RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER HAWKINS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and
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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Christopher Wolfe: This is a Rutgers Oral History Archive interview with Peter Hawkins. My name is Christopher Wolfe. Shaun, can you introduce yourself?

Shaun Illingworth: This is Shaun Illingworth.

CW: Peter, can you tell us your name, your time at Rutgers, your years, what the date today is, and where you are located?

Peter Hawkins: My name is Peter Hawkins. I live in Darien, Connecticut. Today is Friday, April 23, 2022. I entered Rutgers in the fall of 1969 and graduated in the spring of 1973.

CW: Thank you, Peter. I just want to thank you for being here, taking the time out of your day. I wanted to ask first where you grew up and if you could tell us any stories from home, before your time at the University?

PH: I grew up on the New Jersey side of the Washington Bridge in a town called Bogota, New Jersey, which everyone mispronounces as Bogotá, but it was Bogota [pronounced buh-GO-ta]. Actually, in the context, my dad was the local pastor there. What was curious, because of Bogota's location as a short trip to New York City, you had a lot of Broadway people living in town. Being in the church with your dad as the pastor, you're made to join every organization, and so every church choir, growing up from a little tiny one, I was in, but, curiously, they were all run by Broadway people; half the choir was from Broadway. In fact, there was this one man there who was the lead singer in *Damn Yankees*, the star of *Carousel*, the star of *Show Boat*. I think the last thirty years of his life was playing Tevye in London, *Fiddler on the Roof*. That said, my brother was taking piano lessons [with] Broadway people: directors, little local shows, we had Broadway directors living in town, going to church.

The funny part about it was, part of living in that town in my dad's parish, a few parishioners had phenomenal seats at Yankee Stadium. My brothers and I were baseball players. It was a town where we played baseball basically ten months out of the year. So, my dad would take us out of school because he'd get these tickets to the day games, and you'd go. My dad went to Rutgers, he was Class of '43, and also went to the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He would always tell us, "Whatever you do, don't tell your teacher where you're going. You're not going to Yankee Stadium. You're spending the afternoon with your father. If she says, 'Well, what are you going to be doing?' You say, 'I'm spending the afternoon with my father.'" [laughter] You'd go to the games, and literally, one box of seats was right at first base, where Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris and Yogi Berra, every Yankee super all-star you've ever heard of, would be standing right in front of you playing catch before the game started. Again, we played baseball to the extent where we'd be playing baseball all night long. It would be dark outside. You learned to catch the ball in the dark, or it would hit you in the face. The point is, you learned to catch the ball. [laughter]

As a child growing up in Bogota, there were three things that you learned. One was get good grades, or you'd pay the price. [laughter] Two, you got very good at baseball. And three, you learned how to sing. You also learned all of your Bible verses, but that was another part of going to Sunday School. That was our childhood. In fact, when I got to ninth grade, that's when we

moved. My dad moved to a different town, a different church, but I was to go away to school, a place called Phillips Academy up in Andover, for four years. My brother was a year ahead of me; he was at Andover also. We both went there for four years.

Again, the funny thing, if I were to say what I learned at Andover, it was play baseball--I mean, to go there, you had to be smart and you also had to do something really well. For me, that was playing baseball. I was captain of the baseball team at Andover, and we were playing against all these college teams. The one thing that I thought was funny--again, when you go to an all-boys' school, there's a noticeable absence of women, of girls. [laughter] I was not a member of the choir there, but one thing I did notice was that the choir had more concerts with the girls' schools than anyone. [laughter] The baseball team never had any concerts with the girls' schools, but the Glee Club did. When I got to Rutgers, that was one of the motivating forces for joining the Glee Club. Yes, I was trained, but more than that, I never met any girls playing sports.

SI: I just wanted to ask if you could tell us a little more about your parents. You mentioned your father also went to Rutgers. Tell us a little bit about their backgrounds.

PH: Yes, my dad was from Albany. My great-grandfather had fought in the Civil War, and was a volunteer out of New York State. They had moved to Albany. So, Grandpa Hawkins--and this will weird you out a little bit. Grandpa Hawkins was born in 1869. That's a couple of years back, but the point was his first--again, his dad died at a very young age, post-Civil War, and I think one understands some of the ramifications of that. My grandfather was a great crewman. He used to row up and down the Hudson River in his crew boats. My dad would always talk about the garage being loaded to the gills with crew boats or whatever they're called [shells]. Also, our Grandpa was a semi-pro baseball player. So, baseball certainly ran in the family. But my grandfather was also a professional portrait photographer. In fact, I have here, to this day, part of his collection, his taking a picture of Teddy Roosevelt when he was Governor of New York, because they lived in Albany and Albany was a more politically centralized, important city. He would take pictures of all the fancy folk in Albany. My dad went to the Albany Academy, which is a military academy. Grandpa's first wife had passed away, along with a child, in the typhoid plague of 1906. This is a guy that lived to be ninety-eight, but the second wife, who also was the superintendent of schools in Albany, was my dad's mom--and also a suffragette. Education, again, was very important. My dad went off to Rutgers in 1939, graduated in '43, then started at New Brunswick Theological Seminary--church was always very important to this family--and then he served in World War II.

My mother grew up speaking French. Her parents were Acadian French, and the Acadians were from the New Brunswick area of Canada that were driven out by the English in the 1700s. What you see is, if you come down into Massachusetts, Route 2, it's all French Acadian [town names]: Fitchburg, Leominster, Worcester, all towns were settled by these French Acadians. My mother, actually, was meant to be a nun, having gone to Catholic girls' schools from the time she was five years old through college and on to Mount Saint Vincent, which was at the time an all-women Catholic college.

Something that a lot of people don't know is that when the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] first started as the OSS [Office of Strategic Services], this is where they recruited a number of

the women spies. What the OSS did was take all the really good-looking women who spoke a different language at home. My mother, for example, spoke French at home. One girlfriend spoke Greek at home, another Italian at home. What the OSS was doing, under the command of [William] "Wild Bill" Donovan, was take these women and dress them up and place them in high society in Rome, in Athens, wherever. When all the guys (princes/dukes/fancy pants) were trying to pick them up, these women would just sit and listen and find out where the Nazis were hiding, where the fascists were camped out, and basically then provide the OSS with that inside information. In fact, one of my mom's girlfriends wrote a number of books about this after she retired: *The Spy Wore Red, The Spy Wore Silk*. [Editor's Note: Aline Griffith, Countess of Romanones (1923-2017) was an American-born Spanish aristocrat and socialite. She served in the OSS in Spain during World War II and went on to write seven books, including *The Spy Wore Red*, *The Spy Went Dancing* and *The Spy Wore Silk*.]

It's funny, because looking through the papers, these were women that all had gone to Catholic girls' schools together. In fact, one funny situation--not funny, ha-ha-- was our family would go to Cape Cod for a few weeks in the summertime, and this one woman and her husband and their kids would come visit us every summer. They were basically spies, worked for the CIA. They ran the Athens branch. Then, they ran the Saigon branch. It was curious because what the CIA was all about was language skills. These were people that spoke Greek fluently. These were people that spoke Italian fluently. When they ultimately passed away, and I remember reading the obituary, one of my mom's friends was teaching language skills at Langley, CIA Headquarters.

Not to go off on this dark trail, but a schoolmate at Andover was a guy by the name of Scooter Libby. Scooter Libby was the one who was--what was it?--Bush's head of staff? [Editor's Note: In 2007, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, former chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney, was convicted of obstruction of justice and perjury in the leak of the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame.]

SI: Dick Cheney's chief of staff.

PH: Yes. Scooter went to jail for a year or two for ratting out one of the spies. I remember mentioning this to Joe Lieberman, who was Senator at the time from Connecticut, who was in charge of this. I said, "One thing you don't necessarily understand is this is a family business. If you rat out a woman, you'd better believe her husband's in the CIA, and there's a good possibility their kids are in the CIA, too. You're putting not just her life at risk; you're putting everyone's life at risk." To which Senator Joe--and this is in front of a group of about one hundred people--proceeds to say, "Oh, are you in the CIA?" Well, yes, let's put up a big sign. [laughter] To which the answer was, "No, I'm not." Later, I was talking to one of my friends, and Senator Joe Lieberman comes walking by me and says, "Mr. Hawkins, what business are you in … now?" I'm thinking, "Is this guy trying to get me killed?" [laughter] But, anyway, that was just a little [story]; I apologize for the digression.

SI: That's fascinating. Do you know how your parents met?

PH: My parents met in World War II. My mother, again, being an RN [registered nurse], actually, her job was taking care of German prisoners that had been wounded. That was not her favorite job. She was to go on a date with one of the doctors, and my dad was supposed to be the driver for the date. As it turned out, the doctor didn't show up because of some emergency, and so my dad took my mom out. That was their first [date]. God works in mysterious ways, and that's how they met, World War II, on a hot date or a hot mistaken date.

PH: What brought a smile to her face was that she outranked my father. He was only a sergeant. She was a first lieutenant. Again, she was at Mount Saint Vincent's, a good Catholic girls' school on the Hudson.

CW: I wanted to speak a little bit about your experience in school and how it might have gotten you to Rutgers, since you spoke about how one of the number one things you had to do was get good grades. Was that instilled in you by your parents? Did they expect you to go to Rutgers in any capacity?

PH: Yes, you were expected to get good grades. At Andover, I entered as a ninth grader, and there were, let's say, 125 guys in that opening class. They kept adding about forty to fifty guys per year, because about twenty-five guys per year would get thrown out. Most of it was for illegal drinking or something else. [laughter] Actually, there were maybe only one or two guys that were actually thrown out for bad grades. You had to get good grades. It wasn't an option. But it was funny because everyone at that school was probably number one or two in their class from wherever it is they came from. I think that was part of having another skill that you did well, and that could be playing the saxophone. In fact, some of my friends from [those] days now are professional musicians. You see them lit up. One was a famous Broadway guy. Everybody had different skills.

When I got to Rutgers, I transitioned from baseball to rugby for different reasons, a lot of which had to do with these three-hour bus trips to Staten Island or Central Pennsylvania or upstate nowheresville. I used to pitch--not to, again, go off on the dark road--but I was a pitcher. One of my skills was being able to put the fear of God in someone with a baseball [laughter], and sadly, that's been employed.

I remember pitching one game, and it was against Fordham. This was at Rutgers. The manager of the Fordham team was a guy that used to play for the Yankees. He was an infielder, a guy by the name of Gil McDougald, may he rest in peace, maybe not. [laughter] My point was Gil McDougald was the manager of the Fordham team. I remember throwing literally a one-hitter, a couple of six-pitch innings, an eight-pitch inning, which in baseball terms is spectacular. That's not good; that's spectacular. I remember even my own coach, who, at that time at Rutgers, had gone to Fordham and was known as a--they had something called the "Four Blocks of Granite," and it was the front line of Fordham. It was these four big guys, Al Sabo, who was a Rutgers [assistant] coach, and there was a guy at Andover, a guy by the name of Steve Sorota, who ran the football program at Andover. He was another one of these blocks of granite. They were buddies. [Editor's Note: In the 1920s, Notre Dame's backfield in football was nicknamed the "Four Horsemen." In the 1930s, Fordham's offensive line became known as the "Seven Blocks of Granite."]

We were playing Fordham. Gil McDougald, this Yankee infielder, was the manager of the team, and I am throwing a brilliant game. I am thinking, "This guy is going to want to talk to me afterwards," because the team that he's coaching, (the hit they got was some crummy little dribbler that got through the infield,) and I'm thinking, "This guy is going to want to say, 'What's your name, kid? We should talk.'" But I figured, "Okay, it's the middle of the game. He'll wait until the end of the game." At the end of the game, I'm not sure if his players had to wake him up, "If this guy is basically sleeping through this entire game, he has zero, absolutely zero, interest in talking to someone that's just thrown a one-hitter against his team." The whole time I'm pitching, you could see the rugby guys out in the outfield, and they were having fun. I remember thinking, "They're having fun. I don't necessarily see the Yankees in my future."

It was curious because I had a roommate from Andover that did play in the minor leagues. I remember him telling me he played in the minor leagues for a year, and they'd go from motel to motel to motel. He was single, so he's basically in the "no-tell" motel by himself. Then, he'd get on a bus, drive for six hours to some other part of Florida, and he did this for an entire year. Then, at the end of the year, he decided to go to Yale Law School as opposed to continuing in the minor leagues. [laughter]

The net of it was, I saw the rugby guys, and I thought, "They look like they're having fun." You'd hear about the rugby parties and the social life and everything else. Without going down that dark path, rugby seemed like that could be a good way to spend more of my time.

When I think of the social life at Rutgers, it was the Glee Club clearly on a lot of different levels, the rugby and the fraternity. Yes, I was president of Delta Phi. That was the fraternity with the big white columns. If you sat up on the roof, you could see the entire town. It was actually right next to the dean's office. Quite frankly, our building was twice as impressive as the dean's office, which I think created some issues. Actually, the dean of the college, Dean Crosby, was a schoolmate of my dad's. So, I certainly knew those people. There was another dean, Dean Fred Clark, who we made, at my insistence, an honorary brother. Dean Clark would actually come on the Glee Club trips with us. I think Dean Crosby came on one, but Dean Clark came on at least two, if not three of them. He was a great addition to the Glee Club, just an extremely kindhearted man. [Editor's Note: Arnold B. Grobman served as the Dean of Rutgers College from 1967 to 1972. Howard J. Crosby, Rutgers Class of '41, was a long-time administrator at Rutgers, including nineteen years as the Dean of Men and later Dean of Students before his retirement in 1983. Rev. Dr. Fred N. Clark served as a Dean of Student Affairs.]

CW: On the line of Glee Club and your time as an undergraduate, can you talk about how you found out about the organization and what the audition process was to get in?

PH: Well, it was funny because, at that time, again, coming in as an eighteen-year-old, to my earlier point, the Glee Club had more concerts with the girls' schools than anybody else. To be very honest and frank, that was the reason I joined. [laughter] Yes, I could sing. In fact, Soup Walter, the director, who would hold the auditions, had been a roommate--I don't know when, I guess as a graduate student at Rutgers--he had been roommates with a fellow by the name of Reverend Harold Green. But Reverend Green was a buddy of my dad's, so they all kind of knew

each other. When I got to Rutgers, they had sign-ups at some student affairs program, where all the clubs would get together and say, "Oh, come join our club." I remember asking about the Glee Club. There were two fellows that were very involved, a guy by the name of Tom Clarke, who was the president of the Club, and Pete Jensen, who was also very involved, maybe as the vice president. They asked me if I was a member of the New Jersey All-State Choir, as most of the members of the Glee Club were. [laughter] I said, "No, no, actually, not at all." I did have Broadway training, so I figured, you know, "Give me a break." But they were actually much more impressed with my athletic skills, because the Glee Club, as you know, plays in the Soup Bowl, which is the annual football game against the band, which we won four years in a row, let the history books show. I was quarterback for three of those years, a very strong right arm. There were a number of athletic people that joined the Glee Club at that point in time. For me, the reason was, quite frankly, because of the girls' schools. [Editor's Note: F. Austin "Soup" Walter, Rutgers Class of 1932, directed the Rutgers University Glee Club from 1946 to 1983 and founded and directed the Rutgers University Choir in 1949.]

This is the part that's funny. Soup had tryouts, "Could you sing the scales, this scale, that scale, that scale?" If you sounded [good] and had some training, he would then place you second bass, first bass, tenor, second tenor. I'm still amazed when I hear tenors sing. It is beyond me how guys hit those notes. I mean, there was one fellow, a guy by the name of Red Grammer, who sang professionally for about forty years. Actually, his son, Andy Grammer, became a big-time singer and sang at the Super Bowl Halftime Show one year. But there are some guys with voices that just--Red literally just sounded like an angel when he sang. I was a second bass, so my job was background. There weren't a lot of second-bass solos. That said, Christopher, you're well aware of how important it is to have that background bass, or even the first basses; it gives the choir body, it gives the choir soul. That's a whole other piece of the singing emotional puzzle, because it touches hearts. That was the process. Soup auditions; Soup made the decision.

CW: Can you talk about some of your time in Glee Club, some of the trips you went on or maybe some of the interactions you had with other organizations on campus, whether that was singing or otherwise?

PH: Well, the thing that was interesting with the Glee Club--I remember the first rehearsal. Again, keep in mind why I joined. They made an announcement. They said, "Okay, this year we're going to be singing at Lincoln Center. We're going to be singing at Carnegie Hall. We're going to be doing the vesper service up at the Cloisters. We'll be doing something at Saint Patrick's." I forget what the deal was. I'm waiting for the girls' schools. Then, he said, "Oh, and by the way, we're going to be traveling to Europe this summer. We'll be singing in Florence. We'll be singing at the Duomo. We'll be singing …" I am sitting there going, "This is extraordinary." Then, they start rattling off the other concerts that we're going to be doing.

The thing about singing, as you well know, is it's all about acoustics. Acoustics are the hug. If you have acoustics, it just makes everything extraordinary. Every church that I mentioned and even places like Carnegie Hall are built for what? Acoustics. All the churches in Europe are built for acoustics. I think one of the more extraordinary ones, we were singing in the Duomo, and we had this antiphonal piece, where you had one choir in the front, one choir in the back, and there was a lapse of about 1.4 seconds, where the sound from the front would go up in the dome

and then reach the back of the room. If you were looking at the hands of the director in the front, you'd be off by 1.4 seconds. So, you had to actually wait for the sound or look at the director in the front, count one one-thousand, two one thousand, you had to get to 1.4, and then you'd start the singing in the back of the Duomo. It was extraordinary how the two would then come together and create this stunning beautiful sound. Quite frankly, even when we go to Carnegie Hall today--they have an extraordinary Christmas show--I sit there and go, "I remember singing right up on that stage, right where these people are singing right now and famous people that you've read about. Yes, I sang right there." It was all with the Glee Club.

Again, when you travel to Europe, and you're singing at some of these churches, the one time--or actually, there are a couple of times. One of our concerts in Echternach--Echternach is in Luxembourg, right on the German border--there are two things I remember about this particular concert. One, it was outside. But it was on the steps of a chapel right on the border. There were two reasons we sang outside, but one was because it was in the town square. All the people could be outside. We sang something called "The Bells and the Steeple," and part of the singing is, at one point, all the basses are mimicking bells, and they're going, "Bong, bong, bong." We timed it because at twelve o'clock, the church bells would start bonging, and we had it timed so when we got to that specific song, that specific piece of the music, we were doing the bong sounds along with the church bells. You could see it in the crowd, just like, "Oh, my God, the bells are singing with the choir."

The two points I wanted to mention about that concert were, because Echternach is right on the border of Germany, what they left up were all the barbed wire from World War II. It was on Luxembourg property but had barbed wire all along the border, like six feet high. The people there left it up as a gentle reminder, "These were our neighbors." The other thing that they left up were, if you looked behind you, the church doors were full of bullet holes from World War II, because the Germans would come in and execute people on the steps of the church as a reminder of who was in charge. There's so much stuff you see going on in Ukraine right now, and that's something I'll touch on as well. Bullet holes across the face of the church, in the stone, in the doors, right across where these people, the locals, were being executed. I've got to tell you, that was 1970, maybe. The war had been over since 1945, so '55, '65, that's twenty-five years later. They didn't touch those bullet holes. It was a reminder, "This is what our *neighbors* did when they came to our country." That was an outdoor concert.

The indoor concerts, again, are all about acoustics, which actually brings me to probably one of the most stirring moments of my life. I'm sure, when you were talking about Roger Latzgo, Roger probably discussed this as well. The following year, in 1971, we went to Czechoslovakia and Romania. On August 21st of 1968, the Russians came in on the night of the 20th; the Russians drove their tanks right up the main street of Prague. I don't know, there was a thousand tanks. There were airplanes. There was the whole military. They stormed Prague along with "Hungary and Poland and some other country," but it was ninety percent Russia taking over the Czech Republic. Part of that was shutting down the television stations, arresting all the reporters. Czechoslovakia was the freest of all the Eastern European countries. We were staying with local people, and there's something to be said there, but we were going to be giving a concert on the anniversary of the Russian invasion, on August 20th or 21st, whatever it was. [Editor's Note: In 1968, Alexander Dubček instituted liberal reforms in Communist-controlled Czechoslovakia in

what was known as the Prague Spring. On August 20, 1968, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations invaded Czechoslovakia and reinstated the authoritarian wing of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which continued to rule until the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. The oral history of Roger Latzgo, RC '71, resides in the Rutgers Oral History Archives.]

Again, this was a place where if you stopped to have lunch or you were outside having a beer--and I think that's one thing the Glee Club always enjoyed was drinking beer, it helped the voice--you'd be sitting, having a beer at lunch, and some Russian spook with his Ray-Bans would come and sit down next to you and listen to your conversation. Again, picture, we're nineteen years old, twenty years old, eighteen. We thought it was funny. I mean, the locals certainly didn't, but we thought it was funny. I remember we'd offer to buy the guy a beer, and we'd ask him to tell us about what he does as a spy. What does he do for fun? I just remember this one guy getting so angry, the Russian spy, because he obviously understood English, and he wasn't going to talk to us, but just finally getting up and leaving he was so bugged by being treated in that manner. [laughter]

We were giving a concert in a place called Karlovy Vary, which is a spa town about ten miles outside of Prague. When we arrived, there was this giant town square that was empty. I mean, there might have been a hundred people max walking around the square at eleven-thirty, quarter to twelve. We're supposed to come on at twelve o'clock. We figured, "Well, maybe there might be a couple more lunch people." In this spa town, they had these arches. There's some German band, literally an Oom-pah-pah band, playing. No one's listening, and we're thinking, "Oh God, this is going to be awful." We start the concert, it is lunchtime, and so more people are starting to show up. But the acoustics under this archway were spectacular. You might as well have been singing in one of these churches. The acoustics were truly amazing. You, Christopher, as a singer, know how important acoustics are.

Well, we're doing all of our songs, and the Russian general, we had to give our program to the Russian in charge, would say, "No, can't sing that. Can't sing that. No, that's political. Can't sing that. Can't sing that. Oh, your school songs? Yes, sing your school songs. Sing your drinking songs. Yes, who cares?" Part of our repertoire were some spirituals. What the spirituals are is basically slaves singing about yearning to be free. There was this one song we did called, "Soon Ah Will be Done." Online, there's actually another choir that does it, and it is a song about wanting to be free. It's basically slaves singing--it's by William Dawson, [who] did this arrangement, a famous, famous Black composer, William Dawson--and it's about slaves singing, "I'll be free when I die. I will see my mother when I die. I will see God when I die." Right now, they're just trying to exist, but, "I'll be free when I die." It's a highly emotional song. Of all the songs I've ever sung in my life, there are some notes--and you know this as a singer--there are certain notes, there are certain chords that get you right between the eyeballs. This song, "Soon Ah Will Be Done" is one of those songs.

Well, a remark I will often make is, "God will not be mocked." And, you've got this Russian general who's crossing everything out. When we get through the school songs, we had something called the Whale Songs, which are lovely; they're big pieces. I told you when we got there, there were a hundred people. When we got to, "Soon Ah Will Be Done," there must have

been about five thousand people in the square, packed. Picture the biggest parking lot you've ever seen, and pack it with people standing next to each other, crowding in, because the more we sang, the more people would come to listen. They're all on their lunch break. The town square was now packed. You know yourself, again, as a singer, and I've asked Broadway people this, I've asked professional actors--I remember once Sam Waterston, we were sitting with him at the Lincoln Center for a show. I asked him, "Tell me a moment in your life when it all came together, when you were playing a great part, when you knew you were connecting with the audience, and when the venue was special…where those three--kind of like hitting a bases-loaded homer in the bottom of the ninth inning in the seventh game of the World Series. Can you tell me if you've ever experienced a moment like that?" It's funny because here's a guy who's been on eight thousand television shows. He's been on Broadway, all over the world. He said, "No one's ever asked me that question. Let me think." He said, "You know …" He then proceeded to tell me about some show in LA that he had done, where, again, the role was special, his part was special. He was connecting with the audience and the venue itself, again, acoustics is a part of that. It just all came together.

When we got to, "Soon Ah Will Be Done," that day in Karlovy Vary, just outside of Prague, you find yourself standing taller. You find yourself just looking out, embracing the crowd. We could see people crying as we sang. You could see the tears. You could see the emotion. You know yourself, when you finish a piece, you expect applause, because you feel the excitement. What was fascinating was, it was dead silent--and it finishes on this huge note--it was dead silence for not one second, two seconds. Count five very long seconds; there was dead silence. You're thinking, as a singer, "What's going on? I know this was good. What's happening?" Then, the place exploded. When I say exploded, I mean the screaming, not just clapping, screaming, cheering, more screaming, more cheering, and it was like, "Oh, God, what just happened? Something *very* special has just happened." I would say in my life, we all have special moments. It could be the birth of a child, God knows, whatever those things are. But I would put *that* moment in the top three, top four moments of my entire life, and that was a Glee Club moment. Without the Glee Club, *that* doesn't happen.

Singing transcends borders. Singing transcends politics. Singing transcends. The thing about singing, you never see it coming. Singing gets you right between the eyeballs. It gets you right in the heart, because you don't see it coming. You see a guy with a weapon. Yes, okay, fine, you can protect yourself. But how do you protect yourself from a song, from music, from all the emotion wrapped up in that song. Again, I would tell you, without question, that was one of the most profound moments of my life. Thank you, Glee Club, because that certainly wasn't going to happen on a baseball field.

It's funny, even when I talk about the rugby, I went on to play for ten years around the United States at the highest levels, at the national team level. I played with the Northeastern Team, the Met Union team, with two of the big clubs. When I finished with Rutgers, I played with a team called Old Blue, which was clearly one of the top two, three teams in the United States and have played, again, all over the United States--and a couple of near-death experiences there, being the skinniest guy on the field. That's another story. You get all these ex-NFL guys looking to break your leg, literally. But it was the Glee Club. That was the part of Rutgers that was--when I think

of the sports, when I think of the fraternity--again, from my perspective, which was a fraternity my dad was in: Delta Phi. They've all been thrown off campus now, probably for good reason.

My senior year, there was some throat thing called the Coxsackievirus, named after an orphanage in Coxsackie, New York, where all these little kids caught this horrible throat virus, and it was my senior year that I caught this virus. Curiously, it happened to be the same week that I met my bride, Phyllis, who was at Douglass. As an art student whose degree was in art, all the art classes were at Douglass. I don't want to say that's the reason I became an art student, but it certainly didn't hurt. [laughter] If you go over to Antilles Field, if you're standing on the Rutgers side of the chapel [Voorhees Chapel], that's Antilles Field, and on the other side of the field, there's an art piece. It looks like a door. Curiously, I had created one of my art pieces, I had done a doorway about four feet from where that permanent piece of art is today. I'm not saying the guy ripped off my idea. I'm just saying that my almost identical piece was about, let's say, ten feet away from where that permanent art installation is today. It was a doorway that was decorated. We had to do something for the class, so I built this doorway and I had the class help decorate it.

Actually, the art instructor was a guy by the name Geoff Hendricks, who became a world-famous artist, who was actually best buddies with John Lennon and Yoko. So, he would always be telling us what he and Yoko and John were doing that past weekend. [Editor's Note: Geoffrey Hendricks began teaching at Douglass in 1956 as an art professor and continued to teach at Rutgers University until his retirement in 2003. Hendricks was a renowned artist in the Fluxus movement.]

Geoff was the teacher. I had done this doorway, and the artistic aspect of it was, "Are you entering into someplace new?" or as you walk through it, "Are you leaving someplace?" That was the artistic thought. As you go through the doorway, are you entering, or are you leaving? After something had been up for a couple of weeks, you were supposed to take it down. I was taking it down. I see this blonde head walking across Antilles Field, and I said, "How can I time this so that when I lift my head up, she'll be right there?" Anyway, we've now been married forty-seven years, and that was the blonde that was walking across Antilles Field when I took down this [installation]. From a humorous, loving side of it, when I look at that piece of sculpture that's on Antilles Field now, I figure someone memorialized, or whatever the proper word is, our meeting, literally, because that's where it was, right where that piece, let's just say, mimics, what I had built there, again, some fifty years ago. [laughter]

CW: Peter, thank you for those stories. It's really great to hear. I agree with you. Sometimes music just catches you. Thank you for telling us about that performance. You were talking a little bit about going to Czechoslovakia and Romania in '71. I know that around that time, we were in the midst of the Cold War. The United States was in Vietnam. I wanted to ask you about what the climate around these situations were on campus and student organizations.

PH: It's a funny one, because there are a few events. *Hair* had just come out as a musical, and we were living it out in real life. The idea of having longer hair versus ROTC was very big on campus my freshman year, so that would have been in the spring of 1970. The faculty were having a vote as to allowing students to leave campus; they were going to close the school down two months early, that you could go home and protest if you wanted. I remember I used to, in

the winter, do some sports photography for *Targum* because I didn't do any sports in the wintertime. So, I went to a faculty meeting; I'm taking pictures. I remember one of the deans coming up and saying, "Peter, there are certain faculty that are very upset that you're taking pictures." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, they don't want you taking pictures when they vote, so that there's a permanent record of who voted to not protest, who voted to protest," because it was a real [controversy]. [Editor's Note: Following President Richard Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War to Cambodia, a nationwide student strike commenced in the beginning of May 1970. The strike began at Rutgers on Friday, May 1. On Monday, May 4, two thousand protesters gathered on the Old Queens Campus, and Rutgers President Mason Gross addressed the crowd, calling the protesters his guests. That day, two hundred students occupied the second and third floors of Old Queens, including Gross' office, resulting in a two-day sit-in of Old Queens. On May 4 in Ohio, National Guardsmen opened fire on anti-war protesters and bystanders at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine. In solidarity with the National Strike, the Rutgers College faculty voted on Tuesday, May 5 to make classes and final exams optional and instituted pass/fail grades for the spring semester 1970. On May 5, massive demonstrations continued at Rutgers, and protests and counter-protests continued for several weeks at Rutgers and on campuses across the nation. On May 14 and 15, 1970, students at Jackson State College protesting against racial harassment were fired upon by state and city police, resulting in two deaths and a dozen injuries. (From Paul Clemens' *Rutgers Since 1945*; Kent State University Libraries, *Campus Strike Papers: New Jersey: Rutgers University*, 1970)]

My freshman year was very different from the senior year guys. The senior year guys, you still had a lot of, "Oh, Vietnam is good," because they had entered school in, let's say, 1966 or '65. It was very, very different between the freshman class and the senior class. What you saw in the freshman class, the sophomores and maybe the juniors--let's say half the juniors and mostly all the sophomores when I was a freshman--you saw a lot of protests. You saw it in the music. You saw it in a lot of things. Then, there was even a couple of demonstrations, where at that point in time, the New Brunswick Police, even though there was a symbiotic relationship with Rutgers, let's just say the New Brunswick Police were not in love with the "long-haired hippies" from Rutgers who were against the war. There were some incidents [that] were not very pretty, where I think some of the billy clubs came out. I remember there was a protest march, and everybody was left alone because there were a lot more people. But some of these smaller groups, I would say, were threatened. I think "threatened" is a fair word. Some guys were a little roughed up. Some guys were arrested. My own personal feeling was you don't need to get hit with a club. You don't need to be arrested. At one point, you had some guys moving into--what was the …

SI: Old Queens?

PH: Old Queens, where the president had his office. You don't want to get arrested. That's [your] permanent record. It just seemed, for me, personally, while you're supporting it, there are different ways to support things, and getting arrested was not going to be part of the package.

I remember I grew up in--when we moved from Bogota, we moved to a place called Hudson, New York, and Hudson has gone through its stages as well. Back in the 1800s, you might see ninety whaling boats outside, parked in the Hudson River, at Hudson, New York. Hudson missed being the capital of New York by one vote, one vote behind Albany, and New York was

a distant third. In fact, there was a sports store my brother and I liked to go to, and we were told, "Do not go fifty feet passed that store because you could get yourself mugged easily." In the '50s, that part of town became better known when the chief of police was arrested *in flagrante* by the FBI at one of the local houses of ill repute. [laughter] That same area is now, you can get yourself a nice condo for a million bucks--oh, that's a one bedroom. [laughter] The area of town that was the nice area of town, where you have churches as big as Saint Patrick's right in downtown Hudson, those had all fallen to disrepair, where they sold off all the stained-glass windows. Now, again, that's the fashionable part of town. That's where all the art galleries are. If you want some really high-end chocolate, that's where you go now.

To your question, Rutgers was going through a dramatic change in terms of the politics. You had to be careful, because you had the New Brunswick Police who were not supportive at all of political change. Again, let me reflect back on a Glee Club moment. When we were in Prague, two or three guys might be staying with a family. We were staying with one family, and some song came on the radio. They were listening to the radio. It was a mother and father, and they had a couple of little kids. A song came on, and you could tell the father just turned that thing down. He was visibly angry at this song that was playing. Here we are, American students, "Why don't you like that song?" The wife goes, "That's the national anthem," but saying it with this bile, and you're thinking, "The national anthem?" I mean, what happened to "God Bless America" or "The Star-Spangled Banner?" She goes, "No, you don't understand; it's the Russian National Anthem." Again, picture Ukraine today, and if you were forced to listen to your local radio station, and all they're playing is the Russian National Anthem.

Again, from our perspective, the question is, "Well, what's your national anthem? If that's the Russian one, I get why you hate it. What is your national anthem?" The husband looks at the wife, the wife looks at the husband, and we're going, "What's going on here? Why are they looking back and forth at each other?" Then, finally, the wife nods her head, and the guy goes, "We'll play you our national anthem, but you can't tell a soul." We're fifty years later, so maybe we're okay with this. [laughter] The guy then proceeds to get a little ladder out. The top shelf of his bookshelf, he takes a book out, opens the book, and there's a record hidden in the books. He goes, "This is our national anthem. It's against the law to play it. If anyone hears that we played this, we will be arrested." You're going, "Whoa." He then proceeds to play this song, and basically, it's this woman singing and crying. She's crying about being free. You don't have to understand Czech to hear--he was explaining--but you could hear her tears. You could hear the woman sobbing as she sang. You go, "Whoa, what just happened here?" Again, a much smaller version of what we discussed before.

There you are, as an American, and you're thinking, "Hey, this is America. You're allowed to say what you want. You're allowed to protest. You're allowed to do these things," and, here, they're playing a record, where if anyone hears, [they will be arrested]. To add to that, then they proceed to tell us, they wouldn't even let their children be in the room when they played it, because what the Russians did was they replaced all of the teachers with Russian teachers, particularly in the young grades, kindergarten through fourth grade. The Russian teachers would ask these little kids, "Oh, what do you talk about at home?" They would take these little kids and they would ask them these innocent questions, and then they'd go arrest the parents. If the parents were talking about anti-Russian things, the Russians would come in and arrest usually

just the father. They wouldn't leave the kids because then they'd have to feed the kids, and they didn't want anything to do with that. But they would arrest the father, and that father might never be heard from again.

The point we made before, look at Ukraine right now. This was happening, again, on a less fire-power way, but the Russians were coming in, arresting people, and you just never see them again. The television stations--again, our concert, we were going to be on TV. That all got shut down. It was on the anniversary, and they were playing nothing but Russian garbage. But the locals were just stabbed in the heart. The school systems, even working through their children, to try to undermine and destroy the Czech people. That was fifty years ago. Not a thousand years ago. Not five hundred years ago. That's fifty years ago. Clearly, it's still happening in spades today. You're seeing it.

SI: I am curious, when you would go out during that tour, did you meet with any people your own age, Czechs your own age, and get to hear from them at all?

PH: The one time that we heard this, we also did a concert in Romania as part of that tour. Again, it was like a camp. It wasn't high-end stuff. It was a camp where people would go for vacations, whatever. Romania was under the same gun as the Czechs were. There was a Russian band that was playing there, so there were all these band members and then all these Russian guys. The camp, because you've got all these camp counselors and they're teaching sports, had a soccer team. Soccer, obviously, is a big sport. The Russians, they played in the band, but they all played soccer, and they wanted to play. The Romanian counselors, while they weren't wild about playing Russia or allowing Russia to have any joy, said, "Fine, we'll play." On the sideline, you could hear them making remarks. I don't quite remember what the expletives were in Romanian. The Romanians all spoke English as well, when they were speaking to you. Apparently, they knew American expletives when they were describing the Russians.

I played rugby all over the United States, and I've seen injuries. Actually, I ran the program at Yale for four seasons, and I got to the point where I could almost tell you what the injury was before the medic got out there, as you've just seen so much of it. I remember some Russian guy--and I don't mean to upset you with this one--but this Russian guy broke his leg, and you could hear it from the sideline, which is frightening. It's a sound that's just hard. Obviously, the game stopped. That guy's soccer career ended. But I remember one of the Romanians on the sideline said, "Well, it's a rough game. If you can't take it, you shouldn't play." I'm thinking, "Whoa, that's brutal." But, again, let's understand where he's coming from, which is, "These Russians have taken over our country and they're now exploiting our camp. They're coming in here. They act like they own the place. They're not guests. They think they own the place." That was the part that you start to get a grip on, seeing this particular soccer game and seeing this particular injury. Again, coming from the athletic background that I do, I've seen a lot of stuff, but this was the most callous--I don't want to say callous, that's a bad word--it was a sign these people are demons. I think that's really what it came down to. It just adds more to what is going on, I think, right now in terms of the Ukraine, what you are seeing today. I don't think you have to reach back into history, but what I'm describing from fifty years ago--I mean, that's a lifetime--it's

happened before. World War II was twenty-five years before that, where the atrocities were, I'm sure, equally horrific, more horrific.

CW: Peter, just to pivot a bit. I know that the year after you graduated, Rutgers became coed. [Editor's Note: Rutgers College became coed in the fall of 1972.]

PH: Yes.

CW: I wanted to know if there were any kind of talks happening on campus during that time. I know that you said that you were taking photos at these voting meetings. Can you tell me a little bit about the discourse that was going on on the campus at that time?

PH: From the perspective of the students, it always just seemed like a good idea. Again, when I was at Andover, graduating in '69, that was the last year of all-boys' school. You had Abbot Academy, which was down the block literally, a quarter-mile, half-mile away. Maybe the faculty had their own reasons for keeping eighteen-year-old and seventeen-year-old boys away from the girls, but there was very little interaction. When they went coed in the fall of 1970, anyone who was at Abbot all of a sudden became a member of Phillips Academy. I think with Douglass, yes, they had a campus on the other side of New Brunswick, but the reality was it was very easy to take classes. If you wanted to take classes over there, it was easy. If you were a Douglass student, it was very easy to take classes at Rutgers. It just seemed, "Why?" I think that was the question that people were asking, "Why? Why don't you make it coed? Maybe it'll make it harder for guys to get into the school, but so what?" Quite frankly, I think it gives it more credibility because it raises the standards.

CW: I wanted to have you speak a little about the Glee Club's interactions with other clubs on campus, or maybe you can talk about other organizations that you were a part of.

PH: Well, when you think of the Glee Club and other places, there were different concerts that we gave. Just to give one side of the story, first, I remember giving a concert at Annapolis, and we're singing, I forget, "Anchors Aweigh," or whatever it was. You're thinking, "We're traveling how many hours to go sing with the Annapolis Glee Club. How exciting is that?" [laughter] It's nice to visit the campus. I had never been to Annapolis. I had been to West Point for rugby.

I'll show you one thing here. At one point, I was editor of the Freshman Handbook. I guess it was my junior year. Getting involved in the rugby community, this is what I put on the cover of the Rutgers Freshman Handbook. This was a guy by the name of William Turkowski. Let me now show you the back cover. [laughter] What you'll notice about Bill "The Turk" is this giant bandage around his head. If you look at the back, you'll notice that half of his teeth are now missing. This was at the West Point game, where he got caught on the ground and somebody from West Point kicked his teeth out when he was on the ground. If you look at "The Turk's" haircut and picture what it was like going to West Point to play the game, you can understand there might have been a little animosity. While he was on the ground, he got his teeth kicked out and cut his head because somebody kicked him in the face a number of times. To the West Point cadet's credit, Turk went to the sideline, popped a couple of beers, and then came back in the game and proceeded to beat the hell out of the guy that kicked him in the face, and not one of the

West Point guys stood up to help the guy because they knew damn well what that guy had done to "The Turk." I thought, Freshman Handbook, what better cover than to put this out. If you look through the pictures, yes, there's a whole page to the Glee Club, and there's Soup directing. There's also pictures of my brother, pictures of a lot of guys from Delta Phi, different things. Apparently, the next year, as a result of my editorializing, the faculty committee decided that they'd no longer let an undergraduate publish the Freshman Handbook. [laughter] It was a little too political for their temperament at that point in time.

Again, you'd give these concerts, and from my perspective, Soup Walter was considered a premier director, one of the finest choral directors in the United States. From our perspective, and even if you talked to the seniors, this was something that they embraced, that this man was spectacular. He was ninety-nine percent Glee Club. There was one percent--he had a dog named Tosci (short for Toscanini), and Tosci came to every rehearsal. If you went to dinner at Soup's house, and everyone was invited at one point to have dinner with Soup, Tosci was there, and Tosci was Soup's dog.

Giving concerts with the other clubs, we gave one at Columbia. We gave one at--I forget where--but West Point, one at Annapolis, and you'd go, "Why in God's name are we singing with these lesser clubs?" You could hear it even when they sang. It just wasn't as rich.

The girls' schools were another story. I had to laugh--there were a few colleges, Wilson College, Smith College--there was the curiously-named Beaver College, which has now changed. [laughter] For some reason, they've changed their name to [Arcadia] College, or something like that. I remember even hearing the ladies' schools--and not to beat up on them--when the girls were singing: it was a chance to look over and say, "Who do I want to meet after the concert?" because if the first four turned you down, it doesn't matter; number five was still worth meeting. [laughter] There was one song, "You paved paradise, put up a parking lot." I don't want to say I've ever heard a worse version, but it was more entertaining than it was musical. [laughter] I don't even remember which of the schools sang it. The whole thing about the concerts with other schools, it was a chance to get off campus. It was a chance for a night out. It was a chance to sing our music. There was always a party afterwards. Let's focus on what's important; it was a social event as much as anything.

I remember when I was president of Delta Phi, you had this gorgeous building right on Union Street there, 17 Union Street. I remember the Glee Club was having a joint concert with one of these ladies' schools, and I remember thinking, "You're going to have a party afterwards. Where are you going to have it?" The Glee Club rehearsal place was kind of low end. I said, "Look, why don't you all come back to Delta Phi?" They said, "We can do that?" I said, "Let me ask." I remember my pitch to the brotherhood was, "You've got seventy-five women coming from, whichever college. "There's only fifty-five guys in the Glee Club, and you can come to the party, too." We immediately got a hundred percent vote. I remember Soup asking, "Oh, Peter, that was so nice. Could we do that again?" "Anytime. I'm sure we could work that one out." That became one of the social hangouts for the Glee Club as well. In fact, it actually helped, because there were a number of guys from the Glee Club that wanted to join the fraternity as a result of that.

CW: I wanted to have you speak a little bit about how your time as an undergraduate, as a singer, and in sports, projected your career and what you did outside of Rutgers. Do you think you can talk about the influences there and things that you remember that you took with you for the rest of your life?

PH: The fascinating part about even my first job, I don't know to what extent it's done now. The engineers always had a very easy time--because you had the Engineering School--the engineers always had a very easy time finding jobs out of college. I had a godfather that was a Chase Manhattan banker. My father always told me, "You don't want to be a minister. It's too hard, and they don't pay you anything." So, I always thought, "Well, gee, maybe I can be a banker or something. That seems like a nice thing."

I remember when you had to sign up for interviews, there were a couple of interviews that I signed up for. One was with the Wilson Sporting Goods Company just because it was there and my involvement in sports, and the other was Chase Manhattan Bank. They had a training program. I remember the guy from Wilson Sporting Goods going on about what great equipment Wilson was. I remember thinking, "I don't really much care for Wilson Sporting Goods." I liked Mizuno because I have a thinner hand. Mizuno's just much better equipment, which he didn't think was very funny. When I got to Chase, the guy goes, "Peter, you're an art major. Worse than that, you're a studio art major. What in God's name are you doing talking to me, a banker?" I thought, "Well, it's interesting. Art has its own way of teaching." I said, "If you go to business school, they teach you to think, one, you go to number one, and then you go to number two, and then you go to number three, and then you go to number four, and then you get to what? Five." I said, "What art teaches you is you start with number one, maybe you go to number two, then you go to number twelve. Then, you go to number eighteen. Maybe you come back to number eleven. Is eleven a better answer than the one, two, three, four, five? Maybe it's the same answer. Maybe it's a better answer, but it's going to be a different answer, which you haven't considered because everyone else you've hired is thinking, 'One, two, three, four, five.'" The guy looked at me--he was a Dartmouth guy--[and] says, "You know, that's a brilliant answer. I don't think I've ever hired a studio artist before, but I like that answer." [laughter] That was my first job in the Chase Manhattan Bank program. From there, I went to their next-level training program, the one that they hire all their fancy-pants people for, their global credit.

Curiously, when you talk about team sports or playing on team sports, the one thing we learn about team sports is everybody's on the same team and five guys together are much stronger than one all by himself. Ten guys playing together are much more powerful than five guys together. What I found, as I went through my business career, "What's that sticking me in the back?" and you reach back and you pull a knife out of your back. You go, "Who did that? Oh, that guy, the guy that wants your job, the guy who thinks he's in competition with you. So, if he makes you look bad, it makes him look better." My thought process, to this day, is you don't need that kind of person in your life. You need people that work with you. What does the Glee Club--here's a question for you, Christopher--what does the Glee Club tell you about people singing together? It's much more powerful. It's extraordinarily more powerful. If you're in a good, healthy organization, or we've used the word acoustics, if you're in a healthy organization and the acoustics are there and everyone is working together, you can do extraordinary things. You can have extraordinary things happen in your life as a choir together, as a glee club together. I did

not see that necessarily in that organization, Chase, when I got there. So, I thought to myself, "I've got a better idea."

What I did was I branched out on my own and became an independent financial advisor. My first step actually after that--this was interesting--we had owned a home, and I remember thinking, "Okay, I just quit." I got home one day, and my wife looked at me. She says, "Did you quit your job?" I said, "Actually, yes, I did." [laughter] "So, what are you going to do?" I said, "I don't know. I haven't given it any thought." The net of it was, we had had a home with three chickens, two goats and one cat, and I thought, "Well, let's sell the house. We'll find a home for the goats and the chickens." "So, where are you going to go?" No one was buying the house, but literally, the day we decided to go to LA, I said, "Well, we've never been to LA before. Let's move to LA," the day we made that decision, we sold the house the next day for all cash. There was no mortgage. There was nothing. Some guy just came and said, "Here, I'll buy the house. What do you want for it?" and gave us a great price, and we moved to LA.

When I started working out there, I took a job as mortgage broker to the stars. If you were buying a mansion in Beverly Hills, I was your guy. I remember studying the mortgage market, and a friend of mine said, "Peter, if you do million-dollar mortgages, you can make ten times as much as doing little mortgages." So, I said, "That's a good idea. I like that." I would go around, and I'd visit all the brokers in Beverly Hills. Literally, I became broker to the stars and all the Iranians that were leaving Tehran. The Shah, apparently, before he left Iran, told all of his buddies, "I'm leaving in a year. Get your money out of the country." They all moved to Beverly Hills, because the climate is identical to Tehran.

I remember meeting this young kid who was all of twenty-one, and he wanted to buy his multimillion-dollar house, the equivalent of a twenty-five-million-dollar house today or thirty, whatever. I'm asking him all those banker questions, and he said, "I can't answer that. I can't answer that. I'm not allowed to answer that." I'm thinking, after five minutes of this, I took out my own personal checkbook. I said, "Well, I know the bank can't help you without this information, but I'll give you a personal check. How much do you want?" [laughter] That's when the realtor pointed out this was actually the Shah's nephew, and he had to keep a low profile as well. The funny part was, I said, "What are you going to be doing?" This was like September 1st. He says, "Oh, I think I'm going to go to grad school at UCLA or USC." You know yourself, you've got to take your graduate exams and all that junk. I thought I'd be funny, and I asked him, "Have you taken the GREs yet?" "Oh, no, I haven't done that. But I'm meeting with the admissions officer tomorrow, first at UCLA and then at USC." I'm thinking to myself, "Good luck with that one." I called him on Wednesday just to see how things were going, and he said, "I'm going to go to USC." I'm thinking, "Excuse me?" He says, "Yes, I'm in. I start on Monday." I'm thinking, "This is so wrong. This is so absolutely wrong."

Well, to make it even worse, not to put it in oligarch terms, but this was the Shah's nephew, he goes, "Oh, here's a phone number. Call this number if you need any information." Again, having a sense of humor, I did; I called the number. It was in London, and it was one of the London banks. I'm not going to use this guy's name, because I don't want to get him killed. [laughter] He goes, "Whatever Mr. So-and-So wants, we will guarantee it." I said, "I haven't told you what he wants." He goes, "Excuse me, Mr. Hawkins, you didn't hear what I said. Whatever

Mr. So-and-So wants, we will guarantee it. Is forty-eight hours soon enough for you to get my guarantee?" I said, "Yeah, that works." "If you need it sooner, let me know." Anyway, the London bank guaranteed the multimillion-dollar loan within forty-eight hours, and the deal went through. I made basically half of what I had made at Chase Manhattan Bank the year before, so I thought, "This works."

The funny one was, literally, you were walking around Beverly Hills, you'd go to the local grocery store, and you'd see all the stars that you were seeing around town, guys who were in the movies. Bob Redford would pull up in his car next to you, and you'd wave [and] say, "Hi, Bob." He'd wave back. You name the store, they were all right there. The funniest one was I remember going into one of these local stores, and there was a show on a long time ago, *Three's Company*. The star of the show I see come around the corner just as I'm coming around. So, he's at one end of the aisle with his wife, and I'm at the other aisle. I see this guy, and I figure, "Oh, this is one of my friends." So, I give him a big wave. Then, right in the middle of the wave, I realized, "Peter, you don't know this guy at all. This is the star of *Three's Company:* John Ritter. Take a left hand turn quickly, so he doesn't realize that you're just some guy who's seen him on TV." [laughter] I quickly [took a] left. For the rest of the time I'm in the store, I see this guy with his wife, going, "Who is that? Why do we know him? He's clearly a friend. He's somebody that we know." [laughter] This was living in Beverly Hills.

Then, when interest rates--you'd like this one, if you've ever bought a house or had to get a mortgage, the last deal I did was a fixed-rate 17.5 percent loan. You could get a variable for twenty, but the last deal--and this was the Jimmy Carter years--that's when I said, "Okay, I think the mortgage business is about to end, even in Beverly Hills," and that's when we came back East and I started up the financing company that I've had now for the last forty years. Even then, that's worked out as well. Some of the clientele have been people that you've read about, that you know about, that you'd say, "That's probably a good client," and the answer is yes. That's worked out.

SI: Let me pause for one second.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

CW: Peter, tell me about your time on the rugby team. Can you tell us some of your experiences, maybe what the practicing schedule was and how involved you were?

PH: There's two parts of it. There's the Rutgers part, and then there's the post-Rutgers part. Both have had powerful emotional effects on me. Then, again, as I mentioned, I ran the Yale program for four seasons, which capped it off. At Rutgers, the rugby team [had] some very good athletes, all guys who might have gone to Rutgers for sports, and for whatever reason, it didn't work for them. One of my dear friends said to me, "Hawk, you're a good athlete. Why don't you come and play?" I said, "Well, because I'm not six-foot-four, 290 pounds." He goes, "No, you don't understand. There are like fifteen different guys, and every position is for a different shape, size, skill." As it turned out, all the baseball skills of being able to play in the dark, the fullback position is one where you're like the punt returner, you're the guy, as long as you don't drop the ball and you can get out of [the way of danger]. Another one of my skills was being able to run

ten yards quicker than anyone else. Also, I had a brother who was like six-two, 180 pounds in sixth grade. So, I learned two valuable lessons from him. One is don't ever get hit. If a big person tackles you, you will die. And, two, you learn how to tackle, because if you tackle and you catch a knee--you can't see it--but at one point, there were fifty stitches running down this chin. There were another twenty up here. If you get your head in the wrong place and you catch a knee in the face, my nose used to be straight; now, there's a bend. That was a knee in the face, too. That was one of the two times I was knocked out cold.

In fact, one of the drills at Yale, I would say, "Okay, I want you to drop the ball, and I'm going to time how long it takes you to pick up the ball." It basically takes 1.1 seconds to pick up a ball that you dropped. Now, if the average guy runs a hundred in whatever--let's say a fast guy runs it in ten seconds, the guy that was ten yards away when you dropped the ball is now two inches from your nose. "I guarantee you he will hit you, and he will hit you as hard as you've ever been in your life. Don't drop the ball. I don't care if you put sticky glue on your fingers. I don't care if you wear gloves. Don't ever drop [the ball]. And catch it sideways so that if he is going to hit you, you've got an elbow that can at least protect you a little bit." But that was my skill at Rutgers. It was a perfect position for me, someone that, if you caught the ball, didn't drop it, got out of the way of danger, and before you got crushed, you could get rid of the ball.

Again, we all have moments in our life that stand out. When I finished at Rutgers, and this is my point about playing a little later, I was with the Old Blue club, again, one of the top clubs in the United States. There was one club, the New York Rugby Club, that had a lot of these guys from the Detroit Lions. They had a connection, and so you'd get all these linebacker types, tight-end types, these big people with bad attitudes--we'll call it bad attitude--with attitude. At the time, and thank God this rule has been changed, if you were injured and had to leave the game, you were not allowed to be replaced, so your team played a man short, which was incentive for the big people to hurt you. My particular position, the fullback, every time I moved up a rank in the rugby community, and this started with Old Blue--everybody starts on the C team, then you get to the B team, and then you get to the A team. If you do well on the A team, then you become a member of the Met Union, which was the Metropolitan All-Star Team of all the New York City teams. Then, if you did well on that, you could become a member of the Northeastern United States Team. There's only a few, eight, different regions, but the Northeast was considered--that and LA were the two premier teams. Then, maybe you could get to the national team. Every time I moved up a rank, literally, it was because the guy in front of me broke his leg, for real. That's not even a joke. That's for real--and broke his leg in at least one place. My point being that was the rugby setting of my moving up.

I would say one of the more profound moments of my life--let me just preface this by saying, have you ever read Dante's *Inferno*? Dante's *Inferno* is fascinating because when Dante goes down the rabbit hole, his wife is up in heaven praying for him, and God sends down an angel to take him through hell, the nine levels of hell. I remember playing in a game--I'm not going to get religious on you--but I caught the ball, and I'm running, and something in my brain, I'm hearing this voice literally saying, "Go to the ground. Go to the ground. Go to the ground." If you're athletic, it's hard to fall over. It's one thing if somebody hits you; okay, you get knocked over. But it's actually very difficult to fall. This was a game where there's five thousand people in the stands. There's all sorts of people there cheering. My parents, I think, had come to this game.

But I'm hearing this voice going, "Go to the ground." I'm thinking, "How wrong is this? How embarrassing is this? And how does one even fall?" So, as I'm doing my little thing, I'm thinking, "Well, okay, if I take my left foot and drag it behind my right foot and kick the ground, maybe I could kick the back of my leg. Then, I can pretend to fall, and, as I'm rolling, I can pass the ball off." Finally, this overwhelming sense comes to me, "Go to the ground," and I do it. I say, "Okay, screw it. It's going to look awful, but I'll do it." I kick behind my foot. I trip over myself. As I'm rolling down and I pass the ball off, I feel someone literally mid-air coming right over the top of my shoulder. Had I not fallen down, this guy would have taken my spleen out. Then, I see who it is, and it's this ex-Detroit Lion who had just left the Lions a month or two before, and the New York Rugby Club liked him because he was a hitter. I'm thinking, "Maybe that was Grandma in heaven, saying a prayer for her dear grandson, saying, 'Peter, go to the ground, or you're going to be joining me in heaven very shortly.'" [laughter] One of those profound moments.

When I think back [to] the Rutgers rugby stuff, rugby is a joyful game. I like to call it an adrenaline high. Again, as a singer, sometimes you have these performances that you just go, "Wow," or whatever it is one does in life. But, with rugby, you'd get these adrenaline highs. If anything, that is something that I took away, saying, "This game is special." The part B of it was, at the end of the game, you would have a party with the other team. Again, you're taught as a kid to hate the other team. Even though your best friend might be playing for them, you learned to hate them. The joke here, which I make often, I live in Yankee territory. You'll see somebody with a Boston Red Sox hat on, and I always mention to them, "I'm sorry to tell you this, but it's illegal to wear Red Sox gear in town." [laughter] If you say it nicely, you get a big laugh; you get the cheap laugh that goes with it. But that was the thing about rugby. You'd travel to these schools. You'd always have a party afterwards. Not that the party was the big thing, but the fact that you were able to then just have a party with the other team. You'd sing all these stupid songs, and that kind of died out over time, but that you could have a relationship with the other team.

Even the traveling aspect of it--again, I still have my finance business, but New Haven is forty-seven minutes from my house. The practice starts at 4:37. I'd leave the house at four, and I'd get there. I remember the director of athletics saying, "Why do you want to coach here?" I said, "Because it's Yale. Because I can do things." Quite frankly, the most important part of rugby is the off-season. If you travel, if you go somewhere, you can get your team to work out all winter long, and then when the spring starts, you are in shape, ready to play in game one. When I went to Yale, they hadn't won a game in two years. I think they had scored one--I mean, they were awful. I remember the first year, I said, "What we're going to do is that we're going on tour." We called it the *Braveheart* tour. *Braveheart* was a monster movie at the time. "We're going to go to Stirling Castle, and we're going to go to Bannockburn. We're going to go where he was convicted at Oxford." So, we went to all the places that Braveheart went, and we scheduled rugby games at these places. People said, "Why are we going there?" I said, "Because if you want to take up two weeks of my time, you're going to go someplace that the coach wants to go, where the coach's wife wants to go to." The next year, we went to Spain, and the same question, "Why are we going to Spain?" We went to Madrid, we went to Zaragoza, we went to Barcelona. "Because the coach wants to go to Spain. If you want to take up my time, we're going to do that." [laughter] It was nice because the kids, where the parents had money, I said, "No one's

going to not be able to go." I said, "If your parents have got extra bucks, throw it in the pot, and I'm going to pay for some kid who can't afford to go." So, the entire team would go.

The net of it was they went from being horrific to winning the Northeastern United States Championships. They've kind of followed that pace and are now one of the premier teams around. But that all started with Rutgers and the rugby there and the traveling and even the party aspect of it, because let's go back to the example before; it's guys working together to become much stronger. You even talk about taking care of the kids. Here's a woman, here's a man. The left hand is very--it looks like the right hand, but the left hand and the right hand are quite different. But when you put them together, they're much stronger. So, you have a wife or husband; it's a very strong relationship. That was the whole thing about rugby.

I would say this was even different than playing baseball at Rutgers. Not to in any way denigrate baseball, but when you were playing, I always felt that there were guys there who wanted your position. The guy that was sitting on the bench wanted to take your position. It wasn't about, "Let's just win." It was about maybe making you not look as good or making him look better. "That wasn't an error; that was a hit." I remember keeping score of the game once. I said, "But the ball went between your legs." "Well, that was a hard-hit ball." I said, "But it went between your legs. That's called an error." [laughter]

As opposed to the Glee Club, what is it about? It's about a pure sound. It's about harmony. If someone is a little flat or a little sharp, you may poke them and say, "You've got to bring that up," or, "You've got a sing a little louder. You've got to do this." But the point was not to beat up on the guy; it was to make the sound harmonious, to make it come together. The joy, truly the joy, of the Glee Club was on tour, maybe we'd go with fifty guys, forty-five guys, but when we sang in a concert, there might be sixty guys in the Glee Club. I don't know what it is today, but there might have been sixty guys in the Club. It was, "How do you make it sound like one sound, one pure sound?" That was the skill of Soup Walter, who, as nice a man as he was, when it came to singing, he was serious. He might laugh here and there, but it was about one pure sound. Even Patrick Gardner [Director of the Rutgers Glee Club], while I don't know him personally, what I see is a similar attitude. When it comes to the actual performance, it's, "We need that pure sound," and he's very serious about that. Again, Chris, you'd know far better than I. I assume he was the director when you were singing.

CW: Yes, correct. That theme persists. He attributes Soup to that as well, and he says it at the concerts.

PH: Yes. Again, I'm not surprised, because singing, particularly when you've got fifty, sixty voices, that's fifty, sixty different guys. The one thing I loved about the Glee Club, while there might have been soloists in and amongst the singers, when it came time to singing a group song, you didn't hear the soloist. You didn't hear that one guy go, "Oh, God, he's singing solos up in the second tenor section." No. He would tell guys, "Calm down. Relax. It's harmony." That's special. That's something that you learn very much through the Glee Club and, I would say, very much in rugby. Much less so in the fraternity house. Much less so, quite frankly, in the baseball that I played. It was not team spirit, let's say. Let's call it that: spirit. The spirit was of a lesser quality.

CW: Shaun, I do not have any other questions right now with regards to the Glee Club.

SI: Okay. I was curious if you could talk a little bit more about your art major, particularly the studio art aspect. Were there other professors that stand out besides Hendricks? Could you talk in general about what you found interesting and what stuck with you?

PH: There were three things I would talk about in terms of the fine arts at Rutgers. My roommate was a fine arts guy, and what he said was, "Peter, the scheduling of the fine arts courses is such that if there's some other course, some other music, whatever you want to do, it allows for that. It's not like you've got to take this, this, this. It's not this prescribed thing that eats up ninety-five percent of your course scheduling. There's a lot of flexibility. Whether it be independent studies, there's a lot of other things that you can embrace within the fine arts. Do you want to take economic courses? Great, take them. But you're not required then to take maybe the twenty other courses associated with getting an economics degree." The economics professor--I'm drawing a blank on his name--wrote the book that we were studying, and it used all over the United States.

When I think of the art, obviously Geoff Hendricks was, I thought, an extraordinary teacher. Another was Bryan Pottier, who actually had his own personal studio on Bleecker Street--actually, I was on Bleecker Street yesterday in New York--where he had this whole monstrous--in fact, he gave me art of his that I still have hanging here. They were people that allowed you to say, "Let's talk about art." It wasn't like, "Draw me a picture of a building." It wasn't like, "Okay, let's see how realistic we can make the building look." It was about how do you express what's going on in your brain, what's going on in your heart? So, there was a lot more composition to creating. I thought, "This is fascinating." Rutgers used to have these competitions, art competitions, where you could make a little picture, or I used to make these things that were four feet by eight feet, and they would hang them in the Student Center. I thought, "How many other guys are hanging four-foot-by-eight-foot paintings in the Student Center?" I would say Bryan Pottier and Geoff Hendricks.

Here's another little thing. Round about January 1st each year for the last twenty-five years, because it's a new year, I take to writing a couple of thank you letters to people that have touched my life for the good. I remember there's this one guy from Andover who, lo and behold, when I looked him up, was the Poet Laureate of Connecticut, and writing him a letter. There were two guys, Geoff Hendricks, writing him a letter, and there was another guy from Andover, who was not only a teacher but a housemaster that I had, and writing them these letters of "thank you." The responses I would get were … [Editor's Note: Mr. Hawkins's telephone rings.] I'm sorry, let me unplug this.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

PH: Writing these letters of, "Thank you. You have changed my life for the better, the way you taught your course, the way you went about your business." What I thought was fascinating was--maybe I should stop writing letters--two of these guys, one was named Thomas Regan from Andover, wrote me back this touching, joyful letter of how much he dearly appreciated the letter.

As it turned out, he died two months after he wrote that letter to me. It was the same thing with Geoff Hendricks. He got the letter. I know he got the letter. Then, lo and behold, the man dies a month later, because the obituary was in the newspaper. I'm going, "Wow, I am so glad that that letter got through to that man." Again, I've [written] each year, just two letters--that's about as much as I have in me--to people that have touched my life in a special way. Geoff Hendricks was also one of those men.

SI: We are up to four o'clock. Is there anything that you want to add that we skipped over or you would like to talk more about?

PH: Well, the only thing I would add, and it's probably the most important piece, was when I got that Coxsackievirus, that was the week that I met this lovely woman from Douglass. As it turned out, I had to drop out of the Glee Club because I couldn't sing. It really affected--I had to drop out of school for a week. It was a horrific virus. I can still sing today but not for very long. With the Glee Club, you need to be able to sing for four or five hours. [laughter] I can sing about thirty minutes and my voice is gone. The week I met Phyllis was the week I caught the Coxsackievirus, and all of a sudden, I had to drop out of the Glee Club. I had an extra thirty, thirty-five hours a week. There were no concerts to go to, no practices, so I had an extra thirty hours a week. My choice was I could devote that time to studying, or I could devote it to this new person that I had just met. [laughter] Clearly, I devoted it to the new woman that I'd just met from Douglass. Come December, we will be celebrating our [forty-seventh wedding anniversary].

Oh, just one little thing, which my wife won't appreciate. I remember asking her to--there was a restaurant in New York where one of my rugby buddies was the manager. We went there, and I said, "John, do you have any tables?" He goes, "Peter, we're totally booked." I said, "Oh, I was going to ask this girl that I'm with to marry me." He goes, "Give me a minute." With that, somebody got bumped, and I got the best table in the house. [laughter] This is why it helps to have rugby friends. The net of it was, when I asked Phyllis, she didn't say yes or no; she said, "When?" I thought, "I hadn't thought about that." She said, "Well, how about this date?" I said, "Well, I've got a rugby game. We're playing a big game." She said, "Well, how about the next week?" I said, "Well, I've got a game then, too," to which she finally replied, "Well, what day don't you have a game?" [laughter] As it turned out, that's why we got married December 6th because it was the first open weekend on the rugby schedule. [laughter] That said, come December 6th, it will be forty-seven years of marriage to my lady friend from Douglass, all courtesy of the Art Department, which had me building that doorway. It was the door we went through.

SI: That is a good note to end on. Thank you very much for all your time. I really appreciate it.

PH: Well, it's my pleasure. I truly appreciate what you're doing with this project. Certainly with the Glee Club, I know the singers love it, but I don't know to the extent they appreciate how spectacular that organization is. You reflect on your life, and as one progresses in this thing we call life, you might come back as a bunny rabbit, I don't know, but as far as I know, this is it. When you reflect, you get to see how important things were. The Glee Club was very, very important on so many levels, so many levels that go beyond simply singing the songs, again,

even looking at what happened in Prague and seeing it again today in the Ukraine, looking at the rugby stuff.

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

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