made quick friends and, traditionally, we'd go down to a German tavern called Emil's at night, up in the mountains. … We'd sing, and we sang everywhere, and we'd drink beer, and then, Soup Walter, out on this, well, this was sort of a back roads highway, probably about midnight, would go out there and proceed to do cartwheels down the center of the road, and good

ones, not phony ones. [laughter] … I remember, one night, we were singing and this old gentleman came over, and I was afraid he was going to say, "Could you guys keep it down?" and he gave me a check, for I think fifty bucks, and he said, "I just want to contribute to you guys." He said, "I'm a professor at Columbia," and he said, "You guys are the best I've ever heard," which was very nice, and then, a great experience, we had University Choir, which was a combination of the Men's Glee Club and the women's, whatever song organization over there, Women's Glee Club from Douglass, and we would sing with symphony orchestras. … Well, from what we were told, we were the second most requested choral group in the United States, next to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, to sing with these orchestras, and I know it was true, because we sang with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, which was probably the first or second best orchestra in the United States, one of the best in the world. We sang with them for two years. We sang with the New York Philharmonic, and those were great experiences. I mean, I was not a music major, I could barely read music, and I learned so much. I sat next to some music experts in my class. They'd tell me, "Well, there's the flautist. He's the greatest in the world. His name's [William] Kincaid," and you'd watch the tympani [kettle drums], and the rehearsals were absolutely a great, rewarding experience to me. One anecdote on that is, we sang [with], as almost like playing with a minor league orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, as a warm-up for singing later with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. … We went down, in the middle of the winter, to Baltimore and they had a conductor called Massimo Freccia, a volatile Italian conductor, and we started singing. It was a very difficult part in *Carmina Burana*, which is a wonderful piece to sing, a very dynamic piece to sing, and it took a lot of syncopation on the orchestra's part and they could not get it, and he was sort of embarrassed in front of the choir, who I don't think we had made any errors and we knew what we were doing. So, he finally threw his baton at the orchestra, walked off, put on a fur coat and left and refused to conduct this rehearsal until the orchestra, the assistant conductor drilled them, so [that] they could do it. So, we ended up having the afternoon off, in lovely Baltimore, in the middle of the winter, and we came back later that night, the performance was the following night, just hoping that the orchestra could do it. We were pulling so much for that orchestra, and they did it okay. [laughter] Anyway, so, we got by that, and the reviews we got there, and I used to have a scrapbook with those, my mother had kept it, said, "The greatest musical event in Baltimore's history." So, they were spectacular, and then, we sang with Eugene Ormandy for two years, with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, in Carnegie Hall and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia; I think once in the old gym here [the College Avenue Gym], too. … We sang *Carmina* and it's dynamic. At the end, everybody jumps up and goes crazy, and then, the next year, we did [Giuseppe] Verdi's *Requiem* and, at the end, people aren't even sure it's the end. So, you're almost [feeling] like you're a failure, because you just barely hear a little applause. Then, it grows up and you get applause, but, when we did one of these works, … Leontyne Price was a soloist. She was married to William Warfield, who, if you remember, sang *Old Man River* in *Show Boat*. … At the end, we were on the busses, ready to leave for New Brunswick, and he jumped aboard and said, "Bravo, chorus, bravo, chorus," to each bus. We sang with Richard Tucker, who was a famous opera singer, Giorgio Tozzi, who, if you ever saw the old movie, for you, *South Pacific*, with Rossano Brazzi and all this, well, the voice was Giorgio Tozzi. That was a voiceover for Rossano Brazzi. So, oh, there were fun stories in those. Richard Tucker would come out for rehearsal, he was really balding and, all of a sudden, he comes out for the evening performance, he has this flowing hair and all of this. So, obviously, he puts his wig on for the performances. [laughter] I forget who was the singer that came, and, sometimes, to save

a voice, singers will sing an octave lower, and Ormandy would [say], "Not with me, Renata." … She'd have to sing regularly for the rehearsal, and then, you hear this orchestra going crazy. Ormandy would be there, "Second violinist, little flat," [laughter] and you'd marvel at the man. … I have a little off color story; at the time, I was assistant, or whatever I was, with the Glee Club, but I had to find out when they were supposed to stand and all of this stuff. So, I went to talk to him and, as I'm talking to him in the rehearsal, down comes this very bosomy woman, and I look over and he smiles at me. He sees me looking. He says, "Oh, nice bazooms, huh?" [laughter] So, we laughed at it, and then, when he came down to Douglass, in the, I forget what the building was over there, right off of Route 18, it was their music building, I guess, but it was a large facility … to do rehearsals, and the interesting thing there [was], we could get controversy on this, but he said that women's voices matured later than men's, and so, he's very concerned about the lack of maturity in the women's voices. So, he came to rehearsal and he said, "Ladies, please, put the bazooms in them," and he looked over at me and he winked. [laughter] … He was a great character, who, later in life, when I was dating a lady, we went up to … Saratoga, where the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra summered, and I said, "I don't know if he'll remember me, but maybe," and I took her and her family back, and they said, "Oh, he knows the *maestro*?" and I said, "He's never going to remember me, but I will just say hello." … He looked and he waved, and waved me over. I went over and … he did remember me, and he was a really good, fun person.

SI: It must have been very demanding to keep this schedule with the Glee Club while pursuing an engineering degree.

DC: It was, and I'd like to rationalize it and say, "That's why I wasn't in the top of my class," [laughter] but there are other reasons. … Yes, I'd done well in those subjects, in math and that, in high school, but, when you come here, the competition, all of a sudden, you're on a different level. I mean, you're no longer way up on the top. You're, at best, in the middle, and you have some very, very bright people that are in these classes, and, all of a sudden, you realize, "Wow, there are a lot of bright people around," and engineering was tough. … They had what we called an Engineering Council, and I was president of the Engineering Council, which was all the engineering disciplines. … The embarrassing part about that is because we had about fourteen industrial engineers and, in our senior year, eight of us, or nine, failed "AC/DC Machinery," an electrical engineering course. We're not going to graduate. So, I went in to Dean [Elmer C.] Easton, at the time, and he agreed to hold a special concentrated summer course for us. So, we would still graduate in the Class of '58, but we couldn't graduate at the ceremonies, and so, sure enough, eight of us went to these seven-hour-a-day AC/DC machinery classes, to go through this once again and see if we could pass that course, and we did. So, we are Class of '58, but, unfortunately, … we could attend, but we couldn't participate in the graduating [ceremony]. … A couple of the parents took that very hard, and then, as usual, my mother and family said, "Listen, you're graduating. That's what's important." So, they were great about that.

SI: What did you think of Dean Easton? Was that your only contact with him?

DC: No. Having been on the council, I had, oh, quite a bit of contact with Dean Easton, not a lot, but some contact with him, and Dean Ayers, I guess, was his assistant. … Oh, he was a funny-looking guy, but brilliant and cared for his students. You wouldn't think it; he didn't look

like an emotional person, but he [was], and he would listen and he was really … special. I was also president of the Industrial Engineering Society and, when you talk about impressive people, we'd try to get speakers and I looked around and tried a couple of people, and I noticed Dr. [Mason] Gross was on; I guess he was still Provost. … After [Lewis] Webster [Jones], I don't know if there was another President [of Rutgers University] in-between Webster and Gross. There might have been.

SI: I do not know if there was an acting president or if Mason Gross just went right into the presidency.

DC: Yes, I can't remember either, but, in any case, I finally called him and asked if he could give a little talk, and he said, "For about how long?" I said, "Oh, maybe forty-five minutes, if you would?" and he agreed, and so, we held it in the old Engineering Building and he came over and I met him outside and I said, … "What's your talk going to be about, Dr. Gross?" and he said, "What would you like it to be?" I was like, "Anything?" He said, "Yes, tell me what you'd like." [laughter] So, I couldn't believe this. Here's a guy, he's going to talk forty-five minutes, name any subject you want. So, I said, "Well, I know there's a lot of talk about [if] engineering should be five years, because we don't get enough of the arts and that, you know." "Great subject," and he got out there. It was like he had prepared this for two weeks. I mean, it was so perfect, so well-organized. … I couldn't believe it, very impressive man. … Everybody knows and tells you he was on the TV show, where he was the resident expert, Old Gold Cigarettes, or something, and he used to smoke and he'd be there smoking. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross appeared on the television game shows *Think Fast* and *Two for the Money* in the late 1940s and early 1950s as an expert and/or judge.] … After we left, when they went through the turbulent, what was it, '70s, '80s? he did, probably, as well of a job as anybody could have done at Rutgers. He was, in my mind, a very good President.

SI: Do any of your other professors or courses stand out in your memory?

DC: Yes, Professor Keebler. He was the "daddy" of industrial engineering at Rutgers and he guided us through those types of courses. You know, at the time, when you were here, you really took; three-quarters of your courses were the same … for all engineers, and then, one-quarter, you specialized, and all the specialization in industrial engineering was probably Professor Keebler and he was very good, very down to Earth. Professor [Richard C.] Reager taught public speaking, which was a wonderful thing to make all engineers take, and we took it, and he was an ex-Theta Chi from way back and he'd written some great books. … He'd always call [me] "Brother Don," but he taught us how to get up and speak, and it was very difficult for some people and he was very influential, but, between Dean Easton and Professor Keebler and Professor Reager; … overall, most of the professors, I think, were really, when I look back on it, really pretty good. … Yes, I was, like, in the middle of the class. I think part of the "AC/DC Machinery" problem was, this was an Italian professor and it was tough to understand him, and so, although, even in the summer class, I didn't do too great, [laughter] and that was not an Italian professor, so, maybe that's a rationalization, but I think our professors were pretty good. The courses were tough for me. You know, you only had about two electives, maybe. I know I took one English literature and one; no, maybe four. I took one music appreciation course with

Professor Soup Walter and I took baby psychology and, of course, in the last couple years, ROTC became an elective. First two years, everybody took ROTC. …

SI: You did not opt to go for Advanced ROTC.

DC: Yes. We can now phase into the military part, unless you have some other stuff with the Rutgers bit.

SI: I wanted to ask, first, what attracted you to industrial engineering?

DC: I guess, a great deal, you wanted to get a job when you got out of college. Engineering, you got a job. I didn't want to be technical, real technical, and they all [were technically-oriented], electrical engineering, I didn't want to be civil engineering, and I looked at industrial engineering and I said, "Gee, this seems a nice mix between business and engineering," which it certainly turned out to be, and so, I took that path. … You know, you're never really sure what you know; I remember discussing with my roommate, my senior year, "What do you think you want to study?" because, all the way through school, there was always the doubt in my mind, "Do I really want to be an engineer?" and I felt, "Man, I must be the only person here," but you find out, in school, a lot of people, going all the way through, unless they've had a real deep conviction, you're always, "Is this really the right path for me?" … Even in your senior year, you're saying, "Jeez, I don't know if this is the right path for me." … You know, I would like to have been an architect, but, of course, Rutgers didn't have architecture, and so, when I decided to come here, I knew I wasn't going to be an architect, but a lot of it was geared to being able to … make sure you could get a job when you got out of school, and engineers, at that time, probably had the highest percent of jobs getting out of here. Everybody's looking for engineers.

SI: Looking back, having spent your career in engineering, did you see anything that you were taught, any techniques or subject matter, that was really innovative or that you felt was really good preparation?

DC: Yes, I think the industrial engineering courses happened to help me. The basic courses, like when somebody said, "Well, how much did you use thermodynamics?" I feel good that I even remember what it means, … but what it does is, it develops a scientific approach to your mental process and it develops a confidence … in handling statistics and numbers. So, did I use a lot of those courses, like a thermodynamics or a kinematics and things of that nature, in that basic curriculum, which you took no matter what kind of engineering you were studying? not directly. I did use my civil engineering and I used my industrial engineering, and, you know, I always remember, we had a Professor Peck, was an ex-Exxon executive, and he basically taught a course, they probably didn't call it this, but it was in human resources. You don't appreciate human resources in those days, when you're up all night doing your exams, doing your lab reports and all this, and all I remember from this poor professor [was], he's so well-dressed, with a vest and everything, and such a nice guy, but this was the easy course for engineers. … We'd go in there and most of the guys would be half asleep and you knew you could get through this course, because it was the one [where] you didn't have any right and wrong answers. You're going to write essay-type things at the end and all of that, and, yet, that was a course [that] would have been very handy, just like public speaking was handy.

SI: Just in rough numbers, how much time did your coursework require?

DC: A lot. We're taking, I think, nineteen to twenty-one credits. We always had labs on Saturday mornings. We'd barely get up and be able to run over to the football games, which were big social events in those days, and you'd wear sports jackets and be dressed. … You'd take your date and, you know, sit with your fraternity, and we may not have had all the great teams, but we had a lot of fun at those games.

SI: Did the Glee Club perform at the games or any University activities?

DC: Well, yes, I don't remember us performing at the football games. We did perform a concert, which they still do, once a year, here, and we did perform, I think, very moving Christmas concerts at Kirkpatrick Chapel.

SI: Okay. I know, now, the Glee Club is very heavily involved in Alumni Weekend and alumni events. Was that how it was then?

DC: It's funny, I don't remember that as much then, and perhaps we were and perhaps we weren't. … I don't remember, specifically, a lot of participation at those, but I may be wrong. They may not have stuck in my memory. I remember us going to St. Mary's and the girls' schools and having great exchanges and having fun on that, and appearing in a lot of different, either churches or high schools, around the state. … These were the venues we had in those days, other than the choir, which, as I said, would sing in Carnegie Hall and all of that stuff. … Unfortunately, we never had the opportunity to make the European tours and things that they're doing now.

SI: Just to ask a couple of questions about the social life at Rutgers, it seems like a lot of the focus was on the fraternity. Were there a lot of parties, balls, that sort of thing?

DC: Oh, yes, yes. There were a couple of University-wide balls, Military Ball. I remember one, we had a boat ride, which was great, and that was going up to Bear Mountain and that was a Rutgers boat ride. … That was neat. They actually gave you half a day of school off and we all went up on Bear Mountain, cruised up there and came back at night. … That was really a beautiful tradition, the Rutgers boat ride, and Soph Hop. So, you had a lot of University large dances, with bands that would come in, and, other than those, your social life really did center … very much around the fraternity.

SI: For a lot of these events, you mentioned bringing dates. Were they from NJC? Actually, we had Douglass College by then.

DC: I think it was NJC our freshman year, and then, Douglass, maybe, in our sophomore [year], the name was changed; yes, for the most part.

SI: Okay.

DC: Occasionally, you brought somebody from your hometown, particularly your freshman year, when you still had friends back there and you didn't know as many friends over here, but, if you had some girls you knew from your school that went over to Douglass, they were great sources to fix you up with some dates over there. So, yes, I would say almost all the dates were from Douglass.

SI: You mentioned becoming very close with these initial roommates in Demarest Hall. Did you stay with them in the dorms?

DC: No. After that first year, I'm not sure, Bill, maybe he flunked out and maybe he went and lived at home. My other roommate, Ross, joined Chi Psi, no, Chi Phi, and so, he roomed in there, and I moved into the fraternity my next year, and then, we sort of drifted apart. … You know, after that, we'd see each other once in awhile on campus and stuff, but that was not a long relationship, but it was a very nice one.

SI: Was the dorm kind of like a social unit? Were there dorm-based activities?

DC: No, no. Most people were pledging fraternities in their freshman year, and so, I know I was with a lot of FIJIs [that] had pledged, because our preceptor … already was a FIJI, [laughter] and so, he had gotten quite a few and they were trying to get me to go FIJI House, and it would have been my second choice. … So, we had all different fraternities represented in that wing of the dormitory, because, as a freshman, you couldn't stay in the fraternities. I don't know if that was because they didn't have room or whether there was even a University rule, but, normally, nobody was living in their house their freshman year.

SI: One of the great Rutgers traditions of this era was the rivalry with Princeton, and with some of the other schools, like Lehigh and Lafayette. Do you remember any of that?

DC: Oh, wonderful times. Unfortunately, Princeton would always beat us. Freshman year, we went down there and, lo and behold, a Perth Amboy graduate, Billy Gatyas, was our great quarterback and he scored the first touchdown. It was 6-0, I always remember, and, oh, we were going to win. Well, we ended up losing, I think, 46-6, or something, but that was a great tradition. We had a lot of fun, and we would go to a lot of the away games, to Lehigh, Lafayette, Colgate, Delaware, and we'd have a group from the fraternity [that] would go to those games and those were a lot of fun. I mean, there was a lot of camaraderie. The team was okay, not great, but it was a great social time and a lot of fun.

SI: Were there any pranks or anything like that, like going down to Princeton and doing something, or Princeton guys coming up here?

DC: Yes, well, the Princeton guys came up here and they used to steal the cannon, until we buried it in concrete. We'd go down and paint a line down the middle of Princeton. … We'd get in trouble in a lot of the universities, and, I remember, we'd be tearing down the goal post, once, and good, old Dean Crosby, [it] would have been a bad deal, because … the university police from, I think it was Lehigh, came out and he [Crosby] said, "We'll pay for all the damage. We'll

pay for all of this. Let them have the goal post," sort of saved the day. He was a very, very student-oriented dean.

SI: For your first two years, you went into Air Force ROTC.

DC: Yes, and then, I decided I wanted to be a pilot, and so, I went into Advanced ROTC, and then, they changed the active duty requirement for pilots from three to five years. They actually gave you a choice, either to go into a non-pilot capacity for three years [of] active duty, stay as a pilot for five years [of] active duty or drop the program, and so, I dropped the program, but I had gone through all [the] pilot's [tests], physical, and, actually, we had gone up for a couple test flights, where they let you handle the plane in midair enough for all that, but I didn't want to commit to the five years at that time. … To make that transition, when I got out of Rutgers, you knew, eventually, you're going to be drafted and I did want to become an officer. … My senior roommate, Pete Casciano, who was also an industrial engineer, who also flunked "AC/DC Machinery" in that senior year, his brother was a cadet at the Coast Guard Academy. So, we always had all these pictures of Coast Guard cutters in the room and all of this stuff and Pete, that's all he wanted to do. Once he got out, he was going to go to OCS at the Coast Guard Academy. So, he did that and he told us [what] a great program they had and, up until that time, I still wanted to be a pilot. So, I went over to the Marines, for a Marine recruiter, and he said, "Gee, everything looks good. We'd love to have you as a Marine," and he said, "Why do you want to be a Marine?" and I said, "Well;" I gave him the idea that the Air Force required five years for pilots, and then, the Marine Corps, just three. … He was a good guy. He said, "You know, we like to hear that the first thing you said when you woke up as a child was 'Marine,'" [laughter] and I laughed a little bit and he said, "I'll be honest with you, Don." He said, "That's going to change within a few months and, once you're in the Marine Corps, they're not going to give you the option to just drop out." So, I realized it was a matter of time before all the services would have that. My college roommate, who was now up at the Academy, in OCS, said, "Hey, the Coast Guard's great. They'll guarantee you engineering duty, if you come in," and all that, and I thought, "You know what? This is probably the right thing to do." So, I went to work for … I guess about a year, or a little less than a year, when I got out, for a civil engineering company in Perth Amboy, as a civil engineer. … That's where my civil engineering helped, doing surveying work and layout work for some of the refineries in Perth Amboy, the Squibb building out here, Forrestal Center, down in, near Princeton, and so, I applied to the Coast Guard.

SI: To stay on that topic for a moment, was it difficult to get a job, coming out of college, in engineering?

DC: No. I had had a few offers and, far and away, because I had worked summers for this civil engineering company, the highest offer was with them. … Since I knew I was going to have to go into the service, I thought it made sense [to] make as much money as I could, and then, go into the service. So, that's what I chose to do and that turned out to be good.

SI: Tell me about going into the Coast Guard.

DC: Well, the Coast Guard, just as Pete said, they'd give you your choice of duty and you could request different duty stations, but they pretty much guaranteed [you your choice], and they

needed engineers. So, you knew you were going to be an engineer, and, if I couldn't fly, I figured I should get started with my career. So, I went up for OCS, for seventeen weeks, at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, and mine was the last class that went to the Coast Guard Academy for Officer's Candidate School. The year later, they moved it to Yorktown, Virginia, and part of that was, it was a little tough, I think, on the cadets, because they'd been up there four years trying to become officers and we go up there in seventeen weeks and we're officers, even though, of course, we already had four years of college behind us. … Those turning points in your life and why they occur, you always say, "Well, somebody up there's watching over you," I guess, but going in the Coast Guard was one of the real keys to my life and one of the highlights, along with Rutgers and the Coast Guard and, later in life, my profession. Those were the keys to being wherever I am, for better or for worse, but OCS then was another new experience. With saying you're not really an early morning person, well, you were up at five-thirty in the morning and you all of a sudden became a morning person. [laughter] … It was, again, a whole new experience, in both the classes [and] the discipline. The classmates you met up there, now, were from California and from all over the country. … There was one guy from Rutgers, Nelson Cederberg, who was from our class and also was in the OCS class, and it was just coincidental. I didn't even know he was going; he didn't know I was going.

SI: Were most of the OCS candidates your age or were they younger guys or older guys?

DC: Probably eighty percent were my age, all just college graduates out one year or straight out of college, and twenty percent were what they called "mustangs," were warrant officers that were coming back … to become commissioned officers. So, they'd come back, and it was amazing how well they melded in. You know, we all sort of said, "Hey, Grandpa, … help us out," and, you know, and they were good. They were good guys, [laughter] and the instructors were really topnotch, good guys. Yes, it was difficult. They had a demerit system and you did not have liberty for your first four weeks. So, you couldn't get off the base, and then, after four weeks, you get your first liberty and, if you had a certain number of demerits, you didn't. … I was doing fine, and then, all of a sudden, we had a spaghetti dinner and I went and I took a piece of bread and pushed some of the spaghetti on my fork. … Somebody saw it and I got demerits for eating with two hands, and it put me over the limit. So, I lost liberty for the first week, and I learned you don't push spaghetti onto your fork with the bread. [laughter] Bosley Crowther, whose father was a pretty famous reviewer for the *New York Times* in those days, and he was from Princeton, he was my roommate and he came in, he got in so much trouble, he had so many demerits, that we all tried to help Boz, to make sure he wouldn't get kicked out, and Boz survived and became an officer with the rest of us.

SI: Did people wash out of OCS?

DC: Yes, both for physical [reasons] and, well, you also had a lot of courses you had to pass. I don't think a high percent, not like the high percent of guys that started out in engineering at Rutgers, either changed programs or washed out; maybe ten percent did at OCS. I'm trying to think how big the class was, which I can't remember.

SI: You have touched on the transition from the freedom of civilian life to the restrictions of military life. Did you adapt well to that? Did other people not adapt to that very well?

DC: I think going in the service, I felt, was a duty I owed my country, and I was going to do it no matter what, and I had the attitude that, "Hey, you know, whatever it took, I was going to do." … Some of the stuff I would just smile at, you know, when you'd have to learn to make hospital corners on your beds and they'd come in and bounce a silver dollar off it and you get demerits if it wouldn't bounce, when you're taking bayonets and scraping old wax off of these old barracks that were there, off the floors, and they would come in and check the floors. Later in life, you realized, no matter what you did, you were going to get demerits for something. No, I didn't find it tough. I found there was a great deal of camaraderie and I think, generally, if you talk [to people], and people that talk about [the] military and all this stuff, those that are in, I think, far and away, must tell you that there's a phenomenal amount of camaraderie in the military, and what people may not realize in saying, "Oh, well, this guy's got to serve his country, got to go into the military," and all this [is], it's not a negative for most people, and I was very fortunate, because I was in [during] a period of peace. I was between the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and you know more from people you've interviewed and these others, but there's still [camaraderie], and I would think there's even more camaraderie if you share it in battle with people, but you're going through something that you're all going through together, and that's what OCS was. … So, no, I did not find it a difficult experience. I found the academic part of it fairly simple, again, because an engineering background gives you such a sound base. So, when people would get into anything where numbers were required, navigation or stuff like this, it was pretty simple for an engineer. Some of them had a lot of trouble getting through that, but I was never a good swimmer. One of my reluctances was, I could really barely swim and, here, I'm going into the Coast Guard. … You had to swim two lengths of a pool, which I did half on my back, half free stroke, and I made out, but, then, you also had to jump, on a diving board, from the top balcony in this gym, and I had never jumped off a board more than two feet high, I don't think. … I remember laying awake all night, [wondering] how I was going to do that, and I just walked up and walked off. [laughter] … To my amazement, I came back up to the surface when I got there, but I think the professors knew, or the instructors knew, and they had jumped into the water when I went off the board, but I was okay. [laughter] So, I got through that, and there was one guy, Phil Diamond, who was a good guy, and he would not go off that board and you couldn't get out of OCS if you didn't pass it. So, we told him we're going to take him over there and we're going to gradually let him go out on the board, one [time], a little bit, and then, out a little bit more, and we'd work with him for about a week. So, we'd go over there, and, of course, our intention was, the first time we got there, we're going to shove him off, and we told the instructor and he was … hiding in the pool. So, we got Phil up there and we said, "No, no, just go a little further, and, the next time we come in, you know, we'll go a little further and a little further," and then, we shoved him off the board. So, Phil went splashing into the water and passed the test. [laughter]

SI: Were the drill instructors very tough? Did they hurl abuse at people?

DC: They didn't abuse people, no.

SI: Like verbal abuse.

DC: No, not really. They were tough. They'd give you demerits, they'd chew your butt out, but … nothing like you see in the movies with, I suppose, the Marine drill sergeants, maybe they do it, but not at OCS. … You know, they tear you down for about fourteen weeks, until you know you're nothing, and you go on cruises and, of course, everybody gets seasick, even the mustangs, for some reason or another. There's a pool [bet] on it and whoever doesn't [get sick] shares the money, … but you're going to go out there and you've got to stand all your watches again. If you don't do it, you go back out. … So, the requirements were tough. You know, nobody was [saying], "Okay, don't worry about that." You were going to do it, but they were good guys and, no, I can't say it was any real mental abuse or anything, or any physical abuse on any of that stuff. You might have to run laps and things like that, but, no, nothing like that.

SI: Did they have a cutter there for you to train on?

DC: Yes, yes, the *Cuyahoga*, which was a 125-foot cutter, and we also went aboard the *Eagle*, climbed the mast on the *Eagle*, which was up at the Academy, but didn't get a chance to sail her, but, primarily, the *Cuyahoga*. [Editor's Note: The USCGC *Eagle* (WIX-327) is a training barge used by cadets at the US Coast Guard Academy.] You take two cruises, and the different watches you would stand, you know, one was, you'd go into the … combat information center, where you were primarily, you know, you'd rig for running red lights on and you're trying to track different things and, theoretically, if you're going to do submarine warfare, that's what you're practicing. … You know, I made the mistake of tracking something and thought, "My God, this is great. It's moving at about twelve knots," and all of this stuff and did a nice job, but it was a lighthouse. So, you learned as to what you had to do then, and then, you had to stand engine room duty. … When you're smelling pork, intentionally, all over the ship and you go down into the engine room and, now, you've got diesel oil, … you're feeling a little woozy, but they'd give you a little bucket and you'd carry that bucket around. [laughter] You'd be throwing up all over, but you were going to stand your watches. [laughter] Well, of course, this only accentuates it. Now, you go into this little room, half the size of this room, and everybody's been in there sick, so, you know. [laughter] So, it was a tough, tough experience, the first cruise, and, if you hit rough weather, which we did, and it was amazing, I'd never been seasick in my life and, yet, because everybody's around you doing it, it's on your mind, I got seasick. The second cruise was different, and then, you really felt like you belonged.

SI: Had you had much experience with seafaring? You mentioned one or two boat rides.

DC: None, no, none, and, at the end of OCS, it's interesting, because, after they've torn you down for fourteen weeks, now, they're going to turn you into officers and gentlemen. Now, they build you up for three weeks. … The second part of learning etiquette, I think, was, after you got some in your fraternity, you now learned it to a much higher degree at OCS, and you learned what to wear to formal parties, you learned, when you pay a call on your commanding officer, you take your little calling cards and you leave them in a silver plate. … You learned a lot more etiquette in the Coast Guard, and then, dress whites, and so, the last couple of weeks, a lot of that is etiquette in different things. … When you graduate, the first person that salutes you, you give him a silver dollar, and so, of course, the cadets would all be standing outside, waiting, trying to grab a salute, and he'd grab one. Then, you've got to give him a silver dollar. [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that OCS eventually moved to Yorktown because of this proximity to the cadets at the Academy. Was there any interaction or any rivalry with the four-year cadets?

DC: Yes, there was a rivalry, at times, but not [constantly]. For instance, one of our duties was, we'd do fire patrols in all of the dormitories for the regular cadets, and so, we would walk up and down the halls and we'd be in this [dorm] and you'd get some comments and guys would [talk], you know, but not any serious stuff like that. … I think there was just this [attitude], you know, "Why do we have these guys on this campus, you know, … 'seventeen-week wonders,' and we're here for four years?" but, no, that was about it, because you were separated. You didn't eat in their mess hall. … You shared the chapel on Sunday, and the chapel was very beautiful. … Everyone'd go to chapel on Sunday and that was beautiful, and a big plus was, Connecticut College for Women was across the street and the cadets weren't allowed to have cars, but we could bring cars up and store them off the base, and so, we had cars. … I guess that was some of the rivalry, also, was between the OCS guys and Connecticut College for Women people. [laughter] So, getting out of there was rewarding. Unfortunately, that's when my mother was starting to die with cancer, and so, she never had an opportunity to come up and see me. They gave me a special pass to go home to see her and I asked her if she wanted me to stay and she said, "No, you finish what you're doing," and, as my mother did, I suppose, my whole life, the timing, it was so perfect that it didn't interfere. I ended up getting my commission and, two days later, she died. So, naturally, none of my family was up there. Actually, a girl I had dated for a little bit at Connecticut College pinned my commission [officer's insignia] on me, … but OCS was a very rewarding experience, overall, and they gave you a choice of duty and station, and then, you said which one was paramount. … As I said, if I said engineering, you were going to get your first choice in what it was, and then, [for] the station, I put down New York, Washington, DC, and I guess Miami, and it came back, it said, "Seattle, Washington." [laughter] Here's a guy who'd never been further west than Quakertown, Pennsylvania, and so, I walked in, as a naïve, young officer would, and said, "Chief, I think they made a mistake. It's supposed to be Washington, DC. It says Seattle, Washington." [laughter] They said, "No, sir, that's not a mistake." So, lo and behold, of all places I ever thought I'd be going, I ended up getting based in Seattle, Washington. So, I went back. You got two weeks' leave and [I] went to my mother's funeral, and I had to pack up and drive cross-country to Seattle, Washington, and my college roommate, who was the pitcher I told you about earlier, and fraternity brother, was going to go attend USC. So, I said, "Mike, why don't you [join me]? We'll drive cross-country together." So, we took my Chevy convertible and we took two weeks and we drove cross-country and ended up in Seattle, Washington, and that's how I got to my duty station.

SI: In OCS, had you had any preparation for being an engineering officer in the Coast Guard, or was that all stuff you were going to learn on the job in Seattle?

DC: That was stuff you're going to learn on the job in Seattle. They didn't specialize at that point, because you weren't sure you were going to get engineering duty until the end, even though they told you you would, and so, it's a standard for everybody, in terms of OCS. You're learning to be an officer, and then, they're looking at your background as to whether you can qualify as an engineer, or whatever other discipline you could go into, and the trip cross-country, of course, had many tales to it. We managed to stop at the University of Wisconsin. This was in the summer and they had a great summer school and parties and we spent too much time there,

and then, we decided we'd better really hightail it out to Seattle, or, otherwise, I'd be late. … We'd go about eighty miles and stop at a place called Lake Chanute for lunch and it was so much fun, we spent two days there. So, we had to make a mad rush, so [that] I wasn't AWOL on my first duty station, and we get into Seattle; have you ever been there?

SI: No.

DC: Seattle's beautiful, and we're in downtown Seattle and, with the convertible top down, it was a beautiful summer day and [there were] some nice-looking coeds next to us, and we asked, "Hey, where's the University of Washington?" and they looked, "Oh, come on, guys, you can do better than that." Well, we really didn't know where it was, and we were going to go stay at the fraternity. So, we finally found the fraternity at the University of Washington, and the Coast Guard didn't have any officers' quarters. So, you were getting subsistence in quarters and you lived off base. So, lo and behold, the fraternity says, "Jeez, we've got an annex over there and there's plenty of room." So, all of a sudden, I'm back at college in the best way ever. I'm back living at college, with no studies, two sororities, one on each side of my fraternity, great fraternity house. [laughter] So, everybody thought I was teaching ROTC at the university, because, every morning, everybody'd be getting out, I'd be in uniform, going to work, so, in my first year anyway. … Then, my roommate that was with me stayed there for the summer, and then, wanted to transfer, because he loved the University of Washington so much, and Seattle, but USC wouldn't let him out of the money he had put down there and it was just too much. So, then, after the summer, he left for USC, and I went to work in the Coast Guard, and another one of those kooky things in life, as I said, the one year I was between college and the Coast Guard, I was a civil engineer and I was assigned to the civil engineering branch of the Coast Guard, in the Thirteenth District, in Seattle. … I walked in; well, one tough thing is, you were supposed to request to pay a call on your commanding officer, and a lot of the Reserve officers wouldn't do it, but the regular Academy people did, and I decided, "Damn it, I'm going to do it," and so, what you're doing is, you're going in, inviting yourself to your commanding officer's home. So, I went in, … introduced myself and [said], "Captain, I'd like to pay a call on you," and I think he was a little surprised, a non-Academy officer, and he said, "Well, that'd be very nice, Ensign Cook." … Then, he was looking over my background. He said, "You really have a degree in industrial engineering, don't you?" and I said, "Yes, I do." … He said, "I've always admired what industrial engineers do. Would you mind if I assigned you an industrial engineering post, which we don't have, report directly to me, and let's see if we can do some industrial engineering work at our industrial bases?" I never knew this would ever happen, because I thought I was going to be a civil engineer and, I mean, not professionally, but in the Coast Guard, … I was assigned to civil engineering, and so, I became an industrial engineer because this captain had heard of industrial engineering, thought it'd be good, and I don't know if my career would have gone [in]to industrial engineering if it hadn't been for him deciding he wanted us to try to do some of this in the Coast Guard. So, a good portion of my duties in the Coast Guard gave me the first opportunity to use some of my industrial engineering background and to do industrial engineering projects at … the Coast Guard maintenance bases in our district. … I remember, I wrote an article. He wanted me to write an article on our first project, the first big one I did, which was to develop a better way to process what they called flashers and light changers that are used in buoys. Flashers are those which give the lights different blinking characteristics. Light changers are, when a bulb burns out, it automatically rotates and goes to the next station.

So, I developed this whole new facility in this industrial base. We wrote it up and … the comment was, "This is the first example of applied industrial engineering to a Coast Guard industrial facility." So, we were all happy about that, had a big celebration, and we got accolades for that, and so, I did a lot of that. … Other duties were, I had to recalculate all the candlepower of all the lighthouses on the Oregon and Washington coast, and, to do that, I had the terrible duty of visiting probably the most beautiful places in the world and taking dimensions, pictures, and calculating, based on the old Fresnel lenses, in those days, … the candlepower, and coming out with new aids to navigation as to the real candlepower they use, and then, developed, with Westinghouse, a light bulb that could increase the candlepower in lighthouses.

SI: Did you work with engineers from Westinghouse or did you just …

DC: Yes; no, we did. … We did specifications, and then, I'd meet with them, once a month, maybe, for about three months, and come up with a different filament design that they came up with. So, that was very interesting and some of my lifelong friends, of course, I met in Seattle. Seattle became a second home, loved it. I had to do a lot of inspection of stations and lighthouses, and that meant I'd be going out in an eighty-two-foot boat, which was great. You go down there, it was run by a chief and they'd have steaks aboard and it was like having your own yacht with a crew. Some of them, we'd have to fly helicopters in, because they weren't accessible by boat, and [I] assisted on some civil engineering projects, building our first use of prestressed piling to build a dock for a lifeboat station. So, it was interesting duty and the people, to this day, are very close friends and I try to spend, oh, a couple weeks a year out in Seattle. … As I said, that was, yes, fortunate duty in the sense that, during peacetime, the one good thing about the Coast Guard is, we're still doing things that are really useful. … Out there, you know, one of the first things I had to do was attend a funeral for one of our boys that got drowned trying to save fishermen off the Columbia River Bar, they call it. … You have self-righting lifeboats, which they get strapped in and they'll go 360 degrees and they'll pop back up, and [there was] some malfunction there and he lost his life. That was a very sad thing, very difficult for me, and so, I did a lot of travel, up and down the Oregon and Washington coast, and up and down the Columbia River, with the Coast Guard, and those were my primary duties then.

SI: Were you kind of by yourself or did you have a little team that would go with you?

DC: On that part of it, I was by myself. There were people at each station, but I worked in an office with about twenty people, probably fifty percent Civil Service workers and fifty percent officers, and very talented people, really very talented people, very impressed with them, I mean, very talented, and my commanding officers were [talented]. My immediate superior was a graduate from MIT, and so, these were good people.

SI: Had he also gone to the Academy?

DC: Yes.

SI: Was he OCS?

DC: No, he went to the Academy, I believe, and then, they sent him for graduate work at MIT. So, he was a pretty good guy. Then, when the Captain retired, he became a professor at the University of Washington. …

SI: I know, in the Navy, there was a big distinction between OCS guys and Academy men, which played out in many different ways. Does that hold true for the Coast Guard or is it less formal?

DC: I think it's less formal. There's an awareness, but I don't mean there's, you know, a guy saying, "I went to the Academy in those years," and, obviously, I think the promotion chain is more favored toward them. Only having stayed in the Coast Guard for three years and getting your automatic promotions, basically, you're not involved at [those levels], maybe, politically, when you get way up and you're looking toward admiral, captain, admiral. Maybe, that becomes more paramount, but there wasn't a great distinction with us and, of course, the Coast Guard Academy doesn't have the [same number of officers], although, it'd be funny, if you took a percent of officers from the Academy and a percent in the other services, maybe it's greater, because the Coast Guard's a small service, and that part was beautiful. I mean, somebody could say, "Oh, you were in the Coast Guard back in those [days]? Did you know…" and there's a slight chance that you know people that were in the Coast Guard during those years. So, I think that was nice, but, in terms of military experience, I felt a little guilty, because I'm sure they're asking, you know, "What action did you see?" and all of that, and, as I said, I was very fortunate that I was in the military during a period, just by chance, that was between the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

SI: It sounds like you were in a very unique position, that you were able to start this application of industrial engineering to different aspects. Did that continue after you left there?

DC: Well, when I got out of there, and that was a tough decision; I came very close to staying and making the Coast Guard my career, whether it be Civil Service or with the Coast Guard. … The fellow that I was replacing, the officer that I replaced when I got there, he had another year to go and he left and took a Civil Service job and, actually, stayed in the same position. So, we became very close friends and he, to this day, is one of my closest friends. So, that was really [difficult], it was very close, at that time, and so, I'd gotten to love Seattle, but I don't know what the turning factor was. It wasn't like I was waiting every day, "Oh, … I only have two more days." No, I loved it in the Coast Guard. It was one of my great experiences in life, but I thought maybe I should start to try to get my professional career going, and my college roommate that went in the Coast Guard the class before me, he had tough duty. He was stationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which was like being on a vacation. [laughter] So, he had great duty also and he had the same trauma, but two of them decided they'd get out and they'd go back and live in Manhattan and get jobs in Manhattan, and so, he told me, "Hey," they've got an apartment, "there's room." So, I decided, "Well, let me head back home and see if I can get my career started," and so, I left the Coast Guard. I went into what they call an inactive duty status pool. So, normally, the chain of command is, you go ensign for a year-and-a-half, then, lieutenant, J.G. [junior grade], and then, when I was in this inactive duty status pool, I got a promotion to lieutenant. So, when I actually got discharged, I was a lieutenant. … To get discharged, you had to go back to where your original duty station was, in New York. We had to

be discharged from New York. So, one of my good friends there and I said, "Well, why don't we go the long way and catch military hops around the world?" So, with all the leave we had accumulated, we decided to leave Seattle, but go around the world and end up in New York, and that was a phenomenal trip, catching military hops, in those days, and, by that time, we had been able to get top secret crypto clearance, because the Coast Guard was a secondary source for retrieval on the Space Program, and so, it elevated our security clearances, those of us that got involved in it. Well, why it was significant is because, if we got stuck, we could act as couriers, trying to catch these hops, and that would upgrade your priority of getting on a flight. So, we flew out of, I'm not sure, out of Seattle, where we flew out of, Whidbey Island, maybe, and we ended up in Hawaii, on a military hop, and then, … the only hop we could get over to Japan was going to end up landing, … it was a military hop, and I think the base was [Marine Corps Air Station] Iwakuni, down near Hiroshima. … That was a very interesting experience, to be in Hiroshima and have the Japanese talk to us about the A-bomb. You know, we were reluctant to even say anything about it, but they wanted you to go see the museum and all of that stuff, and that was interesting. We saw some people playing baseball and we're standing there and this guy comes over, says, "You play baseball?" and we had both played baseball. So, we said, "Yes," and he said, "Well, we're the fire department. We're playing the police department. They always beat us. Can you play with us?" So, we went out and it was like a Little League field. Every time we were up, we hit one over the fence, and so, we became heroes. They took us out to see a sumo wrestling match, bought us Japanese food. So, that was a very nice experience, and we had to go to Tachikawa Air Force Base and we had to wait for a flight and the flight we got was into Clark Field in Manila. … This is where it became a little testy, because we were halfway now. "Do we turn back?" because, if we couldn't get a flight, well, we'd get an embassy flight to Saudi Arabia, and so, we were lucky. We got on an embassy flight to Saudi Arabia and a lot of experiences on all this, which was a lot of fun, and then, we got out of Saudi Arabia and got up into Europe and, finally, we flew out of Frankfurt into McGuire Air Force Base. … We made it in the two weeks, … maybe two-and-a-half weeks, but we had three weeks, and that was catching military hops around the world. …

SI: You had to spend a couple of days in each place.

DC: Oh, yes. Some places, like Saudi Arabia, two hours would have been plenty. [laughter] Europe was a lot of fun and we wanted to spend a little bit more time there than we had. Japan was fun. Manila, it was hot and humid, but they said, "You go up to an R&R, military R&R center, up in a place called Baguio, up in the mountains," and that was just beautiful and we got to play golf in the clouds. That was a military base, and so, that was fortunate. At the time, there was an uprising in Thailand and, between Thailand and Hong Kong, we were going to go to Hong Kong, but we couldn't get in there, but we got on one of these refuelers. … Now, you look and [say], "Oh, I want to fly first class on long trips." Well, we were, they have this big refueling tank inside this C, I guess, 130, and you're sort of curled around it, and that was for, like, an eight-hour flight. [laughter] So, it's funny what you can do when you're younger, [laughter] but, on one of the flights, there was a company of Marines and they were all in … raincoats and all of this stuff and we're in sport jackets at the time, and these guys are going off to maybe get in battle and we're on vacation. [laughter] …

SI: Did you travel in civilian clothes?

DC: There were some countries, they wanted you in civilian clothes and, other countries, you were in military. So, there are some they didn't want you in military gear, I can't remember which ones, and others where … you did fly in uniform. Most of the time, you're in uniform, but that was great. We were lucky to do this and we got back and got out of the active duty Coast Guard, and then, decided on a career, and I had a cousin who worked in New York and the family said, "Can you help Don?" … He set me up with some interviews, and one of them was with Booz Allen and Hamilton, the consulting firm, and I didn't know even what consulting was, to be honest with you. … So, I got in there and … you went through a whole bunch of tests and they said that they really liked my credentials, but I didn't have any real business experience, but they'd like to keep me in their farm system, and I thought, "Oh, this is just a way of saying no." … So, I left there and saw an ad and interviewed with American Can, who was a big can manufacturer. They were looking for industrial engineers, with headquarters on Park Avenue in New York, which was nice, and so, that's where I started and worked there a year. … I was out on a golf course with a plant manager up in the Finger Lakes Region, and [the] assistant pro came out in a golf cart and he said, "There's a phone call for you," and I go back into the pro shop and, believe it or not, it was Booz Allen and Hamilton. … American Can had been a client and they had tracked my progress and they called and they said that they'd like to offer me a position. … I'm standing in this pro shop, [laughter] and I was making about seventy-eight hundred [dollars]. They were going to offer me ninety-four hundred, and this is all happening in the pro shop, and I said to him, "Well, gee, you know, I just want to get into five figures. I want ten thousand dollars," and they said, "Don, I'm not sure you fully understand, but joining Booz Allen is like joining a fine country club," and I said, "Well, let me tell you, I'm already at the fine country club right now. [laughter] I want ten thousand dollars." So, they agreed on it and I joined Booz Allen, and that was another major portion of my education. … I was one of the youngest consultants they'd ever hired at the time, and I even looked younger. So, they sent me to Chicago to learn how to look and act older, and one of the things was, when you met top executives, if they said, you know, "I'm the chairman of AT&T. My name's Charlie Brown," you don't say, "Well, Mr. Brown, it's nice to meet you," you say, "Hi, Charlie," and to learn how to call people by their first name, wines to drink, … very, very fascinating training course they put me through, a great guy, he was fun, to create this [mature posture], yes. … Of course, one of the big bugaboos, you go out on your first client, they say, "How much experience do you have consulting?" [laughter] [If] you say, "None," that client's going to say, "We don't want a guy out here that doesn't have any experience." So, they'd talk to you about, "Explain to them what your background was and, you know, you're starting now," and ba-ba-ba-ba, and so, that was the start of a consulting career, which I never even had known what it was. … You got with a group of industrial engineers and learned what management consulting was about and learned how to deal with clients and do that. … One little anecdote on that, was funny; after all this, classes in how to act with top executives, about the second day I'm back in New York, lo and behold, one of the founders of Booz Allen, the only one still living, you could see his oil painting [portrait], I knew who he was, he's got his vest, very dignified looking man, and his name was Jim Allen, and I'm on the elevator, all of a sudden, it stops and on gets Jim Allen. We're on about the twelfth floor, and I'm saying to myself, "Say, 'Hello, Jim?' Say, 'Hello, Mr. Allen?' Say, 'Hello, Jim?'" So, I take a deep breath and I said, "Hi, Jim, I'm Don Cook," [laughter] and he shook my hand. He was a very nice gentleman. He said, "You're our new experiment, Don. We're thinking high things for you. It's a direction we want to move in the future, taking people

right out of college, or nearly right out of college, or right out of the military. In the past, we've taken people with twenty years experience," ba-ba-ba-ba, long story short. So, I learned under fire that I could call a top executive, "Jim," at an early age. … So, I worked for two years at Booz Allen and I always wanted to get a master's degree and I thought I probably would be settling down, having a family, which, as you could read, I haven't, but, if I was ever going to do it, I should do it now. … One of the nice things, when I was in the Coast Guard, they paid for you to take other courses and I took business courses, at night, at the University of Washington. So, from my engineering degree, I'd accumulated a lot of accounting courses and things of that nature and gotten my professional engineer's license during that process. So, I decided I'd see what the University of Washington could do for me, if I wanted to go back out to Seattle, which I wanted to do, because I love Seattle, and study full-time to get my master's degree, and so, they said that I could probably do it in six quarters, and I sent back that I could not afford more than one year and that I would take extra credits. … Then, I went into Booz Allen and told them I wanted a leave of absence, and my immediate supervisor said, "That's impossible. The client expects…" I said, "I'm giving you, you know, three months' notice." He said, "No, forget about it." I said, "Well, I guess I said this the wrong way. I'm already accepted and I'm going back to grad school." So, he literally fired me, but, then, later on, the president called me. He said, "Don, I want you to come up here," and I went up there. … He sort of covered for the guy and he said, "John doesn't realize, but we have some work you can do right now and you're going to be more valuable to us. So, you've got that leave of absence," and it was significant, because, one, I knew I had a job when I finished, two, you could write it off as an expense, going back to college, as long as it was to maintain your position in a company. All I had to do is show the percent of MBAs coming into management consulting was increasing each year, so, to maintain my status, I [needed it]. So, I could write off at least my college expenses, and so, I went back out to Seattle and got a little apartment, traded my nice Buick convertible in for a used Volkswagen, traded all my expense account living and great restaurants to nineteen-cent hamburgers, and spent a year at graduate school in the University of Washington and took a lot of credits, more than [most]. … They said, if I had any trouble in any of them, they would not let me do this in one year, and, honestly, with the background I had from Rutgers, the courses that gave people trouble, particularly statistics and all of that, were so simple to me, and all the other stuff was great for an engineer to go back [and learn], because it was all foreign to me and it was a wonderful education, to learn business, to learn marketing, advertising, financial analysis. All that stuff was great for an engineer, to go back and expand my horizons. So, I went back and finished all my coursework and had to do a thesis, or a graduate dissertation, and I was going to do it on waiting in lines in a bank, doing queue analysis, or something like that, or toll booths, and then, I realized where I hated waiting the most was on golf courses. So, I decided to do a thesis on waiting on golf courses, and so many of the professors played golf that this became a big thing. So, I used computer simulation to develop a program to analyze waiting times on golf courses, and I got a grant to hire three of my buddies and we went out and played golf with stopwatches and we time-studied all the different elements on golf courses, and so, I had a library of times on golf courses and did my graduate thesis *in absentia*, when I came back, actually, while I was working at Booz Allen again. I ended up completing my thesis at night and, I guess, one of the great thrills of my life was, you submit this thing and you're really busy at Booz Allen. You just don't have patience, probably, to do any more of this, and you're saying, "If this comes back and they want rewrites and all of this stuff, [that is it]," and it came back from the professor that was monitoring it, and I always remember, he said, "This was one of my

great experiences in teaching. This thesis is perfect as written. I want you to try to get it published," and that was it. There was nothing like, "Can you reword this? Where's your documentation here?" and all the computer work I had to do for this queue analysis, I almost blew it all, because I boxed it up and shipped it back, and of all things for the airlines to … lose, they lose that, and it's not like a suit, where I can go buy another one. This is all that computer work I did and I had all the analysis, and, fortunately, two weeks later, it showed up. So, a long story short, I got my thesis, I got my master's and went back to work for Booz Allen, and big studies I did, Ocean Spray Cranberries. We just designed a method for processing cranberries and used videotape analysis of both the harvesting techniques and the processing techniques, and did a big project for the Food and Drug Administration, the government, one for Citibank, and a big client was Colgate-Palmolive, and traveled and lived in San Francisco, Kansas City, Boston. I'd lived in Montreal briefly, when I was with American Can, because I did work up there in the Canadian plants, and so, from a guy that was never further west than Quakertown, Pennsylvania, I ended up doing a great deal of travel and did well at Booz Allen. … One of the guys at Booz Allen left and became an executive recruiter and developed a pretty big firm, and there was a position that he thought I'd be great for, and so, I left Booz Allen to accept a position as a vice-president of planning with Lear Siegler, which was a growing conglomerate company, with Bogen Electronics, Farfisa Organ, several of the companies they owned, with a big office in the Pan Am Building, when they were still flying helicopters off the roofs. So, we'd take a trip and you'd catch the helicopter and go to the airport and all that. I had an office with a television, a bar and all this. When you're a consultant, you get a little cubicle to work in. So, this was, "Wow," but I hated it. I was used to consulting and I had to make a decision, after two months, "Did I really want to stay here? Do I want to … admit I made a wrong decision?" and Booz Allen would take me back, there was another consulting firm [that] would take me and had asked me to come join them, and there was a little period of confusion as to, really, where did I want to go? I was living at home, at this time. I had been living in New York, but, when I switched jobs, I was traveling so much, I ended up moving back home and saying, "I'm not going to be here much, I'm going to be living in all these cities, so, why pay a lot for an apartment in New York City." So, I decided I would take a few months off [in] the summer, play golf and think of what I really wanted to do, and, during that period, an ex-Booz Allen person said there was a client, a company out there, that wanted some consulting work. If I was, right now, between assignments, would I consider doing some work for the retail company, A&S, in Brooklyn. … So, I went over and I did a project for them, and then, they wanted another one, and then, they wanted a big one, and I said, "Gee, it's going to take me a long time," and the guy over there said, "Well, why don't you hire somebody to help you?" So, I went out and hired a young industrial engineer from Rutgers and, all of a sudden, I said, "Jeez, I guess I've got a company," and so, that's how the company started. I had never intended; you know, I never said, "Oh, well, you're always an entrepreneur, always wanted to do your own thing;" no, not really, but that's how, thirty years ago, I started Cook and Associates, and so, that, in the stages of my life, is what I've done. I've hired industrial engineers from Rutgers. All but one of my engineers are from Rutgers. We had systems designers, and all but one were from Rutgers, in the computer science field, and not that we're large. We're as large as eleven people; now, we're down to five, and done work for a lot of major corporations throughout this country, and some in Europe, and made a good living at it.

SI: First, as a general question, what were some of the major changes that you have seen in your field over this thirty to forty-year period?

DC: Computers; I mean, the amount of computers … and the impact that the computer has had. When I started, we were doing punch cards and things of that nature and computers were just starting to come into existence, and those computers were large mainframe computers. … As time went on, everything that had to be done was through a centralized data center and it became difficult with my own company, because every time we wanted to sell our program, we had to go to the centralized data center and they were always too busy with other programs, and then, lo and behold, out comes the personal computer and the "Bill Gates Revolution," and you can find all these executives now that, instead of having to bow down to this mammoth central computing agency, could now go get programs, put them in their operations and improve things phenomenally, and not have the bottleneck that they once had. … So, we adapted our program to work on personal computers, and that opened up avenues where we could go into distribution centers, where we do most of our work for retailers, and that guy said, "Jeez, we really want to do this," and he could say, "Let's do it," as opposed to saying, "I've got to go through the data processing people and see if they have time to do it." They have nothing to do with it anymore. So, that was a big change in business, and, now, we sort of have gotten back to the other way, because of networks. Now, you once again have your big IT departments, and it's great, because they can integrate all the systems within an organization, but it's bad in the sense that people that really need the information no longer can get it when they want it, because they've got to go through the IT department. So, now, we're back having to sell to an IT department, to make sure everything is all right and it's compatible with everything else. So, there are pluses and minuses to it, but the big transition, certainly, I think, in business, was the advent of … computer usage, and, you know, there's a lot of automation, but automation was taking place way back when I was at Rutgers. You know, you could see conveyors and all of that, and they've gotten more sophisticated, certainly, and, in recent years, [there] is the globalization of business, where, at one time, all distribution centers were manufacturing plants here in the United States. … Having distribution centers, now, you're finding manufacturing facilities around the world and distribution points in China and places like that. So, the globalization had been a major impact and right now, communication and the Internet, in terms of the communication phenoms, e-mail, cell phones. To me, these have been the big advances, as I've seen them, in business. Yes, you'll always have human resources, and I'm sure they've come up with their little innovations and that goes from reengineering to methods-improvement to zero-based budgeting, and the consulting firms always come up with little acronyms for pretty tried-and-true standard techniques. … You know, there may be "critical path programming" for projects and "project control," but those have been there. They've been smoothed out and refined, but the computer age and the communication age have been the major changes, I think.

SI: From the beginning of your career, you had industrial engineers, and then, you had to probably train a lot of computer specialists, and so forth. As you are saying now, today, just in terms of managing information, do you have to bring in information managers and information specialists?

DC: No, I think good industrial engineers cover that and should cover that. I'm on the Advisory Committee for Industrial Engineering at Rutgers, and you talk about, you know, they're teaching

them a lot more operations research things. … In our days, industrial engineering was stopwatch studies, methods analysis and methods improvements, and, sometimes, I think they're losing that a little bit, and there's still a need out there to go out and find out, "Well, how do you have people work efficiently?" What grad school taught me is, "What kind of information do I need to provide to management to know how well they're doing?" For instance, all these dot-com companies that had the big fallout a few years ago, everybody's coming up with these very fancy computer programs to sell merchandise, [like] Amazon.com, and the better [the] website, but, if you think of it, that's okay, that's just developing a nice, little computer program and all of that stuff and very sophisticated, but somebody's got to take that merchandise, take it off a shelf, put it in a package and send it to you. … No matter how good that program is, some human being has to take the merchandise and get it to you, and I think, sometimes, we overlook that. So, the first years, we'd have forms and, you know, … people would fill out everything and we'd do calculations using time standards and come up with some management information. Then, gradually, we started to automate what we were doing, using the computer, instead of people there with adding machines, and then, gradually, you found out, "Well, wait a minute, there are other systems out there that have some of the information we need." So, then, you start to integrate other systems. You've got a payroll system that has hours and things for employees, and you integrate that in. So, that transition took place and that's when you went from all industrial engineers to systems analysts and people that would design different programs for you, and so, it's made a good living for me. Now, I'm sort of realizing what I am, is I'm partially retired in the winter, but not necessarily in the summer, because I now have, for the first time in my life, bought some property. I've never owned property. Of course, I buy it at the wrong time, but I bought a place in Sarasota, Florida, and so, I spend somewhere between four and six months in Sarasota, in the winter, and I have an office in my condo down there. So, I keep [in] touch and I fly back probably one week out of each month, but I certainly don't work the full schedule down there that I do here, and, when I come back for the summer, I think I'll stay on that same schedule, but I get involved too much with the office. So, as I say, I'm semi-retired, at least in the winter.

SI: How big is the firm now?

DC: Well, only five of us now. That's partially, I think, because we hit a period where business became difficult for us, partially because my participation became less, and, maybe, some of the competition has gotten ahead of us a little bit. What really happens, primarily, … in any selling field, let's take a look at consulting, your clients become older with you. So, what happens when your clients retire? You lose the contacts that you really need, unless you've been able to nurture younger clientele within those organizations, and, probably, we've been weak in that, I think. Hiring my industrial engineers from Rutgers, they're great industrial engineers, I really like them, but they don't have the selling capabilities that are probably needed, and I probably should have gotten some selling strength that maybe will not come from engineers.

SI: Do you think that you need to hire people other than engineers or is it a weakness in the Rutgers program?

DC: I think there's some weakness in the Rutgers program, that … you've got to get a little away from the technical, once in awhile, and take a look more at the overall business environment, and

I believe, at our last Advisory Council [meeting], they're trying to come up with a curriculum that ties together industrial engineering with the business school, and I think that would be very good if they could do something like that.

SI: Like a combination engineering-MBA program?

DC: Yes, yes. We were arguing about what to call it at the last meeting, because your professors want to call it something that, to a professor, means something, but doesn't mean anything to the outside world, and I was hoping [for] something more along the lines of "Business Engineering," something of that nature. So, I think that's a direction, you know, we have to go a little bit.

SI: Were you always involved with industrial engineering at Rutgers as an alumnus or an advisor?

DC: No, not much. I spoke a couple times, early, in stages, when Professor Keebler was still alive. He'd invite me over. I was only semi-involved because I was hiring some industrial engineers. So, I got to know some of the professors over there, because they'd recommend people to us, but it was the last three years when they asked if I'd be on the Advisory Committee.

SI: Having hired primarily Rutgers people, was that mostly a school tie or was it the quality of the school?

DC: Well, I knew the quality of the school. From a practical standpoint, people don't have to relocate, because they're already here in New Brunswick and we're located right off the campus. So, I don't have to worry about getting people to move or anything. The third point is, they're comfortable. They're comfortable in the environment here, so, they don't have to move. Fourth, I've got contacts at the University where I think I can get a good reading on people, and, you know, very strong ties to Rutgers. So, obviously, if I have somebody from Rutgers and another school and the guy at Rutgers is as good as anybody, he's going to get the job, and so, I've done that. I think I've got great loyalties to the University. They disturb you at times, but, nonetheless, I've got great loyalties to the University, [laughter] and they've worked out. They've been good people.

SI: Going back to your time at the University of Washington, it was in the mid-1960s. I think 1966-1967 was the year.

DC: Yes, right around there.

SI: All over the country at that time, there were student protest movements building on college campuses. Did you see any of that at Washington? Were you aware of that, involved in that or against that?

DC: No. I wasn't involved in it, wasn't against it, wasn't for it. I must say, I just wasn't involved in that. I did not see a lot out there. I think Rutgers was much more involved in that. I think the University of Washington [was] a fairly conservative school. They had some, but I think, like,

Berkeley was, you know, more active, if you look at the West Coast schools. … Yes, the University of Washington was a great experience for me, because, when I was at Rutgers, obviously, the New Brunswick Campus, and it was all-male, although women could take classes here and we had a couple engineers that were women, and we could take some classes over there, but, then, I went out [to Washington]. You know, in our football games, if we had, like, twenty thousand people, man, that was a big game, and then, I went out to the University of Washington, of course, it's all-coed and their stadium would hold sixty-eight thousand, there'd be sixty-eight thousand there every day, or every game. So, it was two totally different environments, and both schools, I enjoyed a great deal. The University of Washington made great headway. I mean, you see them, they're ranked way up, and our president now, [Richard L. McCormick], of course, … had been the President of the University of Washington, in Seattle, … and it gets much more support from the state than Rutgers gets from the State of New Jersey, but that was a good experience, having that contrast in schools. … Fortunately, an engineering and business degree, I think, is a strong point for anyone; I think going to a smaller university, then, a large university gives you that contrast; having the opportunity to see some of the country, eventually, all the way from East to West Coast, gives you some feeling for that and, if you can expand it now into Europe, you get a nice breadth in what's going on, rather than an isolated nature. … So, a lot of other stories, but I think we've tried to cover a lifetime. I never got married; so, where you see children, [referring to a section of the pre-interview survey], no children either, but I've dated, never was a confirmed bachelor, and I'm not sure how it all happened right now, but I think much of the mobility of the jobs I had added to the fact that I didn't get married, and I think, … my own philosophy, if you get past where you can't have children, or probably the likelihood [would] be very remote, [laughter] marriage doesn't have the aura that it should have had earlier in my life. So, from a personal standpoint, I guess that's what happened there. I don't regret it. There are times I wish maybe I had children, but, even if I had married a lady, or couldn't have children [or] we decided not to, it wasn't something I felt I had to have. I could have done it either way.

SI: Is there anything that you are passionate about, any hobbies or groups that you are involved in?

DC: No. … It's funny now; I always used to say, "Well, no, I workout a lot, I ski, play handball, play tennis and golf." Well, I had a hip replacement about four years ago, at Robert Wood Johnson, and that turned out to be great, but, between the traffic, getting to New York to play handball, and my hip, I dropped that, and then, I decided tennis probably wasn't too good for it and skiing, if you can't ski and not have to worry about falling, I decided that's a [problem]. Primarily, now, I play a lot of golf and I workout any time I'm not playing golf, to try to stay in shape, and other than some prostrate cancer, which I had seeds [radioactive seed implant therapy] and it seems to be going well, fortunately, I've been in pretty good health.

SI: Did you stay in the Reserves for the Coast Guard?

DC: I was in an inactive duty status pool, they called it, and my friend that stayed … on active duty was the head of that program. So, he nicely set me up for some active duty, during that, for two weeks in Treasure Island, out in …

SI: San Francisco.

DC: San Francisco, which was nice, and I did a little industrial engineering project for them during that period, and then, I stayed until they decided they were going to disband that program, serving in an inactive duty status pool, and you had a choice of going active and I really, by that time, was traveling so much and all that, I could not attend regular meetings, so, I dropped out.

SI: Did you leave active duty before the Cuban Missile Crisis or after?

DC: Before. The year John Kennedy was killed, [1963], I was at Booz Allen, because, I remember, I was in the New York office and we got word of his death and I felt bad about that, and there was a fellow in the office with me, Ron Michelle, who's a friend. … We decided we'd go up to the Presbyterian church on Fifth Avenue that day. So, I remember that. So, obviously, I was out of the service by that time.

SI: I wondered if there were any world events, like the Berlin Crisis, that had an impact on the base you were stationed at.

DC: No. I think our first launch into space was somewhere around near the end of my tenure, because, as I said, that's how we got our security clearances, because we were the secondary recovery unit when those capsules were coming [back]. The Coast Guard was the secondary recovery unit. So, it was the start of our Space Program, I believe, when I was still in the Coast Guard, but you can say I really lucked out, we did not have a crisis. There were some minor crises going on around the world, but we weren't really involved in them to any great degree.

SI: Like you said, the Coast Guard has always had this active peacetime mission. Were there any major storms that your base had to respond to?

DC: No. I'm trying to remember; not really. We had gone through a pretty good [period]. See, on the West Coast, you're not; well, we had an earthquake when I was there, but it didn't do enough damage that we had to respond to it. I knew it scared the hell out of me, but, having been from the East Coast and never experiencing an earthquake, that was an experience, but, from a military standpoint, we did not have any response there. There was minor damage and significant deaths, but we didn't have to respond to anything, but the Coast Guard, I think, I took a great deal of pride in it and I hope it continues to be a good service. I know, when 9/11 [the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks] occurred, one of the few agencies [that] got accolades was, the Coast Guard seemed to know exactly what they were doing and responded properly. It's been, now, put under a bigger bureaucracy, Homeland Security, so, I hope that doesn't decrease the efficiency by which it's operated in the past, the plus as they're getting more money now to be able to get updated equipment and to perform its role. A lot of people don't realize what the role of the Coast Guard has been. [In the] Second World War, all the amphibious landing crafts were manned by Coast Guard, and our percent of deaths in the Second World War, I think, was the highest of any service. My friend that decided to stay in the Coast Guard became the most decorated Coast Guard officer in the Vietnam War, because we manned the patrol boats in the deltas and went up and down there. So, the Coast Guard was over there for that. So, it's got a wide range of duties, both peacetime and wartime. Obviously, [the] immigration problem, drug

trafficking are our duties, in addition to homeland security duties, right now, that the Coast Guard becomes heavily involved in. Port security, all those measures are very heavily involved with the Coast Guard.

SI: I had a couple of other questions about Rutgers. In 1956, there was the Hungarian Revolution, which resulted in a lot of refugees coming to Camp Kilmer, near New Brunswick. I was wondering what you knew about that.

DC: I seem to remember Cardinal [Jozsef] Mindszenty coming over here, I think, but I don't remember much more than that. We did have veterans in our classes, and maybe ten percent of our class. I think we had three in our industrial engineering class.

SI: Korean War veterans?

DC: Yes, and they did well. They integrated in with us. I think they were all married with families, but so were some of the guys that got married early in college.

SI: Were there any veterans in the fraternity?

DC: Yes. I know of three. One of them, I think, had been in the fraternity, and then, went into the service and came back and was in the fraternity. So, there, there were some veterans. There may have been more than that, but at least three that I remember.

SI: Do you remember anything about University politics? There was a major bond issue that they were pushing for at that time. Rutgers became the State University during your time here. Do you remember anything about those issues?

DC: I remember Governor [Robert B.] Meyner came and spoke in the old College Avenue Gym and that he was influential, at the time, I think, in having Rutgers become more financially supported by the state and created; I guess it was always the State University, but I don't know what formality it went through to make it really be one where the direction would change. … As many of us [think], back in those days, one resentment I think we all have is when we hear, "We're going to make this a great university." Well, frankly, we always thought it was a great university. We may make it a larger university, we may be able to service more of the students in the State of New Jersey, but I think we always thought it was a great university, and to hear too much emphasis on, "We're going to *make* it one," implies that it hasn't been one in the past. We can improve, we can do that, but I know I think we felt it was a great university. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been here. I mean, if you looked at percent of students [accepted] and how difficult it was to get into Rutgers, it says to me you were getting the top students in the state to come into here. So, I don't know what units of measure they use for that. You know, there's a controversy between getting big and not, and I think I'm in favor of expanding and continuing the growth, but, you know, the football program is an example. Certainly, I support it fully, but, … you know, it's got its plusses and minuses. Dropping some of the sports; I felt that having Dr. McCormick come here would be a plus, because he would understand the tradition of the University, and some of our previous Presidents didn't come from a traditionally old university like Rutgers. So, I was a little disappointed when [six sports, including crew, were changed from

varsity to club sports in 2006]. … I've gone over this with him and I know all the logics behind it, but, still, there's a little tradition between a sport like crew and dropping crew as one of our sports, even though I understand it's a club sport and all of that. It's a little different, though, and having been, if not the oldest, one of the oldest crews in the country, that part of the tradition I did not like to see disappear, even though, financially, and having to field teams in equal, men's and women's and all that, I can understand all that, but, once in a while, you have to say, "Let's preserve some traditions in the University," and that was one I thought should have been preserved. So, yes, as you see your University grow, and it's interesting living here and having an office off the campus.

SI: You have a front row seat.

DC: Living right here and seeing changes and wanting to say, "Gee, some of them are great, some of them, I don't know, and some of them, you don't like." You know, time moves on. You don't want to think that you're getting old, so, you can't appreciate change. Sure, there's got to be change, but I think it's got to be, maybe, "ever changing and eternally the same," is really what you're really trying for at the University. You want us to be ever changing, but, eternally, you want us to be the same in terms of maintaining the traditions that have previously been established. So, that's a delicate balance.

SI: Obviously, we just went through the big change of unifying all of the undergraduate colleges. The College of Engineering was untouched by that, from what I understand. Do you think …

DC: Was that a good move?

SI: Yes.

DC: … Being, basically, an efficiency expert and industrial engineer, centralization and standardization of things at this University should have been done years ago. I don't know how many students I will come across, or sons and daughters of friends that have gone here, and they say, "I love the University, but, damn it, administratively, this place is antiquated and what you go through, it's so complex and what they're trying to do." I think you could have done a little bit better in terms of, you can centralize things internally, but you don't have to change it externally. I mean, we can talk to clients about that. We could centralize departments, we could centralize the administrative parts of this University much better, without taking away, perhaps, the identity of a Douglass, because that is tradition. You're right in bringing that up. Of all those things that I think of, Douglass was an entity which I think should have been maintained; doesn't mean that their programs couldn't have been integrated, doesn't mean that all of that couldn't occur beneath the scene, but you still could maintain the integrity of Douglass. I think that could have been done, but the centralization of the stuff and the standardization was an absolute necessity, because, probably, one of the most inefficient operations, as a consultant, if I looked across companies, would be the university, [laughter] and Rutgers isn't alone. I think institutions tend to be inefficient because there is no profit motivation and you just try to get more and more money. So, that's the problem with it, but, no, it's the right move. I think the Douglass thing could have been done a little differently.

SI: Has the College of Engineering remained, in your mind, much like what you came out of? Has it retained its traditions?

DC: No, I'll say something that'll be [in] controversy, and I don't mean this in any bigoted manner, but one thing I'm concerned with is, we want cultural diversity. Well, I look at industrial engineering right now and I think ninety percent of the professors are foreign-born and some of them fairly difficult [to understand] with the English language, and I'm not sure of the culturally diverse part of [the] student body in industrial engineering, and that's tremendously different. … I would be saying, if we had all Americans, I would be taking the opposite direction and I'd be saying, "I would like … to see us get more foreign students in there," but, if I find out I'm getting all foreign students in there, or ninety percent, then, I would like to say that we have to encourage more people within our country to come in there and we have to see whether or not we can't get any, you know, industrial engineering professors educated in this country, citizens of the United States. So, I think that part, I'm concerned about.

SI: The issue of balance.

DC: Yes. I'd like to see more balance and say, "Hey, I want us to be culturally diverse, but I don't want it to go totally the other way." I think, in our tuition program, we should first service the citizens, the residents, of the State of New Jersey, secondary, the citizens of the United States, and, third, foreign students. So, I would like to see a tuition system, when I look at it, and they were rating them the other day, where we stand, and Rutgers is way up there in terms of what it costs in-state residents to come here tuition-wise. Then, when I looked at what does it cost out-of-state residents, we're not way up there, and there's no such thing as out-of-country. Well, I'd like to see a three-tiered tuition system and I'd like it to be more severe, with more relief for New Jersey residents, and then, a second structure that says citizens, United States citizens, and a third one for foreign students, not to exclude them, but, let's face it, the monies we're getting, public monies we're getting, are from the State of New Jersey and, somewhat, from the Federal Government. I don't know of us getting, you know, public monies from other countries. So, to me, that says you've got a responsibility to service these people.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to discuss or is there anything that I missed?

DC: No. Thanks for the opportunity. It's nice, I suppose, to sit and talk about yourself without writing a boring book. [laughter] …

SI: It was very interesting.

DC: You know, there's always a million things you'll think about, later on, that you would have liked to say.

SI: If there is anything you want to add, you can always add it to the transcript as well. As I am going through it, I might have more questions.

DC: Sure. If you do, … I'll be happy to answer them and see what we can do. I appreciate you taking the time today, too.

SI: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Joseph Hou 5/1/09
Reviewed by David Kelley 5/1/09
Reviewed by Chris Hackmann 5/1/09
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 8/13/09
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/16/09
Reviewed by Donald Cook 10/27/11