

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAWRENCE WEISS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

MICHAEL PERCHIACCA

WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY

APRIL 23, 2007

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Michael Perchiacca: This begins an interview with Judge Lawrence Weiss on April 23, 2007, in Westfield, New Jersey, with Michael Perchiacca and Shaun Illingworth. For the record, where and when were you born?

Lawrence Weiss: July 29, 1932, in New York City, in the Bronx.

Shaun Illingworth: Thank you for having us here today. Could you tell us your father's name?

LW: My father, Max Weiss.

SI: Where was he from?

LW: He was from Hungary.

SI: We were talking before we started the tape about what you do and do not know about his family history. Can you tell us what you do know about where he came from?

LW: Well, yes, sure. He came from a town--his residence was, and I can't even pronounce it, S-Z-A-R-W-A-S-H-A-Z-A, [Szarwashaza], which was obviously a very small town in Hungary. He left from Liverpool on the [RMS] *Adriatic* and arrived in New York on November 22, 1912. He was sixteen years old.

SI: Did he ever tell you any stories about his life before coming to the US?

LW: Not really, and that's the part that, as I told you, I'm very upset about. My brother and I did not in any way try to elicit [that] from him, other than, as I say, we always had these family circles and they always used to talk about the old country, but my brother and I really never sat down with him to discuss his upbringing. I know that, as he used to say to us when he checked our report cards and you didn't get [the] "As" he wanted, he would yell at us and he'd tell us how when he was growing up in Hungary, he lived in a hut with no flooring. They lived on dirt and, when he was three or four years old, his family loaned him out to a tailor in the next town. That's how he learned to become a tailor. He lived with the tailor for six days, and then he came home, actually, Friday afternoon, because they were Orthodox Jews, and they spent the Sabbath with his family, and then, Sunday, he'd go back again. That's how he did it. That's how he grew up.

SI: That really influenced the way he raised you and wanted you to be educated.

LW: My father said, every once in a while--in fact, one time, I [remember], he used to sew in the basement, [where] he had his [machine], because, besides working, he used to do things in the house. I, one time, asked him, when a button came undone, "Show me how to sew the button on." My father said, "You're not going to--I'm not teaching you how to sew a button. You're going to college. Someone else will sew your buttons."

SI: He came over here with a trade. Do you know where he got settled?

LW: Sure, he got settled in the Bronx. In those days, when you came across, when you came to Ellis Island, you had to have a sponsor to get off, as I recollect. Of course, he had family. I even know the name of the guy who [took him in], family cousins, who he stayed [with]. He stayed at the family house of a Louie Siegelstein and he then worked as a tailor down in the clothing industry. In fact, after two or three years, I understand he was a foreman at Witty Brothers, which was then one of the finer clothing places in New York City, down [on the] Lower East Side. The Witty Brothers was very [well known]. That's what he did.

SI: Were the family members that he had in the US distant?

LW: Yes, cousins, uncles, cousins, everyone, [the] whole family.

SI: Did any of his family members follow him over?

LW: Yes, his sister followed him over and she went to Washington and married my Uncle George. That's the only one. His other brother I don't think ever came over, and my understanding--I never met his father or mother, they died--I think his mother died in the Holocaust. I'm not [sure]. So, I never knew any of my grandparents on his side. [I] knew my grandmother on my mother's side, because they brought her over.

SI: Did he ever talk about anything related to anti-Semitism from the old country?

LW: Oh, it was just--it was the general overall [condition], yes. It was always bad to be Jewish. So, that's the way it was. That's one of the reasons why so many came over here.

SI: He never brought up any specific incidents.

LW: No, he didn't. He never brought that up.

MP: How did he meet your mother? Was she already in the US?

LW: Okay, no, no. My mother came over, if I'm not mistaken--let me see how she got over--she came over later. Her brother brought her, (Bernard Israel?), and she came over afterwards. My Uncle Benny brought over all his brothers and sisters, one at a time. She came over from, again, Hungary, although I don't [know] the town. I don't know, but she came over from Hungary. Yes, I do, I'm sorry. They lived in Munkacs, which later became Czechoslovakia, because, when I went to Czechoslovakia with my wife (we went with two other couples) we stayed in Prague. I went to the desk to see the concierge and I said to him, "Listen, I would like to rent a car and go to Munkacs. Do you know where Munkacs is?" and [was] explaining. He said, "I'll find out." When we came back then, [to the hotel], after, as we always do--you go to a city and you walk around--and I came back and the concierge called me over. He said, "You can't go to Munkacs, because it's no longer called Munkacs. It's a," he gave a Russian name [Mukachevo], because, after World War II, the Russians took over that part of the area [Ukraine]. After World War I, it became Czechoslovakia. After World War II, the Russians took over, and he says, "It's a different town and you can't go there," but she came from Munkacs and she came through there.

She stayed with her other sister and brother and they all lived in the Bronx. Then, they later brought my grandmother over, and Sally was her name. That's why we used to go to the Bronx every three or four weeks. We also had to go to the Bronx to visit my grandmother, and then, my aunts and uncles on the other side, and that's what happened. Actually, my grandmother, when we lived on Wyoming Avenue, the last seven years of her life, she lived at our house and she died there.

MP: Did your mother work?

LW: My mother was a seamstress, too, for a while. The minute she got married, which I could tell you, because I have the wedding announcement, the minute she got married, which was August 26th, that date I know, but not the year--1923, she married my father. They lived on Fox Street, 724 Fox Street in the Bronx, and my father would never let her work again. That was something. You never let your wife work. So, she never worked again.

SI: That is a nicely printed announcement. They were very formal in those days.

LW: That's how they did it.

SI: Did either of your parents ever tell you stories about life in the factory?

LW: No, my mother didn't, because, as I say, she worked, but she didn't talk too much about that. My father, he really was a tailor and, if I remember correctly, as I say, he worked for Witty Brothers for a while. So, he would fit in all this other stuff. So, he never really talked about that.

My mother talked about [Hungary]. He would never even talk about being in Hungary when he was growing up, other than [that] he had no food. They had no food and they worked and that was it. My mother told me about her grandfather, which is obviously my great-grandfather. He had a brewery, so they were fairly wealthy for a while when she was little, when she was just born. She was slightly [wealthy] growing up, I guess, the first four or five years. Somehow, they lost the brewery, because, she remembers, her mother would tell her stories about [how] my grandmother had a tutor [that] taught French, etcetera. In those days, if you had a tutor, you had money, but they lost all that. So, that's the only thing I remember. She remembers going to Prague once when she was a little girl, but that's all.

SI: Did she talk about the impact of the First World War on her life?

LW: Well, she came here before World War I, yes, because my Uncle Benny was in World War I. So, that, I know. He came. She came here before World War I, so did my father, obviously.

SI: Your Uncle Benny was here in the US Army.

LW: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I mean, I have pictures. I have so many pictures. You told me that--I knew you were going to be [coming].

SI: We like pictures.

LW: Let me see, that's my brother. Here's my father and mother when they were young. Here, here's my Uncle Benny, World War I.

SI: This is him in the service.

LW: Absolutely.

MP: Did they have the foresight to expect World War I?

LW: I don't think my father or my mother were really cognizant of [it, at] the time. First of all, you [have] got to realize [that] World War I was started when there was an assassination, right, you know, in, what is it, Serbia, Croatia?

SI: Yes, in Belgrade.

LW: Belgrade, the [Austro]-Hungarian Empire. So, I don't think they were very cognizant of what was happening and, of course, they weren't there then, because my father came here in 1912. [The] war didn't start until '17, over there, or '16?

SI: It began in 1914.

LW: 1914, right, because, by [1918], it was over, but, right, in 1914, he was here at least two years before, and the war started over that, really.

SI: Were you close with your extended family?

LW: Absolutely. Well, in fact, when I was born, in the Bronx, and before I was a year old, we, they, moved to Elizabeth. My brother was then almost four years old, and we moved to Elizabeth because my father then got a job working with my uncle, who is one of my mother's brothers. He had a cleaning plant, White Cleaners and Dyers. So, my father went to work there. He moved to Elizabeth. They eventually moved to Elizabeth. My aunt lived in Elizabeth, so that many of my relatives all lived in Elizabeth from my mother's side.

SI: Your earliest memories are of Elizabeth.

LW: Oh, yes. I grew up [there]. The first memories I had was [of] Elizabeth, since I came before I was one year old.

SI: What do you recall? What were some of your earliest memories about growing up in Elizabeth?

LW: It's a great town.

SI: What was your neighborhood like?

LW: Well, I was just thinking, what happened was, it was after the [Great] Depression, before World War II, so that no one had much money. We moved at least six times within that period of time, '33 to '40-something. The reason why we moved--I found out later, because I didn't know when I was growing up--was we all lived in these two-family houses in Eaton Street, Canton Street and Dayton Street in Elizabeth. They were two-family houses, and, if you could get rent [for] a dollar less a week, you move to the next place. So, that's why we kept moving, I found out later. I said, "Why is it we moved from Eaton Street?" and, by the way, Eaton Street, Canton Street, and Dayton Street is within a radius of five blocks. We lived at Dayton Street the most, until we moved to Wyoming Avenue, which is also an interesting reason why, but the reason that everyone helped you move [was] because, if you saved a dollar, milk was a nickel, bread was a nickel, and so a dollar was a lot of money. That's why we moved, but, otherwise, it was a great neighborhood. It was a lovely [place]. It's two-family houses. Most of the people there on Dayton Street, we knew. All my friends, we all grew up [together]. I went to the elementary school three blocks, two blocks, away, School Number Fourteen, Abraham Lincoln School Number Fourteen. It was [near] Warinanco Park, and like five blocks away. It was wonderful.

MP: How would you describe your neighborhood? Was it a melting pot?

LW: Well, actually, it was a semi-melting pot, but there were a lot of people who you would call not middle class yet but who were born in America. In fact, [in] the house on Dayton Street, I lived next to someone who was a teacher at School Number Fourteen, in my school, and across the street a Mrs. Berenson, whose [son], Bobby Berenson, who went to Rutgers University, played tennis for Rutgers University. They lived two doors down, across the street. She was my third grade teacher. It was a whole mixed group, but it was wonderful. I can't tell you what a nice neighborhood [it was] growing up.

SI: Can you describe your living conditions growing up? Did you face any struggles?

LW: Oh, sure, absolutely. Well, look, I did not know we were poor. There was always food on the table, [so] I did not know that. I later found that out. One of the stories which is interesting, one time, when we were all [together], we'd always go to my mother's house. My mother and father lived--we moved to Wyoming Avenue, which was a very nice neighborhood at that time, and so after we're married, we used to always go there for dinner on Sunday or a holiday. My mother, she's a Hungarian, so, therefore, she cooks and bakes like you never believed. One time, I asked my mother, jokingly, while sitting around the table talking, I said, "Ma, why is it you used to send me out every day to get milk or a quarter pound of butter? Why didn't you get a gallon or something like that?" My mother looked at me and said, "You don't understand. We didn't have the money for a gallon. We couldn't waste the money for a gallon. We got it until we ran out, and then, I said, 'Go two blocks down to the store,'" because they didn't have supermarkets, "and get some milk." That's when I realized we really didn't have that much money, but we always had food.

My father then was a tailor, and he used to come home for lunch. Now, I was at school, when I was going to Abraham Lincoln School so was Alvin, and he used to come [home] and my

mother used to make him lunch every day, a four-course lunch. He's a Hungarian, he had to have his lunch and, at night, [it] was dinner and we all sat down and ate.

SI: Your brother, Alvin, is two years older than you.

LW: Three years older than me, August 13, 1929, yes, three years older.

SI: Living in your apartment, it was just the two boys and your parents.

LW: That's right. The apartments were all the same. You walk in, there was a living room, a sun porch, a dining room, [and] a kitchen in the back. You walk in, two bedrooms, my mother and father in the big bedroom, my brother and I shared the other bedroom. My brother always had the choice of which bed, because he's the oldest, therefore, he always had the best, the view. He could always have the window, which really [ticked] me off, but when I complained to my mother, she said, "He's the oldest, that's enough."

SI: You talked about food and how it was important in Hungarian culture. Were there other aspects of the old world that your parents kept up?

LW: Well, let me see, when they wanted to keep a secret, sometimes they spoke Yiddish. After Alvin and I began to pick up a little of that, as we were maybe twelve, fourteen, then my mother and father decided [to] speak Hungarian. "They'll never know," and we didn't. That's when they wanted [to keep a secret]. They always, of course, kept all the Jewish holidays. That's something they always kept. We always had a kosher house.

SI: Were they very religious, or was it more of a secular, cultural type of thing?

LW: No, no, my father was very religious, my mother was religious. My mother, both of them, came from, you know, Orthodox families. No, my father worked on Saturdays, which he hated, but putting food on the table was more important than God. As soon as he got old enough and retired, he never drove, never drove again, on Saturdays. He went to synagogue every Saturday. He couldn't do it when we were growing up, because he had to support his family, but the minute he retired, that's what he did--amazing that he kept it all those years.

SI: Did you have to take part-time jobs to help with the family?

LW: Not really. That's the amazing thing. When I was growing up, when I was young, we didn't have [jobs]. There weren't any, really, jobs I did. When I was in high school, I worked every summer. That was really not so much to support the family as I [would] give my father money and put it away, so that I would go to school or something.

One summer, I worked as a hod track carrier, digging ditches, because the head of the union, who was later deported, Emmanuel Riggi, whose son, John Riggi was the mob and also is now serving a life sentence--I think he just died a couple of years ago, who was sentenced by my best friend, Al Wolin [Alfred Wolin], from Elizabeth. So, I worked as a hod carrier one summer, digging ditches, making very good money. I got paid two dollars and fifty cents an hour. In '49,

two dollars and fifty cents an hour was an enormous amount of money. I got the money and I gave it to my father, and he'd give me five dollars to have for the week, to be able to eat lunch and all that other stuff. I worked there two years. [Editor's Note: John Riggi, a convicted labor racketeer, died in 2015 at the age of ninety.]

One year, I worked on the line at the BOP, which was then Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac, in Linden. We were cleaning light bulbs at night. So, yes, that's when I worked. I worked in the summertime doing that.

SI: This was all in the late 1940s, postwar, when you were in high school.

LW: Yes. I also worked doing these things during college in [the] summertime. Oh, you had to. Rutgers basketball scholarships were only tuition in those days. Now, [scholarships are] a full boat, as they say.

SI: Growing up during this period, between the start of the Great Depression and the start of World War II, do you remember seeing the effects of the depression on your neighborhood?

LW: Not really. That's the point, I did not understand. Having been a history major, later I found out about it. I didn't understand about the depression, how it affected [us], because I was too young when they had the breadlines and all that. That was '29 to '30. I was born in '32, so by that time, the major part of the [depression was over], and, of course, that's when "God," as my father would call him, was elected president, because my father said Franklin Delano Roosevelt was God. He was right; that's the man that turned America around. The only way I understood the depression is that no one had anything really and that's what the depression was, but everyone around there was working. No one [was] making any real money, but they were working. I said my father was a tailor; he [was] working.

SI: Did you see any New Deal programs in action?

LW: Well, not for me, see.

SI: I just mean generally.

LW: No, no. I know they were building things, but that was not something I was cognizant of, because, as I say, that happened in '32 to '36 to '37. I was born in '32, [so] I didn't go to school until I went to kindergarten. By the time I was in the fourth or fifth grade, it was a different [era]. It was the war. It was World War II. World War II was happening, and so it was a whole different thing.

MP: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

LW: Absolutely. Oh, I was in the car driving back from Philadelphia. We were visiting someone, and we heard on the radio that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. That was a shocker even as young as I was, because it was December 7, 1941 and so I was nine years old and my brother was like, "That was a shocker."



I was not cognizant of what was happening in terms of--I knew there was a war in Europe, because I kept the thing about planes, the Spitfire and all these other things. I remember the Stuka dive bomber, but my parents never talked to me about what was happening in Europe, because we lost twenty-five, thirty first cousins, second cousins. They were all killed in the Holocaust. They never talked to me about it then, so I really was [sheltered]. I just knew there was a terrible war. When they were bombing Britain, you'd hear that on the radio, but I was really never cognizant of it, because we were insulated until that happened.

MP: Did you have any notion of the Nazis or Hitler?

LW: Oh, yes, we knew that. We knew who was evil. Our house particularly knew who was evil, because we had, my mother and father, each one, had sisters or brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles. I think, as I say, I think my father's mother was killed in the country and my mother's father, he came here once and went back. I didn't know him, my grandfather, but he died before World War II.

SI: Were they still sending letters or packages to these folks?

LW: That, I don't know. I'm sure they were, but I don't know.

SI: Do you remember sitting around the table with your parents and hearing them talk about America getting involved with the war?

LW: No. As far as there was a war, they're Americans, they're all [Americans], that's the way they were. As I say, we had cousins who were in the Army in America. All our cousins, the older ones, went to war in the United States Army or Navy, or whatever it was. That was just the standard thing.

SI: How quickly did you see some sort of an impact in your neighborhood from World War II? Did you have blackouts?

LW: That's exactly what they [did]. In fact, my father was an air raid warden. They used to have blackouts, and they used to have mock sirens ring all over Elizabeth and everyone had to close their lights. That, I remember specifically; they always did that. They were involved with that. As I say, I think my father was a block warden chairman of [it], so he'd be out there with that helmet. I didn't know that really had an effect. Looking back, Germany didn't have an airplane that could get here, but that wasn't what they were trying to accomplish. They were trying to accomplish making Americans aware of the fact that there is a war, and it's serious.

SI: Do you remember, as a child, being scared or concerned during these drills?

LW: Sure. I remember, we used to have air raid alarms when I was in school, and you had to go underneath the desk. Of course, when you're as large as me and a few of my friends, I always sat, when I went to school in elementary school in particular, the bigger desks were in the back. They were all attached to the floor. You didn't sit according to [the] alphabet, you sat according

to your size, so the bigger guys were in the back. There were girls back, too. In an air raid, we had to get under the desk. That was always a tight fit, but we were worried. We thought they were really going to bomb [us]. We had no concept of, I don't think, what that meant, although we did see, we used to go to movies all the time, Elmora Theater and they would have then in those days, the news. You'd have the news before the major film and you'd see the bombing of London and things like that. So, they showed that on the news, Paramount Pictures, I still remember that, the news, Paramount News [with the slogan] "the eyes and ears of the world."

SI: Do you remember some of the movies that you saw that were World War II action pictures that got the population behind the war?

LW: I know there were and I know I saw them, but I can't remember the movies. I remember we used to go to movies all the time, used to go to the Elmora Theater.

SI: Do you remember anything else that was war related that was just for kids? Did you have trading cards, that sort of thing?

LW: Well, we did have cards, but we also collected stuff, metal and all. They had a place where you put it, so that [they could] use it again, because they were afraid they'd lose [the metal]. You can't lose the metal, you had to reuse it again, I remember that. We did that when we were kids.

SI: You would go around in a wagon and fill it up.

LW: Sure, yes, absolutely, go around with a wagon [with] two or three guys and try to steal as much metal [as] we could from whoever is around, so [that] we could bring it over to the yard.

SI: What about rationing?

LW: Yes, we did. You had a card. You had a gas card and, of course, if you didn't have any priority, you had--I don't know how many gallons they gave you--but, in those days, actually, my father did have a 1941 Oldsmobile, the first Hydramatic, one of the first [automatic transmissions]. They used to use the Hydramatic in Oldsmobile, and then if it worked, they did put [it] in Cadillac. That's how General Motors [worked]. So, he bought an Oldsmobile in 1940--don't ask me how, that I [have] never been able to work [out] how he got the money. I think, in those days, that was like four hundred dollars, it's amazing, but he had an Oldsmobile. You had gas rations. So, we could [go], because we'd always go to New York to visit. Every two weeks, we always had to [go to] either a family circle meeting once a month or to visit my mother's [mother], my grandmother, in the Bronx and my Aunt Edna. We always used to go there, and so he had the gas he had to ration, since he worked in Elizabeth. Many times, he'd go four miles to work and back.

I know we had food stamps, rationing. You get x-amount for the meat, you can only have a certain amount, and I remember that. My mother used to say, sometimes, to have a big Sunday dinner with some good meat, we wouldn't have it during the week. We have to cut it down, so [that] she could use these stamps to do that. Yes, I remember that.

SI: A lot of people said that rationing did not really affect them. One group that really seemed to have been affected were families with children, because, for example, shoes were rationed, but kids are always growing out of their shoes. Do you remember things like that being hard?

LW: To tell you the truth, I don't ever remember. Well, clothes was easy. The older one got the clothes, and then my father was a tailor. When my father gets them, he just takes his [tools] and makes it to fit me. Shoes, whenever you ran through the shoes, you take them to the shoemaker, who then put a sole back on or something like that. I never was aware of rationing of clothes. I remember rationing of food but not of clothes. Butter was rationed, difficult to have a lot of butter. My mother used Crisco or something. I remember that, things like that.

SI: Do you remember it being a hardship?

LW: Not to me. To me, growing [up] during the war was not a hardship. I was oblivious to it. I guess my family was, they all were aware of it, everyone in the neighborhood. Those people in the neighborhood who had their older sons in the Army or in the service, they were more aware of it than I was, than our family. We had cousins, but other than that, the war, it was there. We were growing up and so it really didn't hit us, other than we knew it was there, it was a horrible thing. Yes, we could be bombed. We had to limit what we could buy in foods and meats and the car, but that really, to someone who was eight, nine, ten, eleven, that really didn't affect me. That didn't sink in.

SI: Maybe it was more in places like Newark, where they had a large German population, but were there ever any rumors about saboteurs?

LW: The only thing I can tell you is that Union, [the] Township of Union, had a very big German population. In fact, I know they had the *Bund*, which was then the Germans and you could hear--again, I didn't hear it, know it firsthand--but you'd hear my parents or neighbors talk about Union, "That's where the Germans, the *Bund* is." So, they always talked about it. Later, my first recollection as an adult about [the subject], Union had a mayor called Mayor Biertuempfel. They named a field after him, and he was of German extraction. I don't think it is, obviously, not now, but, in those days, that's what it was, before World War II. That, and I remember when I was at Rutgers, we used to go to a beer place in the Watchungs, the (Schwabers Alps?), which was also a place where the *Bund* met, not when I was in college, but before World War II. That's where the *Bund* met up there.

SI: I have heard other people talk about these beer halls that Rutgers students would go to that were in New York or other places.

LW: Yes, well, this one was up in Watchung.

SI: Do you remember following the news of the war and any of the big events, like V-J Day?

LW: Yes, well, I remember V-J Day, that was a very big thing, and that was August, if I'm not mistaken, my brother's birthday. I was July 29th. He was August 13th, so that was how we remember V-J Day. That was very big. Of course, remember, they were going to go to Japan,

and I was following the island hopping. I had a map, how you follow the islands, Iwo Jima, which, again, didn't sink in until afterwards, although I did see them in the newsreels. They showed you what was Iwo Jima, the way the Marines landed, how they had to blow them out of the pillboxes. Of course, I remember when they dropped the atom bomb, which was something. [Editor's Note: The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps invaded the Japanese-held island Iwo Jima in the Central Pacific on February 19, 1945. U.S. forces used the island-hopping strategy to regain control of strategic islands from the Japanese in the Pacific War. The B-29 bomber *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945. On August 9, 1945, the B-29 *Bockscar* dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan. V-J Day, or Victory over Japan Day, is August 15, 1945, the day that Japan unconditionally surrendered to the United States to bring World War II to an end. On September 2, 1945, the formal surrender was signed onboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.]

MP: How were the headlines in the newspapers? Was that all over the headlines about the war?

LW: Oh, always. Oh, I don't know if it was so much propaganda. The major newspaper, now, remember, I didn't read the *Times* in those days and neither did my father. That was something that now I read *The New York Times* every day. When you're growing up, you read the *Daily News*, and we had the *Elizabeth Daily Journal*. We never read the *Star-Ledger* or the *Newark News* in those days, although those were the two papers in Newark and northern New Jersey. *Star-Ledger* is morning; *Newark News* was the afternoon paper. Obviously, *Newark News* went out of business, because he couldn't have two newspapers then.

The headlines were always about the war, if I remember. There's battles, this, that. After all, it was the biggest conflagration in the history of man up until that time, World War II. When America landed in North Africa, then they landed in Italy, Salerno, and then, of course, when they land [in Europe], D-Day, that's all the news there was, you covered it. Of course, you didn't get the [whole story]. You didn't find out how bad D-Day was until later, what happened, how many people were killed, but it was there. Oh, yes, all those were covered.

MP: Was there any news in the newspaper about concentration camps?

LW: Not that I remember. That's something, I must tell you, not until after the war. Although I know my father knew about it, and the reason why I know that, and my mother, is because after the war, when cousins who lived through the Holocaust and were expatriated, or however you want to put the term, when they got out of the concentration camps, they were sent to camps, relocation camps. My father and mother used to, the family used to have them come over, to [be] American sponsors, and they'd stay at our house.

My cousin, I remember, one cousin Margaret, my first cousin, stayed at our house for two or three months, and then she went to the next house, the next cousin's, the next relative's house, an interesting story. My cousin who was, I guess, she was fifteen when she came here, that's my father's niece, his brother who was in the military in Hungary and never left, never left Hungary, Maurice. When she survived the concentration camp, he brought her over. One time, we were sitting at a table, we ate and everything. Now, she spoke Hungarian and Yiddish, she didn't speak English, or she was beginning to learn. We'd eat every night, and my father asked if she

wants some bread. After all, I'm sure she was eating better than she [had] for a while. When she came to our house, we had fruit. They weren't used to that from the concentration camp. Now, my father asked if she wants some bread, and he handed it to her. She went like that [reached out and her forearm showed]. I said, "Cousin Margaret, what are those?" She had the tattoos, and my father went, "Boom" and whacked me. I did not know what I did, and my father dragged me out and said, "Don't you dare bring that [up]." Now, this must have been '45 or '44, so that means I was twelve years old. What twelve year old [would know about that]? Maybe some were aware. I said, "What did I do? What did I do wrong?" He says, "Those are the tattoos from the concentration camp." That's the first time I was aware of that. Amazing.

Then, later, my other cousin and his wife, they stayed at our house for three months after, then she left, and then, another one. That's how the family did it. Everyone brought one, or [was] sponsoring, and they all went on to live [full lives]. Eventually, my cousin Margaret had two daughters, both of whom became doctors. Amazing.

SI: A lot of them did not talk about what they had been through.

LW: No, none of them talked about it. I never asked, and, of course, at twelve years old, after getting whacked once, you didn't. My father, who was a little guy, before he lost his stomach because of ulcers, bleeding ulcers, a little guy, but tough. [When] he hit you, you knew you were hit. I never asked again. One smack, when you get knocked out of the chair at the dining table, is enough for me.

SI: I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about your father and the union activity. Were you aware at the time of his work with the union?

LW: I wasn't alive.

SI: That was all before you were born.

LW: Oh, sure, this is all in 1916. Here it is. Here are the books. There it is, Social Party 1919, here's his union book from, membership, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. That's David Dubinsky, if I remember correctly. Here it is 11/5/1918, that's the dues book, that's how you paid your dues. So, I had no idea. [Editor's Note: David Dubinsky headed the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union from 1932 to 1966.]

SI: He did not keep up with membership in a party or a union.

LW: Oh, no, no, no, after he stopped [working there].

SI: Did that ever come back to him in any way?

LW: Not that I know of. Actually, you know when I was at Rutgers, McCarthy, McCarthyism was at its peak, but it never got to me. Of course, if Joe McCarthy ever found out I was, my father was a socialist in 1919, I probably wouldn't [have] been able to get my [commission],

being in the Air Force, being inducted as an officer. Because Joe McCarthy raised havoc, before your time, at Rutgers, yes, over at Rutgers. He fired, law schools were fired, oh, yes.

SI: We will ask you that when we get to Rutgers. You entered Thomas Jefferson High School in 1948.

LW: 1948, '49 and '50, three years.

SI: Was that an all-boys school?

LW: The last all boys' school in the State of New Jersey, the girls' was Battin and the boys' was Thomas Jefferson High School, Elizabeth.

SI: What was your high school like?

LW: It was great. It was an all boys' high school, every kid, every boy from the City of Elizabeth, so it was amalgamated. Everyone liked that. You either took shop or you took college prep. We had the leading Latin scholar in America teaching Latin, Dr. (Doc Worsley?) who was the funniest man. He did a book called, we, still have it, it was (*Ilium Latinum?*), which he published, which was sent to all the high schools in the country. This guy was a giant. We had great teachers.

We had great sports teams, because it was a Group IV, which is a state [rating], and we had all these boys, so we had great football. We had unbelievable basketball teams and baseball and we really were [good], and track. It was great.

SI: Had you been involved in sports before going into high school?

LW: Oh, sure. I played basketball every day. In those days, there are very few multi-talented sports guys. You're usually stuck with one sport, at least in Elizabeth. I, with Larry Gordon, I played basketball from junior high school on. That's all I did, besides go to school, was play basketball.

SI: Did you have any other activities, like Boy Scouts?

LW: Well, oh, yes, sure, I was a Boy Scout. In fact, I was at the meeting of the Boy Scouts down at the Y when Roosevelt died. They announced Franklin Delano Roosevelt died, and the scout leader ended the [meeting] we just started. He says, "We're going to call [the meeting off]. We're going to stop. You can go home. President Roosevelt died." It was on the news, and I went home. We took the bus to go home, and my mother was sitting on the front porch crying. This was traumatic for these people. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, they thought, saved the world in terms of particularly the poor. He was [responsible for] Social Security. He did everything in terms of changing the face of America. So, yes, I remember that. I was a Boy Scout. When I was in high school, we were in all sorts of clubs and things like that, but the major thing I did was basketball.

SI: Were there fraternities in the high schools?

LW: I think there were, but that, I was never a member of the fraternity. No, as I say, we never did that. I know there were some people had a fraternity. I think my brother was in a fraternity in high school, but I wasn't. We just, our [group of] guys, our fraternity was playing basketball.

SI: Before you got into high school, were kids just playing basketball on their own, or was it organized in some way?

LW: Well, yes, it was, most of the time you played on [teams]. We had teams. We used to, when I was in junior high school, there were five junior high schools, so you used to play. Somehow, Elizabeth had it so that if you're [a] certain height and certain weight, you were in each different level. See, you always played against people your own size for junior high school. Then, of course, we had teams, guys would get together, and we'd go around the city playing other guys, other teams, and that's what we did. There was a couple of organized tournaments, nothing like it is now, where the kids start when they're eight years old and they're in fourteen leagues, and when they get out of school, they've got another game. When we got out of school, we went and played in School 21 or Al (Lifson's?) backyard and played basketball.

SI: What position did you play in high school?

LW: Center, forward. We had a team that you played everything, and I played with Larry Gordon since the fourth grade.

SI: Are there memories that stand out about your time playing at Thomas Jefferson?

LW: Absolutely, it's the greatest thing in the world. We had probably the best coach in the State of New Jersey.

SI: What was his name?

LW: Bob Cox, who is now in Elizabeth's Sports Hall of Fame. He left after our junior year to go to Los Alamos, New Mexico.

SI: Let me just flip this tape over.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Please continue. You said that he left for Los Alamos.

LW: He left after our junior year to go to Los Alamos, New Mexico, and he became the athletic coach [for] football, basketball and track out there. At Jeff, he coached, actually, what happened was Thomas Jefferson High School won the state tournament in 1946. [The] coach was [Abner] "Abby" West, and Bob Cox was in the Army. When he came back, since he was coaching before, there was a law that said if you, when you return, you get your old position back. So,

Bob Cox, who was a great basketball coach, as was a great football [coach], had to [be] give[n] back his position.

So, when I went to Jeff, he'd already had tryouts when you were in junior high school, and basketball was the thing in Thomas Jefferson High School. They had great football teams and won the state championship. They [also] had a great baseball team. The track team was great, but basketball was unbelievable in Elizabeth. We lost three games; we only lost one game a year. My sophomore year, we were JV [junior varsity], [and] he would never let us [play]. He would let us sit on the bench in the varsity. We were undefeated. The varsity was undefeated county champs, and they lost on the semi-finals of the state. I'll tell you now to show you how much it affected your life. They lost to Atlantic City by two points in the Group IV semi-finals at the Elizabeth Armory. I was there. The next year was my junior year, and he was the coach. We were undefeated county champs, and we lost to West Orange in the semi-finals of the state. [We lost] the same night one year later to West Orange. Then, my senior year, we were undefeated county champs and we lost to Perth Amboy, only this time we lost in the finals of the sectional at Rutgers University and that's still, always had a bad feeling about Rutgers because of that, but we lost to them. We blew that game, too, and that's the only three games they've lost. Playing basketball in those times at Thomas Jefferson High School was really something special. We played in the Elizabeth Armory every Friday night, a home game, which is where they played the county champs, and the state tournament was played at Elizabeth Armory. That was our home court, and it was great. If you ever want to think about being a hero, that's the thing to do.

SI: Was it a big venue or was it akin to a high school gym now?

LW: What, Elizabeth Armory? Well, now it's like Elizabeth High School, [which] now has a gym that's called the Dunn Center, which seats three thousand, but in those days, we used to play, Tuesday [we] used to play at Jefferson High School, [where] there's two hundred people. It was a small gym, typical gym, but playing in Elizabeth Armory we used to play before a thousand, two thousand people in high school on a Friday night, which was something special, and so that was the venue. It was just unbelievable.

SI: Did your high school have a rival?

LW: Sure, Hillside. You know, everyone wanted to beat us. After all, you're undefeated after all those years. Yes, Hillside was the local [rival], we played them in the county championship my junior year and senior year. We beat them by one or two points our junior year, a last second basket, and our senior [year] we killed them. My roommate, who played for the Hillside [team] still, never forgave me, said the ref stole it, but my father didn't understand it.

See, when I was growing up, my father, you come home with a report card, and you'd have to show him the report card, obviously. In those days, you signed it, they signed it. Now, I understand [that] you don't have to show your parents or something, or if they do, they fudge it. You didn't do that in my day. I remember coming home one time, and my brother was in Jeff [as a] senior [and] I was in my ninth grade at Alexander Hamilton; he brought his [report card], I brought my report card and I had an eighty-something. My father [said], "Who got a ninety?"



He says, "You're wasting too much time playing that basketball," and my brother said, "Dad, leave him alone." My father said, "What do you say?" He says "Don't get into this." [My brother] said, "Dad, let him play basketball, he'll get a basketball scholarship, it won't cost you [anything] to send him to college." Of course, my father said, "That's ridiculous." Then, he used to come to all the Friday night [games]. He couldn't come on weekdays, Tuesday, but he always came Friday night. My brother, my mother and father used to come to the game. My brother used to take them to the armory every Friday night to watch the games, which they didn't know what was happening, but they used to go to the games. My mother used to say when I used to come home at eleven-thirty at night, "You're running up now, you're going to catch pneumonia, you're sweating so much." I said, "Mom, don't worry about it."

SI: What was Coach Cox like? What was he able to teach you?

LW: Bob Cox was probably at least twenty-five years ahead of his time in coaching basketball. He used to have what they do now, particularly in games, he'd have three or four managers. When you were practicing, he would tell you at the end, the next morning, the next day you'd come to practice, he'd say, "You got seven rebounds. You got three. Your man scored twice." He'd have these charts and he knew exactly what [happened] during practice, so he was just unbelievable. He used the spread offense, which no one ever understood in those days, now they do, that's why they're all so good now, but he was very tough man.

He was a pilot in the Army. In fact, because I'm on the committee for the Elizabeth Sports Hall of Fame, when we put him in, I wrote to his daughters and got some information. He was one of five boys who served in the military, in the Army, Navy. As a [matter-of-] fact, one of his brothers was at Pearl Harbor during World War II. The whole [family], so all five [served]. He was a toughie. [He] played professional football after he came [back], and he was voted the outstanding lineman of the State of Ohio his senior year, even though he didn't play for Ohio State, he played for Muskegon. This guy was a tough man, tough. In those days when he said something, you said, "Yes, Coach."

SI: What interested you academically in high school?

LW: I'll tell you the truth, I don't know. I must tell you, I went through high school and you had to study. Jokingly, I still remember saying that I wanted to become a chemical engineer. I was terrible in chemistry, I didn't know what that meant. I went to school, you study, [and] we had very good teachers. It's a shame that my focus was so much on basketball that I didn't devote more time to study because we had great academic teachers at Thomas Jefferson. Some of the guys who went there, who really did well, who I still see, they all went to Harvard, Notre Dame, they're all brilliant, very smart guys. I couldn't compartmentalize to put basketball--basketball was your whole life. So, you studied, obviously, you had to study, but, obviously, I didn't study to my full capacity because of that. I liked history. I liked a lot of things.

MP: You knew you wanted to go to college, though, after high school.

LW: No, in my family, you had no choice. In my family, my father would say, particularly when he'd look at your report card, "What do you want to do? You want to work seven days a

week like me. You're going to college." When he first said that, I was like in the third or fourth grade, I didn't even know what college was. I thought he was sending me, "What is college?" I wouldn't ask, but you're going to college, so there was no choice about that. I was going to college. Obviously, by the time I was in high school, my brother went to Rutgers. He lived at home, he commuted, because we couldn't afford to stay at Rutgers. So, he commuted to Rutgers all his years. I knew I was going to college, and by the time I was a senior, it's just a matter of what college I was going [to], where I was going to go, what scholarship I was going to take or get, so it was a different thing.

MP: What other schools were you looking at besides Rutgers?

LW: Well, I had a scholarship to Syracuse, had an appointment to Annapolis, [and] I had a couple of scholarships, four or five colleges offered me some. Syracuse was the one that offered me a scholarship, which was in those days a six hour trip to go, and, of course, I had no concept of what Syracuse was. Now, I took all my kids when it was time for the college, took them to the college area. I don't know if you did that, but your parents took you to college. My father and mother weren't going to take me any place, so I never went to Syracuse and I had a basketball scholarship. Instead, I went to Rutgers.

Actually one of the reasons why I thought I was going to Rutgers [was because] my brother was going be a senior. So, when I went to Rutgers, if I want to go to Rutgers, I figured my brother will be a senior, he'll lay the groundwork and Larry Gordon, who went to Rutgers. He had a few more scholarships than I [did]. Larry Gordon was the leading scorer on the team in senior year [with] nineteen points a game, and in those days that was awesome. He was great, and so he went to Rutgers because his brother, Irwin, was getting his doctorate in ceramic engineer[ing], and Allen, his other brother, played football, swam, and was a track guy at Rutgers, so he was going to Rutgers even though he had scholarships. Again, like he and I, we and a couple of guys, we all had scholarships all over, so he definitely was going. He commuted also. The two of us used to commute in the beginning.

I thought I would go with my brother. My brother didn't tell me that [until] after I accepted Rutgers that, my brother, that summer, told me [that he was going to Rutgers Law School]. I said, "Well, Alvin, are you going to help me out?" He says, "Well, I won't be there." I said, "What do you mean you won't? You're going to be a senior, you got to graduate, Dad will kill you." He said, "No, I'm going to Rutgers law school and if you finish, if you pass your first year at Rutgers law school, then you get your diploma at Rutgers undergraduate." So, I said, "Why didn't you tell me that? I would have gone to Syracuse." Of course, I was joking, because I didn't know what Syracuse was about anyways. Yes, but that's what happened.

SI: Before we get into Rutgers, can you tell us again about why you got involved with the Naval Academy, why you wanted to do that?

LW: Sure, okay. Ben Carnevale, who was from around here, was the coach of Annapolis, and he saw me play in high school and he knew about how we had a very good team. He read the articles. He called me up and said that he would like me to come to Annapolis, and he says, "You get four years college." So, I told him, "Okay." He said, "I'll call you back if you [will]

consider it." So, "I [will] consider," I said. He called me back and I said, "I told my father, 'Dad, I could go to Annapolis,' [and] my father said, 'Oh, wonderful,' he says." Of course, I didn't know, again that's how naïve, [at] our age there aren't too many people that smart or that worldly. In those days, unlike now, Annapolis was really, you're an engineer. Now, they take English and history majors and political science. In those days, particularly [at] Annapolis, you were an engineer, which I wasn't too great in the math.

So, he got Russell B. Long, who later became the senator, but he was then a congressman, got me appointed out of some little hick town in Louisiana. I took the exam at the post office in Elizabeth, and I passed the English and I didn't do well in the math by ten points. So, he asked me, he said, "You know, I would like you to come to Annapolis, and I can get you a scholarship, we'll send you." They had a group of guys [go] to a prep school in Pennsylvania, Wyoming Seminary, and that was the school in which all the guys who didn't quite make the grade in terms of passing the exam, they would all go there for a year and learn to take the exam, that's what it was, and play ball. They now have prep schools all over the country doing it, but in those days that's what Annapolis had. So, we thought about [it], and I said, "Okay." So, I remember he said, "Think about it and talk to your parents," but I said, "You've got it, you're already accepted to Wyoming Seminary, spend a year [there], and then, you'll come to Annapolis and that will be wonderful."

There was a basketball player from Elizabeth who was an Annapolis grad, a guy named Alan Mayer, so I was playing at the Y, and he was playing at the Y and I told him, I said, "You know, I did this, and I did this" and he said to me, very candidly, he said, "I want you to know something, Larry," he says, "I went to Annapolis, graduated there, obviously," and he said, "You're going to have four of the most miserable years of your life." I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "You're Jewish, and I want you to know they don't know Jewish people, they think you have horns." I said, "How did you do it?" He said, "I was miserable for four years." He played basketball for them. I said, "They're going to send me to Wyoming Seminary." He says, "Oh, that's good, I was just telling you, you're going to be miserable, but you asked me, I'm giving you a candid [answer]." So, then I came home and told my father this and [about] Wyoming Seminary, and my father said, "You're going to Rutgers." That was it, and, obviously, I never would have passed, I don't think, or I would have, [but] it would have been a struggle because that's what Annapolis was in terms of math. That's all they did. Now, of course, both Annapolis and West Point are entirely different universities, but so that's why I never went to Annapolis.

SI: Before that moment, had you had much experience with anti-Semitism?

LW: Oh, it's always [there], but nothing serious in Elizabeth, because the school was such a broad base. When we went to school, when I went to school in Elizabeth, some of my friends were Arthur (Papetti?), the guys from "The Burg" [Peterstown section]. I played basketball with Sal (Angelo?), Paul (Ansiko?), who came from St. Adalbert's [Roman Catholic Church] area, that was Polish. Tommy (Ford?) was Irish. We didn't have [much], [as] you grew up, occasionally, there was some guys [who] would say, "Dirty Jew" or something like that, but they'd say that about a guy, an Irishman, too, but nothing serious. I never really, in Elizabeth, really faced the anti-Semitism that I understand other people had.

SI: When you decided to come to Rutgers, you commuted at first.

LW: Yes, [the] first year I commuted [on the] 7:05 out to Rutgers. You had to have the first class walking up on the, what was it, by the river? They had in those days, the first class was, oh, God, I remember, either you went to the gym to swim with Otto Hill, and, in the wintertime, that was hell. Thank goodness I made the [team], played basketball, so I didn't do that too often, but they also had the barracks up there, which is now where the dorm is, and one of the students said, "There used to be barracks there." We used to take classes, I had Air Force ROTC freshman year there, so you had to be there [at] eight o'clock. Eight o'clock classes, freshmen got eight o'clock classes, [so there was] no fooling around.

SI: For the Air Force classes, did you have to come in in your uniform?

LW: No, we had to wear the uniform when we marched on Thursdays at Buccleuch Park. You had to march.

SI: These were all Quonset huts.

LW: That's right, they used to have Quonset huts there, not only Air Force ROTC, but other classes. You [have] got [to] realize [that] Rutgers had just began to be the State University, but they really were underfunded, as they still are today. That, and it was, of course, the World War II guys overflowed, and then, afterward more people were going to college in the '50s, '49 [to] '50, and they just didn't have enough classrooms, so that's what they had. They used those Quonset huts for classrooms, and, in the wintertime, walking up there from the railroad station, up to those Quonset huts, with that wind blowing over, let me tell you.

SI: We were just talking about your first days at Rutgers. Was there any kind of freshman hazing?

LW: I remember you were supposed to wear dinks, as they called them, those little hats, but we were commuting. I never did that at all. I still remember going to get my first classes. You have to line up and get [registered], but it really [wasn't bad], Rutgers wasn't that big, I think it was three thousand people. So, it was an entirely different university. I think if you wanted a class, you usually got it, but, of course, we had to have certain classes. Now, again, when we were freshmen, everyone had to take Western Civilization. You had to take a math [course], everyone [did], which was really bothersome because you're taking math with guys who were math majors or pre-med people, and they have to get "As," otherwise you don't get into med school in those days. So, we're taking math with pre-med and math majors and engineers, we're all taking the same basic courses, so it was a battle. So, that's what we did.

SI: Do you think your high school education prepared you well for that kind of academic challenge?

LW: I think my high school, if I took advantage of it, would have prepared me. I did not take advantage of it. I said we had a great high school. I think my senior year when I graduated, I

think our school had two guys who got scholarships to Harvard, and, in those days, two scholarships to Harvard from one high school was really something. That's how you know we had some very bright [students]. It was there, if your parents made you do what you're supposed to do and you weren't a jock. We had one guy who was a jock who was smart, but it's a general proposition. It was tough, [but] you could have been prepared.

SI: Being a basketball player, did you have to report early for practice?

LW: There was no, this was Rutgers. Rutgers couldn't have cared less about this, well, they did, [at least] they pretended they did. They had probably one of the worst varsity coaches in the country, [a] nice man, Don White, but we had a great freshman coach.

SI: Who was the freshman coach?

LW: Bob Sterling. Here he is. There's the starting lineup, four of the five starting lineup for the freshmen [team] for him. Eighty-eight years old now, would you believe that? That guy doesn't look eighty. We look older than he does.

SI: We are looking at a photo of you, Bob Sterling and Larry Gordon, and the other two gentlemen are?

LW: George Sundstrom, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall [of Fame], from Elizabeth, New Jersey, and Dudley Tighe from Millburn, who also played basketball. So, actually, when I went there, none of us had a scholarship to Rutgers. In fact, Dudley, we all got one after our second semester when we had such a great freshman basketball team, so they gave us scholarships. So, we tried out and we made the team and we played. We used to practice [from] five to something, and then, Larry Gordon and I--the things we'd do--we used to go down after practice, walk down from the Old Barn [College Avenue Gym] to the train station and take the train back to Elizabeth. Then, you tried to study when you got home, eat and study. They didn't have training tables here.

SI: That must have been difficult to balance practice, work and commuting.

LW: A, it was difficult, [and], B, the first set of grades you got, you took out a lease; you were put on probation. I think, we were on probation, Larry Gordon [and] me. We all realized that it's not high school, and so we all had to study. We did, but it was tough.

I remember we used to eat [at] New Brunswick Lunch, [which] was across the street from the railroad station, owned by George Mackaronis, a very famous Rutgers alumnus, who also played basketball years before. He had a standing rule, which you can't do today because of the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association], that anytime, he told us, anytime the train was late or we were hungry just go there, order whatever you wanted and sign the menu, the bill, and don't worry about it. So, Larry Gordon and I used to eat supper there until the train came, because sometimes the trains [were late]. Now, they're running more or less [on schedule], I'm not sure, but if we didn't make the train, there was like a three-quarters of an hour wait, [so] we go across the street, have a hamburger and something and then we go on the train and go home. We'd get

home by eight o'clock, and then you study until you have to get up because you had to make the 7:05 [train]. That was the first semester.

SI: Can you tell us about Bob Sterling's coaching style and why you think so highly of him?

LW: Yes, he was to some degree like the coach that we had [in high school], Bob Cox. He was tough, he was smart, [and] he understood the game. He coached freshman soccer, which he had two All-Americans, both from Thomas Jefferson High School, Paul Baba and Art Brinkman, who was also on the Rutgers Hall of Fame there. He coached soccer, he coached basketball, and he coached freshman baseball, and he was tremendous coach.

As he said, "I'm lucky," since none of us were ever recruited. He didn't recruit any of us because they didn't recruit at Rutgers in those days, or [if] they did, someone mentioned something, but I don't ever remember meeting Don White. I never met the varsity coach until I was on the freshman basketball team.

He molded a team that was [good], and also he understood the game and made us play better. We were tremendous. We only lost three games. We lost the first game to Yale, up at Yale; that's because some of the guys weren't used to playing before in a big auditorium. Yes, we played up at Yale. Wally Porter threw the ball away the last thirty seconds, [and] we lost by two points; we still never let him forget it when we see him. We split with Princeton. They beat us at Princeton, and then we beat them at our place. Every time the Rutgers basketball team plays Princeton, I'm always [there]. I go to practice every once in a while, and I used to tell the guys and still do, I tell them, "This year," I say, "you can't lose to Princeton, because to play against them is to hate them." We split with Lafayette. I can still remember that. Isn't it amazing? Because Lafayette had the guy who played for West Orange that knocked us off in the semi-finals of the state [tournament] in my junior year, I never forgot that. So, that's the three games we lost. Otherwise, we beat everyone else.

SI: Princeton was still the major rival.

LW: Well, it was Seton Hall. We played Seton Hall, [which] was then, supposedly, the best freshman basketball team in the East. We played sixteen games total. When we played them, they were 28-3, twenty-eight, that means [they had played] thirty-one games already when we played them. That's full-time basketball, and they were great. Two years, or a year or two later, they were the national champs with [Walter] Dukes and [Richie] Regan, but they weren't on this freshman team, and we played them and beat them by twenty-five [points]. Bob Sterling loved that, [he will] never forget, he still remembers that.

SI: Was there any way that you thought Coach Sterling was ahead of his time, like Bob Cox?

LW: Well, he understood the game, and he also was a disciplinarian. He made you play, and that's what some of these guys don't know how to do that. He went to Panzer [College of Physical Education and Hygiene], played basketball for Panzer. Panzer, in those days, was, all the phys ed teachers from New Jersey would go to Panzer College, and so they were taught to be

coaches and that's what he did. [He] should have been the athletic director of varsity basketball, but that was politics, as it always is.

SI: In what way?

LW: Well, after we finished our freshman year, Don White, who was the coach at Rutgers, as I say, [I] never met him until I was, I don't think anyone met him, this is the varsity coach, even in those days they recruited, he didn't. Before we got to Rutgers, he probably had a basketball team that should have been in the NIT [National Invitation Tournament], which in those days was the National Championship, the NIT not the NCAA. The NCAA had eight teams. NIT having been, [as I was] growing up, that was the greatest thing in the world to see all the great teams play. I used to go to the Garden [Madison Square Garden] to watch them, sit up in the last row, the student section. He had a team that was so good. Bucky Hatchett, one of the great players or athletes of Rutgers, also a great basketball player at Verona, Don Parsons, and Ray Van Cleef, who played for, you want to hear this?

SI: Yes.

LW: Okay, he played for Clifton. They were undefeated like my high school team was when they were playing the undefeated, number one team in the state, and they got knocked off in the semi-finals of the state tournament. So, they had two [players] at [Rutgers that were from Clifton], Hal Corizzi.

He had three or four first-string, All-State players on that team besides Eddie Kruger, who was from Weehawken, the second string, and Paul Lynner from Long Island, and they should have been in the NIT. He didn't break five hundred; that's how bad of a coach he was. [He was a] nice man, but that's how bad of a coach [he was] that he couldn't get those players, he couldn't break five hundred with a team that should have been challenging in the NIT.

When we went our sophomore year after we [had a great season], in fact, I think four out of the five of the freshmen team started the varsity [team] for Don White: me, Gordon, Tighe--and I don't think Sundstrom started, later he did--but me, Gordon, Tighe, and, who is it? Well, [Bill] Beindorf I think started, four of the five and went to our sophomore year. We won six games and lost thirteen. This is the guy that took the team that was great and turned us into nothing. We never broke five hundred under him in the three years [I played].

I didn't play my junior year; [the] doctor wouldn't let me [because] I had something wrong. My senior year I returned, played one game against Montclair. Third quarter, I went up to block a shot, a guy hit my leg [and] came down on the side of my ankle, ripped every ligament and tendon on my ankle, but I had my double figures for the half, for two quarters. I never really played again for Rutgers. I guess today they would have been able to do things, but they didn't have that modern medicine [then], so my ankle was never healed. In fact, after the season, I had it operated on [to] take a bone spur out, but he still didn't break five hundred. I think they were 11-12 that year, or something like that.

SI: Was it disappointing to be taken out by an injury?

LW: Oh, it almost killed me. I didn't play in my junior year because the doctor, I can't remember what it was, but my doctor, [a] local guy, saw it, it was getting something, and he said to my mother that, "He can't play basketball." So, I went back and I told Don White, "I can't [play], my doctor says [I can't], but can I get another exam?" He said, "Your doctor said it, it's all right." I was starting, and, of course, looking back afterwards, years later when I [think it], that's ridiculous, I should have played basketball. All I had, it was called a histamine-type of reaction, you get headaches, and the doctor said, "You give him shots there." Histamine would have been fine. So, I didn't play my entire junior year, and then my senior year, I got back in shape and played two quarters and that was it.

SI: You mentioned earlier that Don White was kept around, despite not being able to break five hundred. Why do you think that was?

LW: Because Rutgers always did that; they didn't really care. All Rutgers was when I went to school was football, football. After all, where did football start? [It started] "on the banks of the old Raritan."

They had an excellent baseball team, which went to the NCAA. Raymond Van Cleef was centerfielder. I think [Harding] Peterson later became the general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates and played for the Pirates for a while. He was there. They had Frankie Burns, great catcher, Herm Hering, both from Roselle Park, great pitcher until he hurt his arm in football. They had a swimming team. They had two good swimmers. The swimming coach was a guy named [Jim] Reilly, if I'm not mistaken, and he was supposedly good, but they only cared about football.

Harvey Harman [was the football coach]. They did great before I got there with Frankie Burns. My understanding was when Frankie Burns, Burns, [Herman] Hering, [Harvey] Grimsley and Bucky Hatchett was there, [in 1947], they lost to Columbia its first game, [40-28], Frankie Burns. Columbia then had Gene Rossides and Lou Kusserow. They were great. Rutgers then had a great season, and they were asked to come to the Cotton Bowl, but they were told that the blacks, they couldn't stay at the same hotel with them. Rutgers wouldn't go, to their credit, because that was big time, going to [the] Cotton Bowl down in Texas in those days. I guess it's big time now, but in those days Texas was [segregated] and Rutgers wouldn't go. [Editor's Note: Frank Burns went on to coach the Rutgers football team from 1973 to 1983. Under Burns, the Rutgers football team made its first bowl appearance in 1978 in the Garden State Bowl.]

Frankie Burns played for the College All-Stars against the NFL champs [New York Giants]. I don't think it was NFL then; it was whatever the pro league was. They beat them. Frankie then played sixty minutes, both ends, and Frankie Burns was voted most valuable player. He came back to Rutgers [to coach]. When I first got there, he was helping basketball, a wonderful man.

SI: To get more into your life as a student, at what point did you live on campus?

LW: After my second semester of my freshman year, when we got a scholarship for tuition and books and then I had some money from working as a hod carrier, I moved and I lived in a



boarding house right around the corner from what used to be the Student Center on College Avenue, and whatever that street is, I can't remember, the back of Old Queens.

SI: Somerset?

LW: Yes, Somerset, right, that street there, with College Avenue, there was a little boarding house, and I lived there. They had rented a room, so I had a room. That's where I met my roommate, and so I lived there. Then, college life started to be fun. I was no longer commuting--I never understood what that was--my brother never had that, but that was great living on campus.

SI: What kind of activities were you able to get into?

LW: After basketball season, I had to catch up. We had to study all the time, and I became very friendly with the Herb Lipschutz, who later became my roommate from then on, in my sophomore, junior, and senior years. He was Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, an English major, so we studied. I learned how to study to get by, [so that] I could go on [to] next year. I learned how to study, so that's what I did and we did. [I] went up to Douglass and you did this and you went to [that], it was just things and you went to movies. We had six or seven movie theaters, for a quarter, and it was a quarter [for] the theaters, so Saturday you go to a movie.

SI: Did you join a fraternity?

LW: Yes, I did for a while, [but] not then. We started a fraternity the next year, Phi Sigma Delta. Actually, the national allowed us to start a chapter at Rutgers, and we started a chapter because we wanted a fraternity that you didn't have to pledge because in those days they really pledged. I don't know if they still do that, but they used to have pledges do all sorts of stupid things. So, we started a fraternity that was no pledging. We had a group who started it, if we want more people you were interviewed and accepted, and there was no color line and no religious or any ethnic requirements. So, that's the fraternity we had.

SI: Did you have a house?

LW: We got a house. Actually, we had one of the houses that Rutgers owned, they used it--and later we got another house, but Rutgers owned that, right near where the library is now [at 696 George Street]. There were some houses over there that were across the street from where the Raritan [is], and because we were starting it, Rutgers rented us the house. We took over, and it had a kitchen and all. We lived in the house, and we had a fraternity, Phi Sigma Delta. Herb Aronowitz was the president.

SI: How many guys were involved initially?

LW: Oh, must have been twenty-five. We got a group of guys, as I say, all sorts, as we would say, "we were all sorts," and it was. [At] Rutgers, there weren't that many African Americans there. If I remember correctly at Rutgers, there was [a few], but my fraternity brothers, I had [Ronald] "Ronnie" Owens, who later became the Assistant Speaker of the House of the [New

Jersey State] Assembly; he went to law school, good athlete, good guy. Let me see, who else? Teddy Winslow, who later became a dentist, he was in the fraternity; [Jim] Davis who was the tight end at Rutgers, football. He stayed in the Air Force full time. [Steve] Johnson, who was also a football player, he played in the Canadian league. We had a various group of guys.

We actually had two or three gay guys, which we didn't know then, I didn't know then. I must tell you these things never dawned on me, because I don't think anything dawned on you in the '50s.

SI: How did the idea come about to have this open fraternity?

LW: Because we just had a group of guys that thought that was terrible, because I wasn't [even] going to join a fraternity. In my freshman year, I was asked to join three different fraternities, and, particularly in those days, the fraternities were by religion. There were three Jewish fraternities, Tau Delta Phi and Phi Ep [Phi Epsilon Pi] and there was also Sammy [Sigma Alpha Mu], but those are the three Jewish fraternities. I was asked to join Tau Delta Phi and Phi Ep, because one of the basketball players was, as I remember, in the Phi Ep, but I just [wouldn't]. I went to Thomas Jefferson High School; you either had a makeup of various people or it just didn't sit well with me. So, I never did [join the fraternity]. So, then, when we started this, we wanted to have a club that would have this [mix], and then somehow, I don't know who got the idea to call this fraternity, the national. However it was started, it was started, and I was involved.

SI: Did this initial group all know each other, or did you put out a call and these are the people that responded?

LW: Somehow, we put out a call. Around eight or ten knew each other, but somehow we put out a call and we got enough and that's how it happened.

SI: Would you do just normal fraternity-type activities?

LW: Just normal [fraternity activities]. The only thing we didn't have was pledging, with that idiotic, they used to paddle guys when I was there. I don't know if they still do, but they used to paddle guys, these pledges. What an idiotic thing to hit someone. Yes, we used to just have parties and everything. Actually, I became a waiter at the fraternity, so I didn't have to pay for my meals, which was nice, because I didn't have any money. So, that's one of the [advantages], I waited lunch, dinner, and get up early in the morning and you set the table for breakfast. [It was a] typical fraternity I guess, but you had the meal. We had a cook and everything else. That's what we did.

SI: Did you have housemother?

LW: I don't know if we [had a housemother]. I don't think we had someone living in the house. I'm not sure, but I don't think so. No, I don't think that was a requirement. We had someone [on] weekends. You had to have a chaperone when you had parties and all, but [we] really didn't, not that I remember.

SI: Did you have to dress up for the dinners?

LW: No, that was one of the things, we had to be like a normal person. We didn't wear ties and shirts for dinner or anything like that. First of all, half of us didn't have jackets, or just that one, it was those days. I had a sports jacket, my brother's, that my father fixed for me, so he got a new one.

SI: Were there any kinds of traditions from national that you had to try to work into your fraternity?

LW: I remember when we were inducted into the national, we had a black tie thing and then they gave you your pin and the whole thing. After that was over, we never saw them again. We weren't going listen to them anyways. That's not why we started it. We wanted a fraternity house because they were having a lot of fun being in a fraternity, but we wanted to do it on our terms and our terms [were], "That's the way it was going to be, no rituals," none of these things that most of the other fraternities in those days really had.

SI: How did your fraternity get along with the other fraternities?

LW: I don't remember. We all knew each other [at] Rutgers. We knew everyone. Everyone knew everyone, and everyone had your own level of friends. I had friends from Phi Ep; I knew those guys. I knew the guys from DEKEs [Delta Kappa Epsilon] and all that. Chi Phi was Wally Porter, who played basketball. "Swede" Sundstrom was in another fraternity [Delta Upsilon]. We knew each other; we had no problems.

SI: You were not viewed as outsiders.

LW: I didn't feel as if we were. We might have been, but I didn't feel as if we were. We had one guy who was involved in the--what was it--the government, the Rutgers government [Student Council]. He was [Hilliard] "Hilly" Farber, from our fraternity, who was also one of my roommates. We shared [a room], the three of us, Hilly and Herb. He was involved with all that stuff, so I don't think he would be an outsider. He was big deal, big deal.

SI: The fraternity kept on.

LW: Yes, they did for a while. My understanding was they later bought their own house a couple of blocks away on Somerset, or whatever, Easton Avenue, the next block over from Easton Avenue.

SI: Right, Mine Street, the "fraternity row" area.

LW: Right, right, so they bought a house there, but, actually, I don't think I ever went back to the fraternity after I graduated. They later were absorbed, and they're now, what is it--ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau] is all one.

SI: I know there had been some changes in ZBT and that they absorbed somebody else.

LW: Right, right, because my brother-in-law, when I got married to my wife, Linda, her sister [had] already married Don Sterling, who was a Rutgers guy with me, and he was a ZBT. So, I know they're all absorbed, because now we get things [from them]. They still keep sending me information about contributing and coming to here and ZBT. I say to them, "Honey, if Don were alive we could send it to him," but he died of a heart attack at forty-two, so what can I tell you?

SI: When you were at Rutgers, were the veterans still a presence on campus?

LW: Very few, because I attended Rutgers in '50. Now, the veterans either were '45, '46, '47, let me see, Frankie Burns, they were all veterans, no, Burns wasn't. There were some veterans, but I think they'd already graduated. By '50, I think the veterans were gone, the World War II veterans. Maybe there were some because they used the GI Bill later, but as a general proposition there wasn't that many veterans left. Although the freshman class there, they had dorms in Camp Kilmer, that's where they lived. Some of the freshmen on Camp Kilmer, they took over some barracks, because they didn't have enough dorms at Rutgers. They probably still don't.

MP: What was your major?

LW: Well, freshman year, you had the required courses. I started out thinking I was going to be [in] history, but I also took education because I really thought I wanted to teach high school history and coach basketball. So, I took an education [course], they had their education department [as a] separate department, so I took history, and I thought I was majoring in history and education. When it came time to graduate, I was told either I can get a B.S. [Bachelor of Science] in education or a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] in history. Thinking that I'm going to coach, I took the B.S. in Ed, and, obviously, I didn't coach. Because [of] my brother, I went to law school because I'd already applied, but as a general proposition, I thought I was really majoring in history and Ed., education.

MP: Did you have any favorite professors?

LW: The history department was magnificent. Richard P. McCormick was magnificent; he was something. Henry Winkler to me was the best professor I ever had. The one course he taught was "Europe Since 1815." He taught "Europe Since 1815," and not only did he teach the course, but in order to [survive], you also had to have outside reading and reading literature of the time, so that you got the flavor, because, obviously, literature, when [reading] authors of the time, you got the society and you got everything else besides. That's what he taught. He was absolutely marvelous, and we had so many. They were my two favorite professors. In fact, I'm just looking at our book [reunion book], because they were the favorite professors of the Class of '54 in our fiftieth reunion [book]. Here they are, Richard P. McCormick and Henry Winkler, Dr. Winkler. Of course, Mason Gross, he was on television or something, and, obviously, they didn't have a school named for him when he was there. That's the two, Winkler and McCormick were marvelous. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross served as the President of Rutgers University, holding the post from 1959 until 1971. The Mason Gross School of the Arts is named for him. In the

late 1940s and early 1950s, Gross appeared in the television shows *Think Fast* and *Two for the Money*.]

SI: Do you have any stories about them?

LW: Yes, I really do have a funny story about Henry Winkler. My sophomore year we were supposed to play Lehigh. Now, unlike these kids today, where you fly over to Lehigh [or] wherever you go, you take a day off, get the day before [off] and you play, and the next day you may come home. In our day, you got in a bus and you drove to Lehigh and you played the game, and you go back to Rutgers. Now, when you played Lafayette, it was an hour, that's no big deal, but Lehigh was only two-and-a-half hours, but, of course, they didn't have the major highways then.

So, the week before the Lehigh game, Professor Winkler said to the class of twelve or fifteen, "We're having an hourly next week at so-and-so, so be prepared, we'll be covering this and this." Now, your hourly, you had two hourlies and a final, so each hourly was twenty-five percent of your grade and the final was fifty percent of your grade. That was easy. It was a two o'clock class. Well, the bus left at twelve to go to the basketball game. So, I went up to him, and I said, "Professor Winkler, can we do something? We leave for Lehigh [at noon], I'm supposed to play Lehigh." I said, "Can I take the exam before, or can I take it the next day right afterward, the minute we [get back], the next morning I'll come in here at eight o'clock and take the exam?" He said, "Mr. Weiss, I can't. I have a standing rule. Everyone takes the test together." Now, not only was he a wonderful man, but he was a great basketball fan. In fact, I think he lived in the same complex as Irwin Gordon did, and Irwin was getting his doctorate, so he used to follow Rutgers basketball because of Larry Gordon and me. So, we knew after every game, he'd say, "Good game," or "Bad game," or whatever, kid around. So, I said, "What can I do?" He says, "Mr. Weiss, I guess you're going to have to make a decision whether you take the test or you play the basketball game." Now, this was my sophomore year. I was smart enough to realize you don't make up twenty-five percent of your grade that easily, particularly with Henry Winkler. You did not get "As" for nothing.

So, I went directly to the basketball coach, Coach [White], I said, "Coach, I have a problem," and I told him what happened, that, "I have an exam." Now, I assumed that, I don't know, I thought maybe they'd call. I know if it happened today, they'd have a car radio, they'd fly them out to the game after. I'm not starting, so he said to me, "Larry, I don't know what to do. If that's what Professor Winkler said, that's what you'll have to do." So, I took the exam; I wasn't going to give up twenty-five percent of my grade just to play a game. In high school, I probably would have gone; I probably would have played the game. In college, you didn't do that, and Henry Winkler didn't blink. He was a great guy, wonderful man, love him, but that was his rule. He was right, and Rutgers didn't care, they didn't care about things like that. Maybe if I were All-American they might have, but I doubt it.

SI: Does anything else about your professors stand out?

LW: Well, as I say, I remember Winkler very well, and, in fact, I kept up with him afterwards. I remember McCormick very well, and I always saw him at the football games afterward, for

years. I introduced him to my son, and he was always wonderful. Who else? I remember we had a biology teacher; she had the biggest blood collection in the East or something. I can't think of her name now. It was at the biology building right across from where the library is now. Is that still the biology building? I don't know.

SI: On College Avenue?

LW: No, not the present library, the library that is now the museum that used to be our library, [on Voorhees Mall] with Willy the Silent. Right across the way, there's that old building, that's where you had biology in those days.

SI: Now, I think that is used for economics [New Jersey Hall].

LW: Okay, that's where the biology [building was], and, of course, you took biology with the pre-med students, which was totally unfair. Those guys, they had to get an "A." In those days, if you didn't get an "A," you didn't go to medical school. So, as I say, biology was biology with the biology majors, math was math with the math majors, so it's a whole different way of life. So, I remember her, she was marvelous. Biology, I loved it. So did my roommate. That's why when he finished and he graduated, he left law school and went back and got pre-med. He thought it was great.

MP: Getting back to your ROTC training, it was mandatory for your first year. Did you take Advanced ROTC?

LW: Yes, mandatory two years, and then, because it was the Korean War, which was winding down, they wanted you to go into advanced with the idea that you either become a pilot or navigator. Of course, I took the advanced course in Air Force.

Actually, I applied for law school because my brother, who was then in the Army, Fort Riley, Kansas, wrote me a letter that said, "Do you know what you are going to do? Why don't you apply to law school, just in case? I know you are going to go in the Air Force." So, I applied to go to Rutgers Law School, the only law school I applied to, and I was accepted, but then I received my orders in May. We graduated in June--I don't know when you graduate now--but I know we graduated in June, and so we received our orders. I had to go to Texas [the] last week in August or the first week in September to Texas, to be sent to navigator school from Lackland Air Force Base.

So, I wrote the letter to Rutgers Law School, saying, "Thank you very much for your acceptance, but I have to decline because I have just received my orders to go in the United States Air Force." I got a letter back from the dean. It says, "Dear Mr. Weiss, in effect, there's an opening when you complete your military service. There will always be an opening," which I never thought I was going to use.

So, when I graduated, I was shipped out, went out to Lackland in San Antonio, Texas, never been there before in my life. After a month in San Antonio, there were two schools for navigators, one in Harlingen, which was down [in] south Texas, which is a horrible place, and

the other was at Ellington Air Force Base in Houston, Texas, which, by the way, didn't have a million people then. Lucky for me, the adjutant, who was in charge of deciding where you went, was a Rutgers grad who was a football player, Howie [Anderson], coached for Summit, and became the athletic director of Summit, Howie [Anderson]. Of course, when you came in, you had to give your orders, and there he was sitting behind there, "What are you doing?" So, I told him. He said, "Okay, you're going to Ellington. You don't want to go down to Harlingen. It's just a horrible place. You've got to go to Ellington." So, all of the Rutgers guys went to Ellington, because he took care of all our guys. [Editor's Note: As a football player at Rutgers, Howard Anderson earned letters between 1950 and 1952. Anderson went on to become coach and athletic director in Summit, New Jersey. He was named New Jersey Coach of The Year three times.]

Then, I spent a year in Houston, Texas going to navigator school, [which was] very interesting. They also didn't have enough officers' quarters, so I lived off base with two other guys in an apartment complex nearby in Houston, which, as I say, was a small city. I went there for a year. [It was the] first time I ever made money, real money, that I could keep. It was marvelous, a great, great experience being in the Air Force.

SI: What did your training consist of or what was a typical day like?

LW: We went to class in the morning most of the time. You took electronics, you took this, you took various types of navigation, took ten or eleven month courses, and you'd fly. You'd fly missions, you'd fly map missions, you'd fly using sonar, which is over the ocean, water, radar, picking up, learning how to shoot the stars, the sun, so you'd be able to on the map know exactly where you were. You did that for ten or eleven months. Everyone who was there was a guy who graduated from ROTC, except there were a group of guys who graduated from Annapolis who wanted to be in the Air Force rather than the Navy, and there was a group of guys from West Point who wanted to be in the Air Force and they couldn't [because] they didn't have the Air Force Academy in those days, so that's how they got there. So, other than that, there were guys, all the others were college graduates from all over the country, and it's amazing the experience that one gets from meeting people from Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, California. They're different, and different than someone from the Northeast, as I knew it then. It was a marvelous growth experience.

SI: What were some of the differences that came out?

LW: Well, the guys from the South were the South. There was still segregation, so was Texas. In fact, the first time I ever realized what segregation meant was when I went down, I took a train, between your junior and senior year, you had to go down for training in Air Force ROTC or Army. We went down to Shaw Air Force Base, Sumter, South Carolina, Herb, Hilly and I and like fifty guys from Rutgers and fifty guys from all the different schools. We walked off the train. I remember walking off the train and the stations. We stopped at Sumter, South Carolina, and seeing for the first time, in real life, water fountains, "Colored Only," "White [Only]." I never forgot that experience. It was the most shocking experience in my life, and that's what it was.

SI: Were there African Americans in your Air Force ROTC unit?

LW: Not there, they would never send them there, absolutely [not]. In fact, when I was in Houston, living in Houston in an apartment, Ronnie Owens, who was my fraternity brother, was in Fort [Huachuca], Arizona I think it was. In fact, that was one of the few bases in which they had a lot of African Americans. That's how they used to do [it] in the Army--he was in the Army--and we called and I said, "Why don't you come to Houston?" So, he came for the weekend.

I remember [that] I picked him up at the airport, and then we were going to [my apartment]. He slept over my apartment, where I kept seeing people giving him dirty looks, but he was in his Army uniform, I was in my Air Force khakis, we had the same [uniforms], except I had bars. Saturday we went to play basketball at Ellington Air Force Base. We used to play basketball on Saturdays, all the guys, a lot of the college basketball players, so we used to play. Ronnie played basketball at Central [High School], so he played with us, too.

Then, at night, we said, "Let's go to a movie." Now, in those days, the major street in Houston, it [had] like four or five movies, and the only thing is, you had to be careful when you're crossing the street, because all those guys would do is have race tracks. It was unbelievable. We went to a movie, and, of course, I was going to buy the tickets. I'm an officer; he's an enlisted man, big deal, a dollar. I walked up to the ticket [booth], and he was standing next to me. I said, "I'll have two tickets." She said, "Okay, one upstairs, one downstairs," and I said, "No, no, we were going to sit together." She said, "Sorry, sir." I'm wearing my uniform; he's wearing his uniform. I'm a lieutenant in the Air Force; he's a private in the Army. I said, "No, he's my [guest]. We want [two tickets]. We're going to sit together." She said, "I'm sorry, he sits upstairs, you sit downstairs." I said, "What do you mean? We're in the service of the United States, we're defending you." She said, "Upstairs, downstairs, or next please." I said, "Okay, next," and we went back to the base and went to a movie there. That's another one of my first experiences with segregation in America. I guess, we were never really aware of it. That's why I can't imagine being black in those times or any time but particularly in those times.

SI: Was Ronnie Owens shocked by this?

LW: Well, I think Ronnie was. He grew up in Newark, but, remember, that's the '40s, the '50s, and he went to Central High School, which had blacks and whites in those days. He was a great athlete as well, so although he was attuned to it--because I'm sure there was still [prejudice] even in Newark--they weren't treated [like that], to some degree [perhaps], but not the same. Of course, when he came to Rutgers, I wasn't aware [of racial prejudice], other than there were certain fraternities, obviously, that wouldn't let blacks [in]. I was not aware of any mass feeling of prejudice, but I guess he might have been [exposed to it]. He just accepted it, and we went to a movie on the base. I was shocked. That's over fifty-five years ago, and I still remember it. It is burned into me.

[RECORDING PAUSED]



SI: We were talking about your time at Ellington and, in particular, segregation. The entire U.S. Armed Forces had been integrated about six years earlier.

LW: Well, Truman did it, but it was still not integrated, and you have to have the revolution of the '60s before anything really changed. I don't remember--and, again, I'm vague about this--I don't remember if there was a black guy in navigator school. I don't remember that.

SI: Were there African Americans on the base?

LW: Oh, sure, enlisted men doing things, some, but not many.

SI: Do you remember seeing any black officers in any capacity?

LW: Not there. I did when I was stationed in Otis [Air Force Base] in Cape Cod. I was there for two years. There were some jet pilots. In fact, there was a guy named James, who was a big black jet pilot, who was a big guy, became a general later [General Daniel 'Chappie' James, Jr]. Him, I remember, but other than that, no, I don't remember.

You weren't even attuned to that; you never thought about it like that. I lived in a white society, who were we kidding, ourselves. I grew up in Elizabeth; there were black guys. We all grew up together, but it's a different society.

Even Rutgers, I say if I look at my yearbook, which you have right here, which I have mine upstairs, I don't think there were that many blacks there. Look at that, it's all white, you're talking about [Rutgers in 1954]. [Editor's Note: Judge Weiss is looking through the *Scarlet Letter* of 1954.] Okay, here is one; here's a guy, black. Here's the cadets; here's another.

SI: Rutgers was primarily white.

LW: This is the American Chemical Society. Here's the History Club. Here's the football team. Now, we're talking about varsity football at Rutgers 1954. [Editor's Note: Judge Weiss points to a photograph on page 130 of the *Scarlet Letter* of Donald Duncan, captain of the varsity football team.] Don Duncan, who got killed, he was going in the Air Force, he was in ROTC, he was a pilot and got killed.

One, two [African Americans on the football team]. This is [Jim] Davis; that's my fraternity brother. Here, Steve Johnson; that's my fraternity brother. These two are my fraternity brothers. Other than that, that's Rutgers in 1954. Now, the '49 team had more blacks, because, I want you to know, they had Bucky Hatchett and [Harvey] Grimsley. That's ironic, when you think this is New Jersey, which, of course, if you took Professor McCormick's class, [a] history course of New Jersey history, you know that the Mason Dixon Line crosses New Jersey and they had segregation down there.

SI: I want to ask you about the man who was killed in the Air Force.

LW: Don Duncan, yes, right.

SI: Was he killed in a training accident?

LW: I understand that something happened, as they do in those days, and he got killed. He was captain of the football team, if I remember correctly, and he played basketball for a while. He was all right. Yes, Don Duncan, he got killed in the Air Force. His plane crashed.

SI: Was he in your class?

LW: Yes, oh, yes. He was captain of the Class of '54. Only seniors were captains in those days. I don't know if they do it now, but only seniors [were captain]. We lost to Princeton 9-7; you lose to Princeton, it hurts.

SI: You can tell from the yearbook that football was much bigger than any other sport.

LW: Of course, look.

SI: There are write-ups on each game in the yearbook.

LW: Of course, that's all. Here it is, here's my two fraternity [brothers], well, one, that's seniors, Jim Davis, and, of course, there's Johnson. Yes, of course. Here's our basketball team, which I didn't take a picture, because I got hurt after the first [half]. The picture was taken after I got hurt, up. We beat Montclair 100-71. Look at that.

SI: Going back to this mix of people from all over the country in the Air Force, what else stood out about these people from other areas?

WL: They had different [groups], they had sectionalism, most of them, including where we came from, most of them never really ventured outside their environment. I never did. Most of us didn't, we just didn't travel. Air travel wasn't accessible like it is today. First time I was ever on a plane was my senior year, when Rutgers went to play Purdue, because Don White was an All-American at Purdue in the 1920s, there with John Wooden, and so we played the game. So, that's the first time I was ever on an airplane. You didn't venture outside your environment, the state, so that you had a very narrow view of everything else. There was a great deal of sectionalism, and, of course, their state was always the best, their school. We were friendly in the Air Force. Later, you became friendly with everyone. It was not like it is, I'm sure, today, and everyone had a global view, a national view and an international view. They had a sectional view; sectionalism was more [prominent]. [Editor's Note: Don White was an All-American basketball player at Purdue University in the Class of 1921. Three-time All-American basketball player John Wooden graduated from Purdue in 1932. Wooden went on to become head coach of UCLA men's basketball, which won ten NCAA championships.]

SI: What about going from civilian life to military life? How was that adjustment for you?

LW: I don't think I had a problem, because I was an officer. I guess if you were an enlisted man, you had a problem. After all, when I went into the Air Force, when I went to Ellington,

you were an officer, and they didn't have enough accommodations, so they gave you money to live off base. If you got two or three guys and you got an apartment together, it really didn't cost you that much and it didn't cost you any money out of your salary, because they were paying for it. In fact, the first time I ever had a car, I bought a car in the Air Force, first time in my life I could afford a car, [a] 1952 Pontiac Catalina, wine-colored, used.

You saluted. You had to go to class, but I had to go to class at Rutgers, too. This was a school, and you went to go navigate. You had to fly these missions, and you'd say, "Yes, yes, Lieutenant," "Yes, Captain." The officers' club was marvelous. See, this was the Cold War, so like Sunday, they'd have [a cookout]. Let's see, Saturday night, scotch was twenty cents a shot, good scotch. You put a dollar on the bar, you're sloshed. Maybe some guys could drink, but a dollar on the bar could really knock you out. Five scotches, who can drink five scotches? Not too many people. They used to have, every Sunday, because this was all officers and their wives mostly, a lot of these guys got married in college or right after they graduated. That's the way they used to do it. Of course, the instructors were all there. They were all married. They used to have, at the officers' club every Sunday, a cookout in which they had--and of course this is something new to me--with the pig or the beef on the spigot and now they cut it off. This is what they did; you'd see [all] about Texas. This is what they did, and for two dollars and fifty cents, that's what it cost, I think it was that, to go to this cookout. You eat and drink all you want for two dollars and fifty cents. That's what it was; it was great. It really was a wonderful life. For most of us, this is the first time when you got paid, and, of course, you got paid an extra one hundred dollars for hazard pay, because flight pay was, I think we were getting something like four hundred dollars a month before taxes. That was big bucks, really big dollars, to most of us, so I was living like a king.

SI: What do you remember about training flights? Do any of them stand out in your mind?

LW: Well, I still remember this. Biloxi, Mississippi, and, of course, that's before the 1960s, Biloxi, Mississippi was ringed with oil tanks, and so it stood out as a doughnut on the radar. You knew where you were. Everyone had to plot their map, your own map, and see how many minutes to here, how many minutes the next, and you had to keep a log, because that's how you were checked to see if you knew what you were doing. I still remember Biloxi being a doughnut on the radar screen, because it had tanks around, so that was Biloxi, Mississippi.

SI: What kind of planes would you fly?

LW: They were two-engine planes, and they had either they had tables over there. It was like eight navigators on each plane, and you either did the radar, they had radar for each one, you had sonar, that's when you go over water, and, of course, they had these bubbles so you could shoot your sextant. You can shoot either night vision, you'd shoot the stars and the moon, and you had to learn how. They gave you the books for where each star was, I can't remember exactly what, but we used to be able to plot it. You had to plot [it] on the map, and the same thing with the sun. You could shoot the sun, the sun you shoot three different times using it, and then, you just, I'm here at this time, so then you go to the next one, and that's what you did. Then, we did map reading, which we all cheated by getting an Esso map, because you look out the window, and Esso, in those days, their maps you'd get free, and in those days they had every Esso station on

the map, so you could look for the Esso [sign], "Oh, here we are." So, that's how we used to do map reading, looking for an Esso station, not a Phillips 66. They didn't give us maps.

SI: This is pretty intense training for eleven months.

LW: Absolutely, very. By the time you finished, you knew how to navigate any place in the world, and, listen, the planes that you were going to control were very expensive, oh, absolutely. After I finished there, I was sent to Air Defense Command, Early Warning, and somehow I drew Cape Cod, Otis Air Force Base, which I had never been to. Now, I had been to Boston twice because my roommate was going out with a girl at Wellesley, and I think we played there once, basketball, [at] Brandeis. I can't remember that, that's vague, but I remember getting assigned to Otis Air Force Base. I said, "Where is that, Cape Cod? What?" I look at the map where it was, and it was really a great [place], Otis.

Of course, they didn't have enough quarters for officers, so they gave you money to rent. I rented a house, with two other guys, [that] I found right across from the public beach at Falmouth for a year. [The] next year, I rented a house, with another guy, called Mashnee Village in Buzzards Bay, which I have gone to almost every year with my family thereafter, that's how much [I liked it].

Otis was great. We flew RC-121s, which were Constellations, Lockheed Constellations, and they had on the plane a big thing on top that was for the radar, and they also had a bubble in the bottom that also [was] for the radar and so on. We had radar, they had radar at twenty desks, and there were twenty airmen that stayed there. We would fly out over the ocean some two or three hundred miles and then fly a race track. There would be four planes all over the Eastern seaboard flying these race tracks, so that any plane that came into America would have to be identified, and, if you couldn't identify it, they'd send jets up from the various Air Force bases, because, again, this was the Cold War. Everyone assumed that the Russians were going to bomb us at any moment now, and so you had to be prepared. So, that's what we did.

We would fly eight or ten-hour flights. You'd have two navigators, and the navigators would be two hours on, two hours off. You had a bed to go to sleep. It really was great duty, what can I [say], if you don't mind flying for eight or ten hours. Of course, that's why I'm wearing this [hearing aid]. I'm not wearing the other one right now, but the reason why I have hearing problems is--one of the reasons is--flying all that air. They even told me that I eventually would have that, because the vibrations of an airplane in those days were not like it is now.

So, I would navigate; I was the navigator. Ironical that, again, I didn't know how important the navigation [was]. I did it, but the first time, Cape Cod fogs in a lot, particularly in the winter, fogs in a lot, so, when you're finished doing your race track, when you come time to go back to home base, Otis, the pilot would call and ask for flight assistance and, "How's the wind velocity? Any problems?" They'd say, "We're fogged in. Pick an alternate. Go to an alternate," and you'll come back later, because it's going to be for a night, all day, like that. So, the pilot, the first time it happened, I get a call from the [pilot] on the intercom, "Lieutenant Weiss." I said, "Yes?" He said, "This is So-and-So," [the pilot]. I said, "Yes?" He said, "Pick an alternate." I said, "What do you mean, pick an alternate?" "Oh, SOP, standard operation procedure, navigator picks the

alternate. Tell us where we're going, and then, tell me how to get there." You have to plot the whole thing. I went to Bermuda at least twenty times in two years because that was my alternate, "Let's go to Bermuda." If you ever went to Bermuda in the last twenty years, it wasn't like that in 1956. Bermuda was very nice, but, no, they had a few major hotels. It was great.

We'd go to Bermuda. We'd get off the plane. The enlisted men, they had a base there, [where] the enlisted men will stay in, but we went to the hotel with the officers' quarters. We used to always carry a uniform, a clean uniform. We get off the plane, and we go there and go to the pool and then bring home scotch, gallon scotch with no taxes. Everyone could bring two things of scotch we used to buy there and no taxes, and we used to bring it back, liquor. It was great. It was a great experience, two years at Cape Cod.

SI: How often did you fly?

LW: Every third day just about. Obviously, occasionally, there would be breaks, but every third day you were up there. You'd be on the base one day, all day, which you did hardly anything, except have breakfast and talk with the guys, officers, not with enlisted men. Next day, you'd fly. Now, it all depends whether you flew all night or all day, whatever it is, you flew and then the day that you landed you were off, you had twenty-four hours off, because that's a hell of a long [time] on an airplane. So, then, the next day you were on, and that's what you did.

MD: How long were you in the Air Force?

LW: Two years, two years there, three years altogether. [I was] two years there, one year at Ellington, and two years there, [Otis].

SI: You were really in the first line of defense in case of a nuclear attack.

LW: Who knows? Did Russia have nuclear attack [capabilities] then? I don't know [if] Russia had nuclear capabilities in 1955. I really don't know. I don't think they did, [but] I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: The Soviet Union tested its first nuclear weapon in 1949 and its first fusion bomb in 1953.]

SI: Conventional.

LW: Conventional, yes. Everyone thought that they could fly, but they really [didn't], from what I learned later reading [about] that, I don't think they had the capabilities. They didn't have the long rockets until later. They didn't have the rockets until [President John F.] Kennedy, remember Cuba? So, that's in the '60s, which was shortly thereafter, but I don't think they had the real capabilities at that time. [Editor's Note: Judge Lawrence is referring to the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, when the Soviet Union attempted to install nuclear missile sites in Cuba. As a result, the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a thirteen-day standoff, until the Soviet Union agreed to remove the missile installations in exchange for American military concessions in Europe.]

The one thing [that] is wonderful about this country is that the Department of Defense wants at least ten times more money than they need, and they'll spend it all. I'm telling you, in June, we used to fly over the ocean and dump gas, because the year [end] was June 30th. Therefore, if you didn't use up your gas, they were afraid they would lose their [allotment], the amount for the next year, their quota, and so they'd fly over the ocean and dump it. Of course, I never understood. I'm a navigator, get out there and dump it, and we can fly back, big deal. I didn't understand what we were doing to the environment. No one understood about the environment; we're dumping gas into the ocean. I wasn't paying that much taxes. It didn't dawn on me. That's what military does. They're still doing it today, aren't they?

SI: Did you see other examples of waste?

LW: That's the only one I can remember. The waste is having us there. What could be more wasteful than having us live the great life we lived? Obviously, in those days, that was the real thing, that was the fear.

SI: How much stress is there in the job? How much pressure was put on you guys?

LW: None, not that I can remember. I was a navigator; I did my job. Every once in a while, we had certain things you have to meet, but that was a very, very limited type of approach.

It wasn't SAC, Strategic Air Command. I have a couple of friends who worked in SAC as navigators, and they used to have to sleep by the plane. Curtis LeMay was nuts. They used to plan for a week waiting for the [inspection], just in case. We didn't do any of that. [Editor's Note: Air Force General Curtis LeMay headed the Strategic Air Command from 1948 to 1957.]

I lived off base. I used to go in the morning, drive into the base, have breakfast at the officers' club, report in, sign in, and then read the paper, *Times*, wait for lunch, go to the officers' club for lunch with all the guys maybe. That's what we did when we were on duty, because we didn't have to do anything. We knew what we were doing when we were flying the next day. We'd go, pilot would tell us which race track we were going to fly, and he'd say, "Get me there." We'd go a couple of hours before, I'd plot it out, and I'd get him there. Then, I'd sit there and make sure that the plane stayed in line, so that the radar, the twenty guys would have their radar set on where the plane was, so they knew if something came in that they didn't identify. Every plane was identified, and if you didn't, then they have to find out who they were.

SI: Were you aware of what was going on on that end?

LW: Yes. I'd walk up and down, but I never got involved with it. My job was to navigate the plane for the pilot, and he wanted to know where he was. I said, "Here's where you are, Captain." "Major, here's where you are flying, and I'll get you back to the base." That's all they worried about.

SI: The Constellation was one of the bigger planes.

LW: Yes, Super Constellation, four engine.

SI: How were the conditions inside the plane?

LW: Oh, not bad. That plane was used to fly passengers to Europe, the Super Constellation. The Lockheed Super Constellation, it was a big plane, but on here it was just for the air, just for navigating, just for radar though.

SI: It was not too cramped inside.

LW: Well, not really. On either side they had the radar things, and the navigators had their little area, who was on, and the other guy, [who] had the bunk, sat there. I used to love to fly Sunday evening, see, because I'd be out and then I'd come in and I'd be able to read the *Times*, the whole *Times*, when it was my duty. Then, after I finished the *Times*, I'd go take a nap. We had a bunk for the navigator. You've got to let the navigator sleep because there's only two of us. One is on and one is off, because two hours of navigating like that [and] you've got [to rest]. You've got to rest up, if nothing else [for] your hearing and your eyes.

SI: Did the pilots get breaks like that?

LW: Oh, they had two pilots on there, absolutely, two pilots, pilot, co-pilot. These guys used to set it [on] automatic. They didn't have to hand fly it when you're flying, then they'd hand fly it to make the turn. I'd give them the setting, or whoever the navigator is, "Head to so-and-so degrees," and then you set up and off you'd go into the next one.

MP: How many men were in your crew?

LW: Well, there's [the] pilot, co-pilot and engineer, and then there was two navigators, [that] is five. Then, there's twenty enlisted men, plus two other guys, so that's twenty-five [plus], around thirty, twenty-eight to thirty people on the flight. They had to have some guy in case one of the radars went out, [so] they had one of the radar mechanics to fix it and all.

SI: Accidents were more common in the air. Were there any accidents?

LW: I only [remember] one time that the engine somehow failed, and we landed with one engine, one time in my life. I knew that that's a good plane, if you can make it with one engine back to Otis Air Force Base. Let's face it, we all had parachutes. When you came on the plane, you came on with your parachute. You took it off, but [it] never dawned on me, [never] can I imagine that I would ever jump.

MP: Did you have any parachute training?

LW: Never. If you have to do it, you understand you open the door and you jump, count to three and pull and hope it works. If it doesn't, you'll never know, but I never had that problem. [We] never had a fire. I don't think when I was there that an RC-121 ever went down for any reason whatsoever. [It was a] great plane. It really was.

SI: Did you interact with other portions of the base, people that were doing other things besides early warning?

LW: The only ones that I interacted with, I played basketball with. I used to go the gym. Actually, one of the guys who I was living with, (Larry Jaffe-Daniel?), was the catcher for [the University of Florida], backup catcher to a guy named [Haywood] Sullivan, who later caught for the Red Sox and became the general manager. So, he was the backup catcher, and when Sullivan graduated, he was the first string catcher for [the University of Florida]. He was always involved, he was coaching the Otis Air Force Base baseball team. So, I always used to go to the gym. [I] played basketball there against the enlisted men, and then a few of the guys, a few of the officers, played. There weren't too many basketball players out of the officers, so we used to play basketball a lot. So, that's how I interacted with some of the basketball players, some of the enlisted men who played basketball, because you didn't interact with the enlisted men that often. Let's face it, that's the way it was, officers are officers, and enlisted men are enlisted men.

MP: Did you see any resentment from the enlisted men?

LW: Not that I know of. We were playing basketball. Yes, they resented it if I got a rebound off them. I resented it if they got a rebound, but other than that, these guys, it wasn't bad duty. You've got to realize that, from my perspective, being on Cape Cod wasn't bad duty, even [for] the enlisted men. In those days, Cape Cod was still very undeveloped. They still, I don't know if anyone knows about Cape Cod now, but they had a Mid Cape Highway that you go from one end of the Cape to the [other], that wasn't there.

The only thing I know is that it was great lobsters, first time I ever ate lobster. I used to eat it three nights a week. Lobster was a dollar a pound. I wish it was now, because I'll be going there this August, taking my son, his wife and my two grandchildren. We go every year to Cape Cod, to the same place in Mashnee Village, and we go out for lobster.

SI: Towards the end of your tour, did you have any idea what you wanted to do after you got out of the military?

LW: That's the interesting part, really. I was accepted to Rutgers, and, of course, I turned it down. I still thought I was going to go teach high school and coach. In fact, I had it in Elizabeth, which was still Thomas Jefferson High School, Elizabeth, the basketball coach obviously, was a famous Rutgers football player. After my senior year, a guy named Bill Tranovich came to coach Thomas Jefferson's basketball team. He's called the "Big Train," an awesome guy, [a] tough guy. I understand he was the guy that beat Princeton on the [day the Rutgers Stadium was dedicated in 1938], but did you know he played with three fractured ribs?

SI: No, I had not heard that.

LW: Well, the reason why I know is because the trainer, Mike Stang, when I first came to Rutgers and was playing basketball and you have to tape up your ankles, and when he heard, [we] tell him that Larry Gordon and I were at Thomas Jefferson High School, and we were coached our senior year by Bill Tranovich, he said, "Bill, the 'Big Train,' was the toughest man I



ever knew. When he played Princeton he had three cracked ribs, and I didn't want him to play, and he said to me, 'Mike, tape it up,' and he played, and they beat Princeton" I think 20-18 or something like that at the [dedication] of the Rutgers Stadium. He is the guy who beat them, [he] was the second leading scorer in the country, but he played with three fractured ribs. In those days, you used to [play], they didn't bother him. He said, "I don't care what you do, I'm not going to miss the Princeton game." I say, "To play against them is to hate them." That's a classic.

SI: That is a famous game.

LW: Oh, well, you should have seen this guy. He didn't know that much about basketball, but he did a nice job at Thomas Jefferson. [He was] a lovely guy. I kept up with him all the time until he died.

SI: After you got out of the service, that was how you ...

LW: When I was in the service, because Bill Tranovich was the coach of basketball at Elizabeth High School, he was also the assistant football coach, so I went down to see him, when I was in my last year at Otis, '56 to '57. Actually, I was going out with a girl from Douglass, so I would always come down on weekends. Occasionally, I would stop to see Jefferson play basketball, and I'd always see him. I was trying to get a job, and he said, "You can be my assistant coach, anything you want to do." So, I was dealing in that way. One time, I came down to Newark, I was actually coming to New Jersey to see Gloria, who was a freshman or sophomore, sophomore, maybe a junior. Who can remember? She later married my roommate. We were going out, so I would [head to] Douglass. You couldn't see them until after class normally, and you had to bring them back by eleven on Friday. That's the way it was. So, I stopped off in Newark if I had [time]. Sometimes I would land [at Otis] and fly Thursday night, which means you're off Friday, Saturday you didn't go on the base, and Sunday you were off unless you had to fly. I used to take the late Sunday night flight or early Monday morning, so I could have weekends and go down there.

So, I stopped off [to see] my brother, who was then working for one of the major law firms in the State of New Jersey [Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland, Perretti]. He was just a young lawyer there, and so I would stop by and have lunch with him in Newark. He'd take me to the Newark Club, because the firm had a [membership], and he would take me with some of the older lawyers. Of course, they loved him because he was a brilliant lawyer. One time, he said to me, "Well, what are you going to do?" I said, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to go be a teacher and coach basketball." He said, "You know, Larry, what are they paying teachers, around twelve, thirteen hundred dollars?" He said, "You know if you became [a lawyer], you could make 7,500 dollars. There are guys making 7,500 dollars a year as a lawyer." Now, I know in the context of how it was said, 7,500 a year is like a 175 to 200,000 dollars a year now. You know that's the difference. When a teacher's making twelve or thirteen hundred a year or fourteen hundred and someone said, "You become a lawyer, if you work hard, you can make up to 7,500 dollars." That's beyond what is in my frame of reference, being a son of a tailor, something you never thought of. If you ever make five thousand a year, you'd be happy. So, I said, "What do you

mean?" He says, "I'm telling you, there's some lawyers making 7,500 dollars or ten thousand dollars a year. You know you could." So, I started thinking about going to law school.

When it was the end [of my tour], I decided that instead of teaching at that rate, I'll go to law school. I went over to Rutgers one time on a Friday when I came down to see Gloria, and I said to them, I introduced myself and I said, "Here's a letter. I'm thinking of going. Is there space for me?" They checked, and they said, "Well, absolutely, you start at so-and-so. You just write us a letter, let us know you'll come to Rutgers that year." Of course, we had what was known as the Harry Truman, who made America better, and that is, of course, we had the [GI Bill]. In the service, you were able to get the GI Bill, even then. We had the GI Bill, all services. I was going to live at home. By that time, I had a Volkswagen Bug, a '57 Bug, which got forty-two miles to the gallon, and we're talking about living in Elizabeth and commuting to Rutgers-[Newark]. It was a stone's throw with a good arm, so it wasn't going to cost me anything. In fact, I would have made a little money. I think they paid me 850 dollars a year with the GI Bill, and at Rutgers, it was not bad. Law school was three hundred dollars a semester in those days.

MP: Where was the law school?

LW: Newark, in the Ballantine building, where there used to be the beer thing [Ballantine Brewery]. So, I decided to go to Rutgers Law School, and that's what I did. In fact, I got out two weeks earlier from the Air Force, because [I] told them that I was going to law school, I had to get there on time, and they discharged me two weeks early so I can make law school. So, that's how I went to Rutgers Law School.

SI: Did you have to stay in the Reserves?

LW: Yes, I had to stay in the Reserves for seven years or something; I don't remember. I have my discharge papers upstairs, [from when] I got out of the Reserves. As soon as I could get out, I got out. Don't ask me why, because a lot of people stayed in and made money, but I think the last time, I think it was when there was the Cuban [Missile] Crisis, I was visiting [friends]. Actually, it was Saturday night, we were up visiting one of Linda's friends, my wife's friend, who was marrying a guy who was going to law school, he was an accountant going to law school, and we heard on the radio and we heard that they're recalling So-and-So. I got home and I checked, and I said, "They may be recalling me." I said, "What do I know now? I haven't navigated in how many years." When was the Cuban crisis, 62? I said, "As soon as I get out," I said, "honey, [it is] goodbye." I don't need to [go]. I had one child, and I did not need to go in the service again. So, I retired. I did my tour, and that was it. I served my country, and if they wanted me again, I would have gone, but if I didn't have to, why do it?

SI: What was going back to school like?

LW: Law school [was] terrible, very, very difficult. First of all, you were away three years. Second of all, it's not the type of environment that you have at campus. It's a shame, I still say it's a shame, [not] like some law schools. Thirdly, Rutgers then had a terrible thing; they had a couple of deans or the assistant deans, who used to say, "We're going to be the Harvard of New Jersey." I think we started out with 148 or 152 kids, and we graduated forty-seven or forty-eight.

That old saying they used to say at Harvard, "You look to your right and to your left, and one of you won't be here at graduation," well, that's my understanding, you should excuse the expression, is bullshit. In Harvard, they don't flunk you out, maybe [rarely]. First of all, anyone who gets to Harvard doesn't flunk out. If they want to stay, they want to stay, same thing with Yale, things like that. At Rutgers, they made it their business to try to flunk people out, and it was terrible, terrible.

It's a whole different mindset to learn to be a lawyer. It's a very, very difficult area to just pick up; you have to be taught how to think like a lawyer. You have to read cases and view things, issues, it's a marvelous experience. There are so many people that, obviously, are in the world of business who went to law school and never really practiced law but learned so much because of [a] law school education, but it was very difficult. I found it extremely difficult because I'm living at home. Besides, you have to go to the libraries on weekends. You have to read, no fooling around. It really was very difficult.

[The] first year was very difficult, and I had a very tough time in the first year. Actually, we had a tough time with one course, which almost got me thrown out of law school. That's "Legislation." Rutgers had, again, they wanted to get rid of people to set a reputation, and so they had a professor, fifty years [later] I still remember his name, that's how much of an impact [he had on me]. His name was Julius Cohen. He taught "Legislation." He had his way of viewing the Pure Food and Drug Act, and you had to use that act as understanding how to interpret legislation. He obviously was there to not only be difficult but to flunk people out.

Now, there was a rule at Rutgers when I went there; the lowest mark you could get was a sixty. A seventy-two was a good grade. Seventy was passing. Seventy-two, seventy-three, seventy-four was a good grade. If you got a seventy-seven, you were big time. Sylvia Pressler got a seventy. I don't know if you know her. Sylvia, she is probably the most brilliant judge to sit on the judiciary. She was the Chief Judge of the Appellate Division [of the New Jersey Superior Court]. She was the editor of the *Rules of Court* [*New Jersey Rules of Court*]. She went to Rutgers Law School because her husband, Dave [David Pressler], she married a Rutgers guy, who then went to Harvard Law School, and then she went up there and she finished her school[ing] at Rutgers Law School. She's so brilliant, she's frightening, but that's the grading. So, if you didn't take the test, you got a sixty. He gave eighteen or twenty fifties. Now, I don't know if you can understand the math, but if you get a fifty, do you know what you need to pass? Because it's a cumulative average, you have to have a seventy cumulative average, so if you didn't take it, you get a sixty. If you take it and he gives you a fifty, you're through. I was one of ones that got a fifty, and my cumulative grade point average was 69.9, and so they flunked me out of law school. I had to appear before the committee to argue my case that I should not be flunked out.

They flunked some of the top lawyers' kids, a guy named (Gleason?), (Jack Gleason?), great lawyer, whose son was a graduate of Brown, had his master's in history, and went to law school because his father wanted him to come to (Formigli, Sanhanson and Fantasia?), which was a big law firm in Newark. He wanted his kid [to be a lawyer], he wanted his son to come [to the firm]. He flunked out. This guy, to this day, no one understands.

So, I appear before the committee; I had to argue my point. I had 69.9. There's one professor that I remember, who was Cowan, Thomas Cowan, who was also one of the most brilliant men around, philosophically. He was a Notre Dame guy, and he told me afterwards, he says, "If they won't reaccept you, I've already got you accepted to Notre Dame." I said, "Professor Cowan, I can't afford to go to Notre Dame." He says, "You cannot afford not to go to Notre Dame. If they don't reaccept you, I've got a position, you're going to Notre Dame Law School," because I got a seventy-six in torts. He taught torts. He says, "Anyone who has a seventy-six in my class cannot flunk out of law school." So, they finally got me reaccepted, but I was one of the very few. I finished law school [and] graduated Rutgers. I mean, I wasn't law review. [I] graduated law school, but it was tough that first year.

SI: Did you develop an interest in a specialty?

LW: When I went to law school, there wasn't a specialty that I thought about. You had to take everything. We didn't have clinics and things like that. You had to take all the courses that everyone [took], contracts, torts, civil procedure, equity, property. There were courses that were mandatory courses that you had to take to learn to be a lawyer. It's not like that today. It's a shame, because it really was, as I say, [a] great education, but [it's] tough to be a lawyer, particularly now. It was much easier when I was there.

So, I graduated law school. It was wonderful. My mother and father were very happy to have two sons who were lawyers, let me tell you, and I got married, what is it? I met my wife between my second and third year, that's right. Alan Rockoff, a Rutgers graduate, later became the prosecutor of Middlesex County and became a judge in Middlesex County. When he was the prosecutor, [he] made sure he hired my son, who is now still a prosecutor of Middlesex County. Alan Rockoff and Joy, his wife, they were going out, they had a group of Zeebs [members of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity] that always met--they still meet, husbands and wives--and Linda's sister was married to Don Sterling, who was a Rutgers Class of '54, and he was a lawyer, and they got Linda a blind date. Linda complained that, "I'll never meet [anyone]," and they fixed me up with Linda, my wife.

I called her for a date for Saturday night to meet her, to take her out, and she says, "I'm going up to Cornell to see my sister and brother-in-law. Do you [know] my brother-in-law Don Sterling?" I said, "Yes, I know your brother-in-law Don Sterling, the Zeeb," and she said, "Well, that's where I'm going." I says, "Well, then, I'll call you in six weeks." She says, "Why don't you call me next week?" I said, "Because finals are in six weeks, and starting Monday all you do is study," and that's really all you did in law school. I don't know how it is now, but the last five weeks was just [spent studying], because in those days there weren't hourlies. You got a final. That was your grade; your law school grade was your final exam. If you didn't pass, goodbye. That's what it was, that's all it was. So, then, I called her, and, after I finished, I took her out. [I] took her out for [the] summer and fell in love. Linda was the most wonderful human being in the whole world, amen. I got engaged in Thanksgiving and got married after I took the bar [exam]. I got married on August 3rd, and that's it.

SI: After you graduated from law school, did you get a job at the firm?

LW: Yes, I got it. Well, you see, you had to clerk, which they don't do now, you had to clerk for nine months. I clerked between first and second year, and then I clerked between my second and third year. So, after I did [that], I got a job with a firm called Melco, Goldsmith and Pollack in Perth Amboy, because I was living in an apartment in Edison, right off Route 1, and Dave Baer, who was also a Rutgers Law School grad, he went to Columbia, we were considering [becoming business partners]. I was best man at his wedding. So, he was practicing law, and he said, "We wanted to become business partners together." So, he was working with the firm of Levenson and Levenson. I got a job with Melco, Goldsmith and Pollack, and I clerked and then I started working there. I did everything. There was a lot of good things. I learned a little about it, and I tried one or two personal injury cases. I thought it was fun to try cases. I said, "This is really fun, standing up, talking to people. After all, you wear a suit; it's really very interesting." I decided that I wanted to try being a trial lawyer rather than sitting at a desk.

I found out there was a job at Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, house counsel, John W. Taylor. I read it in the *Law Journal*; they were looking for a young lawyer to learn to try cases. So, I went for an interview, and I got a job. I accepted the job from Liberty Mutual at one hundred dollars a week. I still remember, 5,200 dollars a year. "Hey, my brother was right." I mean, 5,200 dollars a year. I went to work for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and that's all I did was try cases.

You used to start with--again, the system today, it's too bad--because they had what was called a district court. In those days, [they] used to try these property damage cases, a small personal [case], and [I] used to go there with six or seven files and try two [cases] or pick a jury, try a case. When that's over, you pick another jury, try another case, and that's what I did. I tried cases. Then, I started getting bigger cases, and I tried cases in Middlesex, New Brunswick, Paterson, Hudson County. I was all over the state trying cases for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and I really enjoyed it. I felt as if I was confident and I didn't have too much [work]. You had to do the paperwork. When you were studying at night time, you brought the files home to get prepared to try a case, or in the middle of a case, you have to know the file. You have to prepare to cross examine and all these other things that you have to do as a trial lawyer. So, I stayed there and tried [cases] until I got slightly proficient as a trial lawyer.

Then, I met this guy. I left Liberty and opened up [a firm] with a guy named Rocky DiAmbrosio. We opened DiAmbrosio and Weiss in Elizabeth. We went back to Elizabeth there was another guy who set us up who also wanted to come with us, and so we opened up a law firm in Elizabeth. He got some work from Allstate Insurance Company because he was a former Allstate trial lawyer. He was a great trial lawyer, and so we started trying cases.

We tried a murder case. The guy was [indigent]. In those days, there wasn't a public defender, so the assignment judge would ask a lawyer to represent an indigent defendant. Most defendants are indigent; I mean, not too many wealthy people commit murders or crimes, some murders maybe, but not too many as a general proposition. That's why they have public defenders now. He couldn't get anyone to help him. See, he was going to try the murder case and get a little reputation, and I was going to do all the defense work we had, go to trial, automobile cases and things like that, so we make a little money while he was trying these cases. He couldn't get anyone to assist him, so he said, "Judge, I have no one to assist." [Walter L.] Hetfield was the

assignment judge, and so Hetfield said, "Well, why don't you get your partner?" He says, "Well, what am I going to do [about] business?" He said, "You have a lot?" He says, "No, not that much. We just started out." He said, "Well, the State is going to pay you," because they pay you for it, "so I'll just appoint the two of you."

Now, this was a case involving three guys who killed a guy named [Karl] Teitelbaum, who was a junk dealer in Elizabeth, [a] Holocaust survivor. He had a junkyard in Elizabeth, and what they did was they stabbed him thirty-five times. They were robbing him. He was going out with a girl, I can't think of her name [Barbara Jean Jeter], but she was the one who set it up. Ravenell, Wallace Solomon Odom, and M.C. Jackson thought he had a lot of money, because the girl was having sex with this guy [Jackson] and so she told them, "He has a lot of money in the junkyard in Elizabeth, which I'm very familiar with." When they went to get him, he started running and they chased him. This is a guy who was a little guy, barrel chest, who made it through three concentration camps. If you're going to kill him, you're going to have to do it the hard way. They stabbed him something like thirty-six times until he died, because he was running. [Editor's Note: The murder of Karl Teitelbaum took place in Elizabeth, New Jersey on June 5, 1962. For the details of the case, see *State v. Jackson* 43 N.J. 148 (1964).]

Then, anyways, they got caught. They got tried. The first time, it took around four months to try the case because you had three guys tried together, each one had two lawyers, and the whole complex thing, three confessions. One was found not guilty, and two were found guilty, of which M.C. Jackson was one of them. What happened was it was reversed on the grounds that you can't have three people tried in which they all confessed because you can't have the jury read a confession that says, "I with Blank and Blank ran after So-and-So." Well, who's Blank and Blank? [It is] the other two guys sitting next to him. Each confession said, "I and Blank and Blank." The [New Jersey] Supreme Court finally woke up to the fact, when you have something like that, you cannot try them together. You have to have them separate, so that they're not infected by the other confessions, which are, obviously, too prejudicial.

It takes time for the judicial system to understand. When it came for a retrial, he [is] already sitting in state prison. He's been there for a while. We had to try this case. So, we had around forty transcripts this high, because it was already tried once, so we knew everything. So, Rocky and I tried the case. In fact, I still remember this, that he moved out of his [place]--he was married, lived up in Morris Plains, or something; I was living in Edison in an apartment--and we moved out for the week. When we tried the case, we moved to my mother's house, which was on Wyoming Avenue in Elizabeth. So, we would go to court, we'd try the case, we'd come home, my mother would give us supper, and then we'd work for five or six hours that night reading the transcripts of who the next witness is, where they were, to prepare for the next day. We did that for the entire trial.

We're responsible for *State versus Mount*, because the chief justice got very upset with us, [Chief Justice Joseph] Weintraub at the time, because it took us thirty-one days to pick a jury, *voir dire*. In those days, the lawyers *voir dire*-d the jury. Do you know what that means? The lawyers questioned the jury directly. When we picked them, we questioned them, and our whole viewpoint was to make sure they understood that you had to convict beyond a reasonable doubt. We kept using the term, as well as trying to weed out those who [knew about the case]. After all,

this is a retrial; some of them might have known about it. Anyway, it took us thirty days. Then, we tried [the case] in eight days or nine days. The state did a bad thing by letting the same prosecutor try the case the second time, and you get a little comfortable. He's already convicted him once. He doesn't work as hard.

Of course, we're working [long days], finished at the court at four until. We went back to the office, checked in, went to my mother's house. She made sure we ate, and then we stayed in the dining room to work from around seven o'clock until around twelve-thirty. [We] went to sleep, got up the next morning, showered, put [on] our suits. My mother gave us breakfast, and off we went to the courthouse to continue. That's what we did.

We proved that they couldn't have given the confession, because when we went to visit him in the state's prison, we were talking to him, M.C. Jackson, and both of us realized [that] this guy is not very intelligent. This confession, some of the corrections that the detective said he made were words that somehow didn't ring true. I don't know how they didn't pick it up. This guy drove a garbage truck. He just so happened to drive a garbage truck from my mother's house before. Then, we found out, I think it was a priest, if I'm not mistaken, the priest at the state's prison in Trenton, and we spoke to him. I said, "You know it doesn't sound like he really speaks well." I said, "Look at this confession." Rocky said the same thing, "What do you think?" He said, "Oh, he couldn't have done that. He couldn't have said that. He couldn't have made those [statements]." "How do you know?" "Because I'm teaching him how to read and write." He's been there for two or three years. "Well, before he came here, he could not read or write." I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Of course, I'm sure." Here I am asking a priest, "Are you sure?" So, I said, "Would you testify to that in a court?" He says, "You subpoena me, I'm going to tell the truth." So, we did. We destroyed their case. The eyewitness we also destroyed, and so he was found not guilty in three-quarters of an hour.

The reason why I say that we changed the law is because the chief justice called up the trial judge, which I found out later. When I came on the bench, the judge told me that the chief justice called. When you become a judge, you become a member of the club. Joe Weintraub, who was a great chief justice, wanted to know why this murderer got found not guilty. The judge, John Barger, said to the chief justice, "Because those lawyers picked the jury, they kept *voir dire*-ing them about beyond a reasonable doubt. They *voir dire*-d them. It took them thirty days to pick a jury, and we tried the case in eight days or nine days. What they did with the confession, this jury was not going to convict him." He says, "This has got to cease." So, *State versus Mount* says that the judge picks the jury, *voir dire*-s the jury, and not lawyers. [Another] lawyer represented *State versus Mount*, but it was really our case that caused the chief justice to [issue the ruling]. It's very, to me, ironic that something like that [came out of it], but that's what happened. [Editor's Note: The case mentioned above is *State v. Mount* 30 N.J. 195 (1959).]

It was great. Trying cases is marvelous, and then our firm started getting a lot of defense work. I worked in the office. I tried cases in Middlesex and Monmouth--that's New Brunswick and Freehold. Union [County] had a terrible calendar at the time. Then, later we broke up, and I moved to Westfield and opened up my practice here, 555 Westfield Avenue, and had a carrier, too. I started doing trial work, and that's what I did, really, really fun, hard work.

The worst day for a trial lawyer is Sunday, because either you're about to start a trial and you have to read the whole file to know what you're doing if you want to be a good trial lawyer, or if you're in the middle of a trial, you [have] got to keep reading the deps [depositions] to see what's there. Sunday was always bad, particularly since your wife wants to go someplace Sunday with the kids or something. It's very difficult.

Then, I ran for Town Council here in Westfield and got elected as a Democrat, which is not too easy. Now, it is all right, but in beautiful, old, colonial Westfield, Democrats were shunned, [which] is what the word is. I ran for Town Council and got elected, and I became involved with Brendan Byrne when he was running for governor [in 1973] and his counsel, who I knew, Jerry English, [who] later became [Environmental Protection Commissioner and Legislative Counsel], he was involved. I was his man around here, and I became very friendly with him. I tried a couple of cases before [him]. Ironical that I tried a case in Essex County when he was just a trial judge. He left the prosecutor's office. Then, when he was the assignment judge of Morris County, I tried his next-to-last case. This was a plaintiff's case. He tried to settle; the judge was always trying to get you to settle. We would try for half a day [to settle], and then [the judge would say], "Why don't you settle?" After each time, we couldn't settle it. I said to him, "Judge, we're coming up next week, you're going to run for governor." "Oh, I'm not going to run. What, are you crazy?" I said, "Judge, you're going to run. We've already got it done."

Now, in those days, there was what was called the DeCavalcante tapes. [Simone "Sam the Plumber"] DeCavalcante was the head of the mob, the mafia, in the State of New Jersey, from Kenilworth, and the U.S. Attorney had tapes of him. It just came out [in 1973]. One of the tapes was that they were trying to do something with someone who was in Essex County, and they said, "Can't we get to this prosecutor?" DeCavalcante said on the tape, "You can't deal with that guy. He's a Boy Scout. He can't be touched," Brendan Byrne. So, I said to him, "This is easy. We're going to have these billboards [with] you on a white horse, a knight in shining armor, and, 'Vote for Brendan Byrne, the man who couldn't be bought,'" I say. Everything just played [out]. So, he was elected governor. [Editor's Note: Brendan Byrne served as the governor of New Jersey from 1974 to 1982.]

All the time that he was doing it, I would say to him when we're campaigning, I said, "Look, when you're elected governor, would you please put some lawyers on the bench who are trial lawyers?" I said, "You sat on the bench. You know how bad [it is]. Some of these judges have never tried a case. They don't know what they're doing." When he got [elected], he did that; he put a lot of good trial lawyers [on the bench].

Then, one day, I got a phone call. I was in my office. Jerry English called me. He says, "The governor asked me to call you and tell you he wants you to be a judge. You want to be a judge?" I said, "No." First--oh, I'm sorry--he wanted me to be--there was a problem with the prosecutor of Union County, Karl Asch. They wanted to get rid of him because he was a Republican. He was nuts. All the prosecutors, [he] allowed them to wear guns in the court. Lawyers don't wear guns, and prosecutors don't wear guns. Anyone who lets them wear a gun in the courtroom is crazy. This is what he used to tell his guys, "You're going to wear guns when you go to court."



First, I get a phone call from Jerry English that said, "The governor wants you to go see the attorney general, Bill Hyland. He wants you to become prosecutor in Union County. Make an appointment." So, I called up Bill Hyland's office, who was then the attorney general. He was from Camden at the time. I made an appointment, and I went down to see the attorney general. I walked in, and I had a long talk with him. In any event, I was going to be appointed prosecutor of Union County.

There was, at the Elizabeth Armory--how can I forget these things?--Elizabeth Armory had a birthday party for Brendan Byrne. It was really a campaign [event]. That's how you raise money. Everyone at that table, and everyone from anyone who was in the Democratic [Party] was there in Byrne's administration, Jerry English, Bill Hyland, the whole thing, and the senators, Tom Dunn, the famous Tom Dunn of Elizabeth, Mayor and Senator Dunn, but everyone was there. I was there with Linda and a few others. Brendan called me, the governor called [me over]. We're talking, and Jerry English, who was really his right [hand], he said, "I think we'll name you prosecutor next week." I said, "Whatever you say, whatever the governor wants." I'm giving up my practice, but, being a prosecutor in those days, it is today nothing like it was. That's big time. I said, "I only tried one criminal case really." [He replied,] "But you're a trial lawyer. You'll learn." So, I said, "Okay." I went home after the thing Saturday night, and I said, "Honey, I guess I'm the prosecutor. I have to get things done."

I get a phone call [at] five o'clock in the morning from Tom Dunn. Now, [if] the Mayor, Senator Dunn, calls you at five o'clock in the morning, you wonder, "What's what?" I answered the phone, because, obviously, my wife is sleeping. I said, "Yes?" He says, "This is Tom Dunn." "How are you, Senator? What can I do for you?" He said, "Well, I understand that you thought you were going to be prosecutor [for] Union County." I said, "Senator, I don't think anything. Whatever the governor wants, the governor gets." He says, "Well, I just want you to know you're not going to be a prosecutor yet. He's going to appoint Ed McGrath, who is a judge, who's going to leave the bench to become the prosecutor because he wants a clean house and so therefore he wants to have someone who's a judge." I said, "Whatever he says." "So, it looks like you're going to be a judge, because he wants to make you a judge." I said, "Whatever the governor wants."

The next day or two, I got a phone call from him, and he said, "You're going to be a judge, if you want." So, I said, "Well, I don't know if I can do that," because judges were getting paid [less]. So, his line was, "You speak to your wife, but after you speak to your wife, make sure you speak to your brother," because he knew Alvin, my brother, [who] was by that time a partner at the law firm of Riker, Danzig and Scherer, which later became Riker, Danzig, Scherer and Hyland, one of the major law firms in the State of New Jersey.

The attorney general then [called] up. I spoke to him. I spoke to my wife, who said, "Fine." I said, "Honey, I'm going to take a big pay cut. We're going to lose a lot of money." They were paying 28,500 dollars as a judge, [Union County] District Court. She said, "I don't care. Money is no good anyways. Will you be home?" I said, "I can't go anyplace. After court, you've got to come home. You can't go [to] any political things or anything like that." I called my brother, and I said, "Al, what do I do? After all, [I'm] going to give up a lot of money." He says, "Larry, I'm going to tell you one thing. When you're on the merry-go-round and you pass the brass ring,

you only get a shot at it once. I guarantee you, the governor's going to never call you again if you turn down his offer to be a judge, so you have to make that decision." I said, "That's easy." So, I became a judge.

[It is the] best thing I ever did in my life, absolutely wonderful to be a judge. It's getting more and more difficult now, but then so is the practice of law. In those days, being a judge was wonderful. That's it, I became a judge. In our system, you sit on everything. I did small claims, and then I sat on civil [cases]. Of course, with my background and experience, it was easy. I tried everything. I also then sat on criminal, and you tried criminal cases and murder cases and everything. It is very interesting, very interesting, and I did that. You can retire at full pension at twenty years on the bench, and [at] sixty, you get full pension, which is three-quarters pay, or sixty-five and fifteen years on the bench and you get full benefits, or seventy and ten years. So, by the time I was sixty-four or something, I could have retired, but I worked to the last day. As my brother said, "You work five years for one-quarter pay." Of course, [when] I retired, I got three-quarters, so for the last four or five years, I worked for just one-quarter pay, but I loved it. It didn't matter. Of course, my brother says--he was then the assignment judge of Essex County--he couldn't complain.

SI: What are some of the more memorable cases that you sat on?

LW: Oh, I had some great cases, I really did. I had a murder case, capital case, which is really, I don't think people understand, and I guess they should, the difficulty and the pressures of everyone involved in a capital case. When you deal with the taking of someone's life, it's not something you do lightly. Now, I must tell you, in Union County, we have never had, in modern times, a capital verdict; that means no one has ever been sentenced to death in Union County. The case I tried should not have been a capital case. It was a mentally retarded man who was alleged to have sexually assaulted (Takisha Landaway?). What came out [is] that he did it, because he tried to sexually assault her, and then she stopped him and she fought him. When he said, "Don't tell anyone" and she said, "I'm going to tell," he killed her and he dumped her body in the port on the railroad tracks. For months, they didn't find him. I remember the mayor being on television Channel 2, begging people to give him information. In any event, this guy was picked up again. This time, he was trying to sexually assault a little boy. Somehow, when they caught [him], [the boy] was screaming and he fought them and other people saw it, and they called the police and they got him and they picked him up. Supposedly, then it came out, and he admitted that he had sexual [assaulted] (Takisha Landaway?), which I doubt his confession was that valid.

So, in any event, he was tried, so then I was the one who tried him. [In] New Jersey, you have to death qualify a jury. You have to really go into details, plus the fact that it's the judge who asks the questions and not the lawyers, most of the time. It took us thirty days to pick a jury. When I did it the other time, it was the lawyers. I knew that no jury in Union County was going to sentence him to death, they would convict him, but never sentence him to death, so we're wasting time, but the prosecutor wouldn't waive the death penalty and so we tried it. He was found guilty, and I sentenced him to life in prison.

I was later reversed by a great panel, Herman Michels and Warren Brody were two of the three. Brody sat in Union County, brilliant, and Herman Michels was a great trial lawyer. They reversed it on the grounds that I should not have allowed the confession in, because at one time there was testimony of police officers indicating that the defendant asked for a lawyer and once you ask for a lawyer and [because of] Miranda [rights] you [have] got to stop. I didn't see it that way, but that doesn't matter because when the Appellate Division sees it that way, that's the way it is. In fact, both appellate judges called to tell me before the opinion came out that they were reversing me. I said, "Hey, that's your job. Your job is to do what you're supposed to do, and don't worry about me." I did not retry it. I never believed a judge should retry the same case when you're reversed, so someone else tried it. The confession obviously didn't get in, and he was found not guilty. He was serving a sentence that he had pled guilty to for trying to sexually assault [someone]. So, he was there. Then, he got out. I understand he abused someone else, and, anyways, he died. I found out he died. No one knows how, but I just heard that. That's one interesting case I had.

Then, I had two really great [cases]. The funny thing is I was with a lawyer [on] Sunday whose wife works with my wife, and he's a malpractice defense lawyer in New York City, does defense malpractice. He's a guy from Hillside who went to Rutgers University--we only go out with Rutgers people. He heard about the two other cases. He asked me, did I know about these two cases? [I said], "Funny you ask about it, I'm the guy that tried them both." One was called (Rosie O'Grady?), in which a wife-mother had a mid-brain aneurysm and she became a--I don't know if you call [it a]--vegetable. She was incapacitated. She could think, she understood, but the only way she could talk was by blinking her eye.

The case was tried before me by three great lawyers. The plaintiff's lawyer was really great, and I tried to get it settled. The internist had one million dollars and the otolaryngologist had three million dollars, so there's only four million dollars. So, I tried to get it settled. We tried the case. Finally, one of the lawyers in the case, a very good lawyer, [a graduate of] Rutgers-Newark, he represented the doctor personally, the internist, and so he went on the record and said, "I demand that the insurance company, who is insuring both my doctors [one] for a million and the co-defendant for three million, that they put [up] all four million dollars, because they can't try to save money by not putting the total policies up, because, otherwise, it would be bad faith, because you're subjecting my doctor, because if my doctor gets held for two million, one million comes out of his own pocket. He's only got a million dollars coverage." So, the insurance companies finally--the case was almost over--put up the four million dollars.

I called the lawyers in, and I said, "Okay, you got the four million; it's settled." He says, "Well, I got to talk to my client," and then he came back and he said, "Judge, I have a very difficult problem." I said, "What's your problem?" He said, "He doesn't want the four million. He wants the doctor to pay something out of his pocket because the doctor killed his wife, in effect." I understand he was a wonderful husband; his kids were there. I said, "Wait a minute, the fact is that your wife is now being taken care of, and it's not costing you a dime, and the money you get is not going to pay for that." He had insurance for that, in effect. I said, "So, this four million dollars is really for your client, the husband and his kids. How could he turn it down?" He says, "He wants to have the doctor [pay]. He wants his pound of flesh." So, the lawyer said, "My client is not paying anything out of his pocket." [The other attorney said], "Judge, it seems to me

you ought to appoint a guardian for the woman for the four million dollars, because the husband is not really thinking about his coverage for his wife. He's not acting proper." I say, "Sorry, I'm not telling her husband that he's not capable of taking care of his wife's financial matters, as well as anything else. He's a very good husband." So, I said to the lawyer, "I think you ought to go see your client with the husband," who is the secondary client, because the client is the woman, "and tell her about it and see what she says." He said, "Okay." So, he goes there.

He comes back the next morning. We come to my chambers, because you had to do everything in the chambers for things like that. He said, "Judge, I went to see her. I told her that you recommended that she should take the four million, I told her I recommend she take the four million, and I said, 'If you want to take it, say yes, you blink once. If [you] don't want to take it, say no, blink twice.'" The husband said, "Honey, I want you not to take it. That doctor should pay out of his own pocket," and he said, "She blinked twice." So, we didn't take it.

We went up and had summations in charge, and the jury came back with a no cause and lost four million dollars. That went up to appeal and everything else, but that became famous in the state because two weeks later, there was a NJICLE course in New Brunswick at the Law Center, of which they talked about this case because the lawyer who represented the plaintiff was on the panel and talked about it. He says, "I should become an alcoholic after losing four million dollars." He gets a third; we're talking about big bucks. [Editor's Note: NJICLE is the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education.]

Then, of course, another case I had, which was really interesting, I don't know if you remember the boy who became a quadriplegic because he was sitting in a van that went through [a traffic] light. One part of the light was not working in Kenilworth, and they sued Kenilworth. [Editor's Note: The case is *Waldorf v. Borough of Kenilworth*, 959 F. Supp. 675 (D.N.J. 1997).]

Well, it's famous because the first time it was tried, he got eight million dollars against Kenilworth. Kenilworth had three million dollars coverage, which means either they go bankrupt or they raise taxes. Well, they're not going bankrupt, so, obviously, everyone in the town was going to pay; they're going to raise taxes. That was reversed. By the way, my best friend tried it, Alfred Wolin, Federal District Court. It was retried a second time. He didn't get eight [million]; he got sixteen [million] dollars. [It] went up before the Third Circuit. They reversed it again. It was retried a third time. Then, they hired another lawyer, and this time the verdict was three-and-a-half million dollars. Well, they offered them eight, and he turned it down. So, now he has three-and-a-half, so, obviously, he appealed up to the Third Circuit. The Third Circuit affirmed the verdict, and that's it. Ten years is enough, you've got your three-and-a-half million, you could have taken the eight, don't bother us, it's over.

So, the Town of Kenilworth sued the lawyer, [Raymond M.] Tierney and his law firm, who tried it the second time for sixteen million, on the grounds that if he had made his motions for summary judgment, because between the second and third they waive the issue of liability. We tried them. That's why they got a little verdict, because it wasn't really in anger, because the liability wasn't an issue, for not fixing the light, and they could have done it easily. In, any event so they sued the lawyer, and, of course, they sued for legal malpractice in Union County. The assignment judge who got the case--the assignment judge is the one who is in charge of the

entire county-- he called me up and he said that, "There's a case that I'm sending to you because you are the only judge in the county who knows anything about it." I said, "What case is it?" He says, "Kenilworth is suing Tierney and his law firm." I said, "For what?" "Malpractice." "Oh," I said, "you mean the one that Alfie called me on every day?" [He is] my friend, we speak to each other, so he's tried the case twice, I spoke to him every day about the case. "That's the one, you're going to handle it." So, I tried that. So, I took care of that case, and that was very interesting, because suing [a] lawyer for malpractice and all. Eventually, the lawyer, who's handling it for the town for malpractice committed malpractice, in effect, made terrible things. I threw the case out as a matter of law some two years later, and he appealed and he was reversed. They said I did the right thing, and so the case was never tried. Everyone in the state knew about this case, that you're suing him. That's one of the other great ones, but you have so many. It's very interesting. [Editor's Note: The case is *Waldorf v. Shuta* 3 F. 3d 705 (1993).]

SI: What were the major changes you saw over your years on the bench, either in terms of how law was practiced or other major events?

LW: I'll tell you, first of all, they have so many lawyers. When I passed the bar, I think 146 or 144 passed. Now, five thousand pass the bar at a time. There are so many lawyers. Every once in a while, we'd have motions, and a lawyer would be arguing. One lawyer would say things, and the other lawyer said, "Judge!" [He] would be very upset because the lawyer misrepresented. I said to them, "I remember when I was practicing law," I said, "I know that's a long time ago, but when I was practicing law, you could hold [up] your hand, you could count one finger on one hand how many lawyers you couldn't trust. Your word was your bond." I said, "Today, in order to make sure you understand the lawyers you can't trust, not only do you have to hold both hands up, but you have to take your shoes and socks off and use your toes and still need more [digits]." The practice of law has become a business. It's no longer a profession, and I found that to be so.

Secondly, the numbers in the courts, it's so inundated [that] you have to get rid of cases, and numbers sometimes take precedence over the ability to prepare, although I really believe that that's been overcome to some extent with [the] best practices. That's what I found, and, of course, I don't know, maybe when I was young, they said that about us. When you get older, you look back and you say, "They're not making them the way they did when I got on the bench." First of all, what that meant [was] there weren't as many judges, and most judges who got on the bench took a pay cut, which meant they knew experienced lawyers, even if they didn't try. You know, they had experience. Today, there are lawyers that get on the bench who are taking a pay increase.

One of the judges who used to advise Brendan Byrne and other governors about who to appoint to the bench, Alex Waugh, who was also my brother's former law partner, he was the assignment judge of Essex County. He said to me when he used to call, "There's a judge [that is] going to be appointed in Union County," or something, because I knew most of the lawyers, he'd say to me, "Judge, I'm very disconcerted about this situation." He says, "They're picking lawyers who are taking pay raises, which means they really weren't that experienced or that good as lawyers or they come from so many attorney generals," and this and that, "they really don't have a broad base." When you've been on the bench, you have to try everything, and I find that so. Now, of

course, I'm not allowed to appear in court. Once you retire from the bench, you can never walk in the courtroom in the state, nor in the federal court, so I can't judge that.

I'm in a law firm [where] they do a lot of, actually, medical malpractice defense work, and one of the best medical malpractice lawyers in the state is the senior member of the firm. He, every once in a while comes in and says, "Just came back from this judge," he says, "they don't know what they're doing." I said, "I'm hearing that too often, and it's a shame, because they don't want to work." He says, "They don't want to work." I must say, he used to say to me, that's one of the reasons why he asked me to come with them. When I was a judge, I knew the file as well as the lawyers when they tried the case. I spent every night working on it. I knew the file as well as the lawyers. Many judges don't; they have the file and that's it. It's not the way it's supposed to be.

SI: It sounds like you got on the bench during a time of interesting reform, and that you liked Brendan Byrne.

LW: Well, Brendan, see, he was a former judge, so he wanted to get better people on the bench. He picked a lot of good judges, as well as on the Supreme Court. We had a chief justice who was very difficult, Robert Wilentz. His brother was Warren Wilentz, who tried, by the way, the Kenilworth case. He was for the plaintiff, three times. He [Robert Wilentz] took over, became the chief justice, and he changed the court system. He made it into a very organized system, where you used to have to file weekly what you did every hour, on the hour. Every judge had to do that. So, many of us just let our secretaries do it, we never assigned it, because what are you going to [do], call me up and find out what I'm doing? "Anything you want, Chief." Of course, as I say, when I first started out, it was in Perth Amboy, right around the corner from him, so I used to go have corned beef sandwiches with him at the delicatessen. I knew him well enough that I didn't care, but that's the way it was.

He's changed the system, and they made the Administrator of the Courts. Before that, the Administrator of Courts had maybe twenty people in the system; they now have eight hundred. They cover every aspect of the judge's life. In a way, they've taken away a lot of the professionalism, but I guess that's the way modern America is. What can you do? You have to meet the problems. Court systems are crowded. Everyone is suing, but I don't really think there's that much of an impasse in New Jersey. Everyone tells me if you want to try your case, you can.

SI: Do you think that the changes that David Wilentz made worked?

LW: Robert. David is the one who tried to help me.

SI: That is right. David was the father of Robert and Warren Wilentz. Do you think the changes were good or bad or just what was needed at that time?

LW: I think to some degree it was good, but, like everything else, if the pendulum starts swinging, it is swung too far to this aspect. The AOC is just [an example]; I had nothing to do with them anymore. I'll tell you, an example [of] what I mean by the AOC, that's Administrative

Office of the Court. Robert made me the presiding judge of the criminal courts for a while. I didn't want to do it, because you do a lot of administrative work and I like to try cases. He asked me to [do it]. [When the] chief justice says, "You're going to be the presiding judge," do you want to argue with him?

So, I took over. The criminal courts in Union County were run by a great judge, a really nice guy, but he really wasn't into being able to say, "No, you can't adjourn the case" and that's what you have to do. You have got to give everyone an opportunity to be prepared, but when the time comes, you've got to be able to say, "You're moving your case," because the calendar was getting backlogged. Civil isn't as bad, you're only dealing with money, [but] criminal you're dealing with [a] speedy trial. It's the constitutional right of a speedy trial. You [have] got to be prepared. The prosecutor has to get witnesses. Defendants don't need as many witnesses, because [the] state has the burden of proof beyond [a] reasonable [doubt]. So, it's a whole panoply of problems that come about. You have to have a calendar, and you have to make sure it runs right.

When I took over, I changed--this is going to be immaterial, but just one [example] of how the AOC [operates]--what I did was, because in Union County, we had five judges sitting on criminal. I'm the presiding judge. Each judge on Monday would have their own arraignment. Arraignment is you come in with a lawyer and say, "Have you counseled appearances? Have you received your discovery? Have you read the charges to your client? How does your client [plead]? Does he understand the charges?" "Yes, he does, your Honor." "How does he plead?" "Not guilty." "All right, it is pre-trial date." You do that, but that means each judge had their own calendar for arraignments. All day Monday, they're doing arraignments, and they're not starting a trial. You don't start trial until Tuesday. That's one day. Now, every Friday in criminal court, you're sentencing, so that means you only get three days to try a case. It's what happens.

I decided that the best way to do it is I'm going to do all the arraignments, every one. I'm the presiding judge. What I just did, that's what you do a hundred times, the same words. In fact, I was going to put it on a tape, so after about fifty [if] I get exhausted, I could just press the thing, "Counsel, you have your appearance on record?" The prosecutor's there, hands them the discovery. The other judges then can start trials Monday morning. Most of them would get rid of two trials in one week that way, and so therefore help the county because there was a terrible backlog in criminal.

Well, public defenders didn't like that I started at eight-thirty. It was a big problem, and the head public defender, the number two, got to the chief and says, "This is what they're doing in Union County. It isn't fair." The number two public defender was one of my brother's dear friends. He had known her for many years, and I knew her, too, so it didn't bother me that she complained. I get a phone call from a member of the AOC, and my secretary [took the call]. I'm on the bench, and he said, "Someone in the AOC wants to speak to you right away." He hands me a note, but I said, "Excuse me, I'm in the middle of," whatever I was doing. I got to get to the phone, and I went into my chambers to speak to someone from the AOC. After all, the AOC is administrative court, and this person says, "Judge, this is So-and-So. I'm on the criminal division of the AOC, and Mr. [John] McCarthy [AOC assistant director, criminal practice] asked me to call you, because the chief justice told him that you're doing this and this." He started telling me about all

the problems of the public defender. I said, "Excuse me, what did you say your name was?" and I went to the law diary to find out when he passed the bar. The law diary has every single lawyer, alphabetically and tells you when they passed the bar, so you know who you're talking to. Is the guy a lawyer for twenty years or five years? He was two to two-and-a-half years a lawyer. He's working for the AOC. I said, "Tell me something, Mr. So-and-So, have you ever seen an arraignment?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, then how can you tell me what to do if you've never seen an arraignment?" [He said], "Well, I just want you to know that the chief justice ... " I said, "When I hang up, would you please go to the chief justice, and you tell him that Judge Larry Weiss, not Alvin Weiss, Larry Weiss," because he knew my brother very well, and he knew me better, I said, "you tell him Judge Larry Weiss said, 'I'm doing the arraignments to carry out his request that I move the calendar.' If he doesn't want me to do it this way, that's all right with me. Just tell him to name another presiding judge of criminal courts. I'll try any case and I'll go back to do whatever he wants me to do in trying cases, but make sure you tell him that. Thank you.'" I hung up.

Obviously, around two hours later, I get a phone call, and it's the chief justice, who said--as I say, I knew him for a long time, and he's a brilliant guy--he says, "Larry, this is Robert." I said, "Chief," you always call the chief, "Chief," I don't care if you know him by Robert, I said, "Chief, what can I do?" He says, "I understand this," and he says, "I'm sorry to bother you." I said, "Chief, you never bothered me." "Thank you." We hung up. I did it my way, because I was right and he knew it.

That's the AOC. They have no understanding. They're so involved with the minutia of what's happening, and they have people there that never ever dealt with it. That's what happened with the court system, and that's a shame, although we have a great administrative courts now. Phil Carchman, his only problem is that he's a big Penn guy and he can't stand to see Princeton beat Penn, but neither can I. I'm just joking now, but he's great, very good. He was the prosecutor of Mercer County, and he was a great lawyer. He was a great trial judge. He went to the Appellate Division, and the chief justice asked him, [Deborah] Poritz asked him to be her administrative courts and he gave up because that's a terrible job. I mean, it really is, not being able to judge, but he's there now, he understands, you've got the system that works. It's a problem. [The] court system is a problem, as bad as we are, as difficult as it is, you've got the best court system in the country, certainly better than New York or some of these other horrible places where they elect judges, what a crime. [Editor's Note: Deborah Poritz served as the chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court from 1996 to 2006.]

SI: Have you remained involved with the Democratic Party?

LW: Not really. Last year, I attended a couple of rallies for the local Democratic Party, but I really have not. I'm going to be seventy-five. What can I do with the Democratic Party? I'm not too happy with either party right now.

I have a very good friend, David Miller, Newark, Rutgers, could have gone to Harvard, but he didn't want to give up his job working for the *Star-Ledger* in high school through college, who was the last Moscow correspondent for the *Herald Tribune*, then ran Southeast Asia for CBS during the Vietnam War. I'm only giving his background. Then, he was head of their Rome



office for four years, Paris office, the London office. Then, when he left CBS, [he] went to NBC and worked for NBC News.

We call each other every day and read the news. He sends me emails and stuff, and I call him. I told him today, I said, "Isn't this wonderful in New Jersey?" Every time I call him, I say, "Look at this, all you have to do is pick up the paper [to see] who's stealing what." Here is a fellow accused of wheeling and dealing. This is the guy, that was Sharpe James' guy, that was involved with all the property deals. Sharpe James [was] the senator and [mayor] of Newark. [Editor's Note: Sharpe James served as the mayor of Newark from 1986 to 2006 and as a state senator from 1999 to 2008. During the 1990s, various members of Newark's city government faced either accusations or charges of corruption, including City Council members, the police director, the mayor's chief of staff and eventually the mayor himself.]

Here it is, look at this, this is even more ludicrous. [The newspaper headline says], "UMDNJ [University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey] paid higher prices to get leader." They spent 276,000 dollars to woo the new president, this guy Owen [Dr. William F. Owen, Jr.] from Tennessee. You had to spend 276,000 dollars to find him. Besides that, when they hired him, they found out he had problems in Tennessee. Why are they hiring him? Is this horrendous? Then, they said, "Well, that's not bad because the search wasn't as high as [the] 349,000 dollars, the cost, to find Owen's predecessor, John Petillo," who was finally thrown out. This is the State of New Jersey. Then, it says, "'The search was done excellently,' said Robert Del Tufo, chairman of the school's board of trustees and former US Attorney." That's outrageous, but that's what we talk about. This is the state of New Jersey. This is the Democratic Party that's running this stuff.

It's bad enough the Republicans with Governor Christie Whitman, who destroyed the pension system of the State of New Jersey and took the money out of the pension system by changing the county system, that was improper, and then using that to pay the budget. Now, there's not enough money for the pension system; she's the one who started it all. It's terrible. [Editor's Note: Christine Todd Whitman served as the governor of New Jersey from 1994 to 2001.]

Don't tell me you're going to find someone independent. I thought, "It's a shame that he didn't wear his seatbelt. This guy was going to do a good job." Certainly didn't need the money, Corzine, and he really was beginning--it was taking a while--but he was getting to put some pressure on these guys, but not wearing a seat belt. He'll never be the same. The state is in trouble again. I'm going to be seventy-five in July. What can I do? It's a shame. [Editor's Note: On April 12, 2007, Governor Jon Corzine was injured in a car accident that occurred on the Garden State Parkway. Corzine, a Democrat, served as New Jersey's governor from 2006 to 2010.]

SI: You have done a lot in your career.

LW: Well, listen, I'm very happy with what I did. I think there's nothing better, [but I] can't get my son to want to become a judge. He wants to be just be an assistant prosecutor. What can I do?

SI: Obviously, we have skipped over a lot in your long career, but is there anything that you think we should add to the tape to help people understand it better?

LW: I don't know, between my early career, growing up in Elizabeth and playing basketball, to Rutgers, and then after that the Air Force, and then I became a lawyer and that's all I did. I was a lawyer, and then I came on the bench, spent twenty-six-and-a-half years on the bench. That's a major part of my life, and it was, to me, one exhilarating experience. By the time I retired, I was seventy. I thought we'd go traveling and all that. Can I help it if my wife works full time as a special ed teacher who won't stop working?

SI: Do you think Rutgers prepared you well for both your undergraduate experience and law school?

LW: Absolutely, absolutely. I thought, "I don't know what's happened to the educational process today." I do know this. At Rutgers, four years at Rutgers was an experience that I can't quantify, but I do know this, I came from a generation that, television wasn't around. I knew a couple of people who had television sets when I was growing up, in high school, but we didn't watch television, and we didn't travel. We didn't have the air travel, and the highways weren't really the way it is today, so you didn't travel. So, we were kept within the confines of where we were raised, and so we didn't have, as I say, a national or a global view of what was happening in the world. Rutgers gave you that. You went to college, and you really were exposed--these professors, as I say, Winkler and McCormick and some of these, you're talking about twelve to fourteen people in the class--you really were exposed. You were able to talk, to get up, and you would be challenged and you're exposed to so many things. We all had to take English. We all had to read various books, and if you lived with an English major, you even had to read T.S. Eliot, which is wow, which is something I'll never forget. This is what college exposed you to; [it] is marvelous.

Then, of course, I was lucky enough to get in the Air Force when they weren't shooting real bullets, because, obviously, in the service when they're shooting real bullets it's a different type of service. I was in the service that was, it was during the Cold War, so we're spending fortunes, billions to maintain a military that was being prepared for something that wasn't going to happen. Therefore, [the] military got everything, and it was a wonderful three years. As an officer, I don't know [how it was] with [the] enlisted men, but as an officer, it's really [wonderful]. As I say, I was at Cape Cod. I had a wonderful time going to Boston every once [in a while]. It was a marvelous [experience].

Then, I went to law school, which was very miserable in terms of Rutgers [and] the way they did it, but when you graduated, I got in the profession. I worked six to seven days a week as a lawyer, but you made a good living and you're doing interesting things. When I got on the bench, it was the best thing that ever happened, so I can't complain. I think I had a very [good career].

I had two kids. I've got a daughter who became a nurse. I wanted her to go to medical school, but she wouldn't go. She was in the hospital, she had ulcerative colitis; she was operated on ten times at Mount Sinai. When she graduated Columbia Nursing School, one of her doctors, who

was very involved with Mount Sinai Medical School, as well as her pediatrician at Mount Sinai, said she wanted her to go to medical school. She said, "These doctors are horrible. I don't want to be a doctor." She wanted to be a nurse. She became a nurse at Mount Sinai in a pediatric unit. For six or seven years, she was a nurse there. Then, she worked at Sloan Kettering. Don't ask me why someone would want to be a nurse at Sloan Kettering. She did a research pain study, and then she got married. She was a hospice nurse, which is, again, that's even [worse], but that's my daughter. She couldn't have children because she had operations so many times that her reproductive system was just scarred, so she adopted two kids from Columbia. One is twelve and one is six. I've got two of the sweetest kids.

My son is married. He went to Syracuse, because I couldn't get him to go to Rutgers because Rutgers didn't have a good enough basketball team and Syracuse had a good basketball team. His dorm was right next to the Dome, so he could run into the games. That's the kind of son I have. I tried to get him to go to Rutgers, but he wouldn't do it. Then, he went to law school, and he's a lawyer, an assistant prosecutor in Middlesex. He gave me two wonderful grandchildren who are wearing Syracuse sweaters, which hurts. When we go to the Syracuse-Rutgers lacrosse game, one of them wears red and one of them wears orange. One of my grandchildren knows to wear red. You've got to take care of Grandpa. Of course, with Syracuse, they kill us in basketball. He comes to every single Syracuse-Rutgers basketball game that's home. The only game we beat them was when Carmelo [Anthony], I think, was a freshman. When they [Syracuse] won the national championships [in 2003], we beat them at home. He never forgave me until they won the national championship. Then, he reminded me who were the national champs. So, I'm very, very lucky.

SI: That is good. Do you have any questions? This is a wonderful place to stop. Thank you very much for talking with us today.

LW: I hope I haven't taken too much of your time.

SI: No, it was wonderful. Thank you for bringing out all these photos. Is there anything here that you wanted to discuss?

LW: No, I guess, this is what I just [talked about].

SI: There are a lot of great family photos here.

LW: Well, that's family. Thank goodness, I finally got a computer and [know] how to use it. Ellis Island, you had to be able to get this. My father found it. I had the tag, but to be able to get this thing to show, here's the boat that he came across on, which is, by the way, the first boat on the wall on the second floor [where] they have on, Ellis Island, all the ships that were used to bring [in] immigrants. The [RMS] *Adriatic* is the first one. When we went up [there], my brother and I went to Ellis Island, we saw it and I said, "That's Dad's boat." Don't tell anyone my father was a socialist. Norman Thomas was; he wasn't bad.

SI: Yes, I was wondering if he was a Norman Thomas supporter.

LW: Who knows? My father never talked about it. Who knows what my father was? Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that's all I know. As I say, when you mention Roosevelt in our house, there was a pause of silence, and when he died, I'm telling you to come home and see your mother sitting on the front porch in Elizabeth, Wyoming Avenue.

One thing, maybe this is interesting, how did we get a nice house on Wyoming Avenue, which is really a fairly nice street in upper Elmora? My father did some banking at the Harmonia Bank, and one day he was coming in to make a deposit. A lawyer, (Al Acorn?), who was a lawyer there, said to my father, "Max, I want to see you." He said, "I have a house that you should buy." Now, my father said to the lawyer, "I can't afford a house. We're talking about big bucks. I can't afford a lawyer's house." He said, "Yes, you can. What I want you to do is, I want you to look at this house at Wyoming Avenue in Elizabeth and then come back after you look at the house, and we'll talk." So, my father went to Wyoming Avenue in Elizabeth and he looked at this house, and it's a very nice house on Wyoming Avenue. I'm looking for the mortgage, which I know I have here somewhere. There it is. It was Mutual Savings, Harmonia took [it] over.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1940s, by [the] '40s, during the '40s, he said to all these savings and loans banks that [were] foreclosing all these houses, and there were so many houses foreclosed. He had the administration order the savings and loans to get rid of all these houses. He says, "They're not landlords. They're not supposed to be landlords. Savings and loans and banks are supposed to be banks," and so he ordered them to sell their houses that they had foreclosed. So, my father went up to look at the house, and when he looked at the house, then he came back, and I found this out later, that (Acorn?) said, "I can't afford it." He said, "Yes, you can. I'll give you a five thousand dollar mortgage, that's what they foreclosed, five thousand dollars, and I'll give you a mortgage, and if you take the mortgage and you pay it off, you'd be paying less than what you're paying for your rent and you'll own this house." So, my father listened, and he did. Here's the mortgage. There it is, [a] fifteen year mortgage, five thousand dollars, five percent, he was paying, 39.54 a month, right, for a house, 865 Wyoming Avenue, a very nice house in Elizabeth, New Jersey. That's how I got this fancy house on Wyoming Avenue, two blocks from St. Gens [St. Genevieve's School]. I'm telling you, that was the nice part of Elizabeth. That's how we got the house. That's what happened. They don't do those things anymore.

SI: Another reason to like FDR.

LW: You're talking about a man that made [it possible for] my father [to] have that house. It's still there. People still [live there]. I go past it every once in a while when I'm in Elizabeth, as I pay my respects. You walk into a center hall, a huge dining room, a huge living room, what you call the sun porch but really was just a room, [and] a kitchen. Upstairs, we had one, two, three, four bedrooms, small, but my father's bedroom, and one bathroom up there.

When we moved in there, it was the first time that my brother and I had separate rooms. We lived in the same room all the time we were growing up, and when we moved in, my brother picked the room in the back and I got the room in the front. The room in the back was a little larger, the bedroom, his is right next to mine, and so I said, "Why is he getting the room?" Of course, the line, "He's the oldest." After he moved in, and we each had our own furniture, within

a day or two after we moved, I walked into his room to see, [to] talk to him. What was I, twelve. Yes, it was '44, right, so, I was born in '32, I was twelve, going to be thirteen. So, I walked in his room, and he said, "Get out." "What do you mean?" By then, I was getting to be a little bigger than him and a little tougher. I said to him, "What do you mean get out?" "This is my room. You want to come in, you knock on the door, and if I say, 'No,' you [have] got [to] get out of here." So, of course, the only thing that a younger brother can do is say, "Mom, Alvin won't let me in his room," and my mother said, "That's right. You have to get permission to go in his room, and he has to get permission to go into your room. It's his room. [In your room], you do what you want. The only one who doesn't need permission is your father and your mother." That's the way it was.

It's amazing, because, now, today, everyone has their own rooms. That's not the way it was. Up until the time in that house, we grew up in the same room. Until I was twelve, [I] shared a room with my brother. That's the way it was, amazing.

SI: I just thought of one more question. You mentioned that you were at Rutgers during the height of the McCarthy Red Scare and, also, there was the infamous case at Rutgers of President Jones firing Moses Finley.

LW: Finley and the law school professor, yes, right, absolutely.

SI: I was wondering if that was discussed at all on campus.

LW: Absolutely, oh, absolutely. Now, most of us, being what we call semi-liberals, but they didn't have that term then, McCarthy was, for any enlightened person, you knew that he was evil. The man was a purveyor of prejudice. His thing about Communism was phony, and, of course, I majored in history, so all the history department knew. We used to discuss McCarthy. In fact, we used to watch [the Army-McCarthy hearings on television] when I was there, after Webster Jones did that. Of course, he lost the respect of most of the professors at Rutgers, and they finally got rid of him because of that. [Mason] Gross took over. [Editor's Note: In 1952, when called to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security regarding alleged ties to the Communist Party, Rutgers professors Moses I. Finley and Simon W. Heimlich invoked their Fifth Amendment rights and refused to testify. The Rutgers Board of Trustees issued a resolution that called for the immediate dismissal of faculty members who invoked their rights against self-incrimination in front of an anti-Communist investigatory body, a position advocated by Rutgers University President Lewis Webster Jones. Despite a faculty committee that contested the university's position as being antithetical to academic freedom, the administration of Rutgers University succumbed to the conservative pressures brought on by McCarthyism and enforced the dismissal of Finley and Heimlich.]

They had what was known as the Army-McCarthy hearings when I was there, and that's when McCarthy challenged [Robert] Stevens, who was from Metuchen, who lived in Metuchen, because he was Secretary of the Army. They'd said that at Kilmer they were soft on Communists. There was a dentist who was supposed to have been a Communist. In any event, that's what they did, they said that the Army was soft on [Communists]. The head of Kilmer was General [Ralph Wise] Zwicker. The reason why I know that name is because I was practice

teaching at New Brunswick High School, history, I was practice teaching, because we had to do that in order to get your education degree, and I had his daughter in the class, General Zwicker's daughter. I remember that the Army-McCarthy hearings were on before that, and we used to go home, back to the dorm to hear it, and, in fact, it was on TV. I don't know where it was, someone had a television on that we used to watch the Army-McCarthy hearings. [Editor's Note: General Ralph Wise Zwicker's testimony in Senator Joseph McCarthy's subcommittee occurred in February 1954. The testimony had to do with Major Irving Peress, a subordinate officer at Camp Kilmer, who had failed to answer questions on a loyalty oath form and then had refused to answer questions when subpoenaed by McCarthy. Many observers thought that McCarthy's treatment of Zwicker was abusive and disrespectful.]

[Joseph] Welch, [who] was a great lawyer from Boston, represented the Army. McCarthy had his famous henchman, Roy Cohn, who was probably one of the most brilliant lawyers around but one of the most despicable human beings alive. To this day, I'll never forget, probably one of the greatest moves that a trial lawyer ever was to do, they were cross-examining, and they produced a photo. It had to do with G. David Schine. G. David Schine, who was supposedly involved with Roy Cohn, in a, not a heterosexual relationship, a homosexual [one], which we all know Roy Cohn was to this day. When he died everyone knew it, he died of AIDS. In fact, that famous play, isn't there that [play] about this? [Editor's Note: In the spring of 1954, the Army-McCarthy hearings aired on national television after Senator McCarthy alleged Communist infiltration of the Army Communications Center at Fort Monmouth. One of the central questions of the hearings centered on whether McCarthy had used his influence to obtain an officer's commission for Gerard David Schine, who had been drafted in 1953. The Army's lawyer Joseph Welch questioned Cohn and Schine on the witness stand about a doctored photograph that showed Schine alone with Army Secretary Stevens, but a wide shot revealed Stevens and Schine along with Colonel Jack Bradley and a fourth person. The hearings revealed McCarthy's unscrupulous, fear-mongering tactics, and the Senate censured him in December 1954. The year before, in the summer of 1953, McCarthy had sent Roy Cohn and Schine, a consultant to the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Europe to investigate subversion in American agencies there. Some officials lost their jobs after detective stories written by a pro-Communist writer were found on a bookshelf in one agency.]

SI: *Angels in America*?

LW: That's right. He was a despicable human being. What he tried to do, they went to Europe when G. David Schine, whose father was the Schines, who had hotels all over the place, and they went to Europe and they went to the libraries in the Army bases and they got rid of books, *Catcher in the Rye*. Obviously, a Communist plot, *Catcher in the Rye*. Anyway, that's what they did. The Army tried to stop that, and McCarthy took on Stevens and all. They produced a photo of him looking at G. David Schine or something like that. I don't know the exact, but it was a cropped photo, like this, and someone told Welch about it. So, the next day they got the full photo to show that he wasn't looking him. He's looking at someone else. [Editor's Note: *Angels in America* is a play written by Tony Kushner about AIDS and homosexuality in the 1980s.]

Roy Cohn was on the witness stand at the time. He was the one that's being examined by Welch, and to me the most, one of the greatest things I've ever seen in my life. Welch was Boston Irish,

with a bow tie, with glasses like this, and he said to him, he said, I'll never forget it, he said, "Look at this photo, how did you crop the photo? You produced the photo that was cropped. Who did it?" Mr. Cohn said, "I don't know who did it, Mr. Welch." He's on the witness stand now; he's under oath. "What do you mean you don't know?" So, Welch said, "Do you think maybe it was the pixies?" of which Roy Cohn, being a very smart but snide guy, looked at Welch and said, "I don't know. What do you mean, a pixie? What's a pixie?" Welch said, "Mr. Cohn, you know what a pixie is. A pixie is a fairy." It broke the House up, because that's what they used to call homosexuals, fairies, and it broke the House up and he destroyed Roy Cohn.

Then, I met General Zwicker at Rutgers. They had something on the campus. He was there, and his daughter was there. I was practice teaching, and she asked me, "Would you like to meet my father?" I said, "Certainly." Brigadier General Zwicker, who was in the Battle of the Bulge, if you want to talk about war heroes, if there's such a thing, there he was, and McCarthy is calling him a traitor. So, I met him.

That whole thing was just rampant all over the University, and, I tell you, I think that Webster Jones destroyed himself by yielding. He did a bad thing for Rutgers, but I know the professors absolutely, he lost support of the entire faculty, forget it. Students, we didn't know, but I understand he lost the support of the entire [faculty]. He left, didn't he?

SI: Yes, pretty soon after he left.

LW: To go to some charitable thing.

SI: Yes.

LW: Right, right, something, whatever it was.

SI: National Conference of Christians and Jews.

LW: Right, whatever it was, they got rid of him.

SI: Other than that, there was not an overall atmosphere of fear on campus.

LW: I did not sense fear, sometimes a little anger over there, but, remember, we didn't march in those days, that was after. If this happened after the '60s, who knows what would have happened? We're the pre-'60 group. In the '50s, you didn't march. If you objected to something, you objected to it quietly.

SI: Nobody was afraid to say or not say what was on their minds.

LW: Not that I know of, no, no, no, no. We all thought McCarthy was evil. Anyone [who] took a history course knew he was evil. There may have been more conservatives in the history department, not a professor, but a student, we ignored him, I'm sure we ignored him.

SI: Do you think most of the students were liberal at Rutgers?

LW: I think most of them were non-political. I think we were the generation that really didn't get involved that much, although I did get involved with the election when Adlai Stevenson ran against Eisenhower, if I remember correctly. Governor Stevenson, that's what he was called, brilliant man, wonderful speaker, but he didn't have a snowball's chance in hell. Eisenhower was untouchable. It was a good time in America, and he was the general who saved the world. I don't know if Adlai Stevenson would have made a good president. Sometimes he was great. He became our ambassador to the UN during the [Cuban Missile] Crisis. He was the one who said, "I'm waiting for your answer, until hell freezes over," and then he stood there and the Russian delegate wouldn't answer. He was great, but he didn't have a chance. He ran twice; I campaigned for him twice. Once when I was in the Air Force I campaigned for him. Of course, his thing was they had a picture of a shoe with a hole in the bottom of the thing, and that's what we used to wear in the lapels for Stevenson. You couldn't wear it when you were wearing your Air Force stuff, because you weren't allowed to do that, but I had it on my sports coat.

I supported Stevenson, but in the Air Force everyone supported Eisenhower. If you were full-time military, you obviously supported Eisenhower. They didn't know that at the end of his [term], stepping out of [the] presidency, that he would make the speech that said, "Beware of the industrial military complex, you can't trust them." They didn't know that; he knew.

SI: In 1952, when you were campaigning for Stevenson at Rutgers, what did that entail?

LW: Well, you'd hand out stuff. As I say, television wasn't really that, so you'd hand out campaign literature and do things like that, but not much. We didn't get that much involved. That's what I did, hand out some literature and things like that, but we didn't have time. You had to go to class. We had unlimited cuts when I went to Rutgers, but if you missed a class you were in, when you have fourteen in a class, you miss a class, the professor knows who wasn't there. All you do is look around, look at the same seat, "Why is that seat empty? I know who that is." So, you just hardly ever miss class.

SI: What was your most memorable game at Rutgers?

LW: Oh, God, City College [of New York]. I scored sixteen points the first half, scored one point the second half. We lost by one or two points. The reason why I say it's my most memorable is because after my freshman year, I wanted to get a job at either the Catskills, which was then where all the basketball players used to go up there and you'd earn money being a waiter at one of those big hotels and play basketball on weekends. That's where all the gamblers were, they met all these guys, and I don't know who gave [my name], that's the one thing, but someone gave my name to the coach of Villanova, who was then the athletic director at the Nevele Country Club. In those days, [there's] Grossinger's, Kutsher's [Hotel and Country Club], that's where all the basketball players went. You go up there and you become a bus boy and you make maybe two thousand dollars. Remember Rutgers is 254 dollars a year, a semester. You make a thousand or two thousand dollars as a waiter or a bus boy, that's big bucks, and play basketball against all the guys from all around the country. The guys from Kentucky, North Carolina, everyone was up there, all the guys from New York.



So, you had to get interviewed. He had all my clippings from my freshman year, and he offered me a job there. Then, someone got me an interview with Nat Holman, the very famous Nat Holman, coach [at] City College and really one of the great basketball coaches in the history of America. He had a camp, of which a lot of his team went to be counselors and waiters up there. What they do, they played basketball, that's why his team won, the only team in the history of America that won both the NIT and NCAA, and the NIT was the big tournament then. Whoever won the NIT was the national champs, the NCAA got eight teams, and they beat the same team twice, Bradley [University]. [CCNY] beat them in the NIT, and then they beat them in the NCAA. He was a great coach. Someone got [my name] to him and told me, "Go, maybe you'd get a job with him." So, I went up to City College, first time I was ever up in City College. Remember, I was born in the Bronx but left too early.

In those days, you could take a subway up to City College, which was in Harlem, and there was no big deal about doing that. I went and I had an appointment to meet him, and I went to the gym and got interviewed by Nat Holman, famous Nat Holman. He was a great, [a] wonderful man. He said, "Would you like the job? Here's what you'll do, you'll be a waiter." I'd been a waiter at a camp between my junior and senior in high school with Larry Gordon, so that was easy to be able to do it. He says, "You'll make around eight hundred dollars," or something like that, and he says, "and we play basketball all the time." Being coached by Nat Holman, [or] playing with Paul Arizin, who's in the Basketball Hall of Fame in the NBA [and played at] Villanova--half the Villanova team was at Nevele Country Club--or being coached by Nat Holman with [Ed] Warner, [Ed] Roman, [Alvin] Roth, and [Floyd] Layne and more, who won two. So, of course, the scandal had already occurred.

In my freshman year, they had the scandal with everyone shaving points, including NYU and LIU. Asa Bushnell, who was then head of the Eastern [Collegiate] Athletic Association, sent out an edict to all those members of that group, of which Rutgers was one, that no basketball player could go up to the Catskills or any other place like that where they're exposed to [gambling] and if they do they lose their eligibility. I saw my coach, who I was going to see, my voice it goes downwind, "What'd I do, Coach?" I had a job to play with the greatest basketball players from Villanova or the great team from City College, I'm going to be playing with them every day. He said, "You can't do it. Otherwise, you can't play next year," and, of course, obviously, [I was] planning on starting, so I figured I can't. I'm planning on playing, so I didn't go.

We played City College the second game [of the 1951-1952 season]. Now, by that time, they didn't have any of those great players, because they were all indicted and they were out of school, but they still had a decent team. That's Nat Holman. We played City College. I scored sixteen points the first half, and the second half I had one point. I hardly got the one. I'm playing low post, center, hook shot, things like that. We lost by one. I came off the bench walking back--it was the Old Barn--and we sat on, years later, they sat by the big wall [that] divided these pools, before that, we sat here, City College was here, and our dressing room was here. City College, that's the visiting [team], so you crossed after the game. I'm walking after the game, having scored one point [in the second half] and we lost [63-61], and I'm walking, and Holman came up to me and he put his arm around me and said, "Larry, that was a great game." Now, for Nat Holman to talk to you is, I just don't think you can realize what that meant, but I said to him, "Mr. Holman," I said, "how could you say that? I only got one point the whole

second half, we lost." He said, "Larry, you have to understand something. You can't score if they don't give you the ball." He said, "Don't worry." I walked away. Things like that, you never forget, Nat Holman telling you that, which was true. I never really got [the ball], I had some [foul shots], that was Don White.

I told that to Sterling, my freshman coach, years ago, because I'd go out to lunch with him every once in a while, he's retired, eighty-eight, [with] his wife, and I told him that story once, and [he] said to me, "What did White do?" I said, "He didn't know, he never noticed." I said, "Did you see the game?" He said, "Well, sure, I saw the game." He said, "I don't remember it." I said, "That's all I got, was one point," and he said, "That wouldn't have happened if I was coach." I said, "I know. I played for you the year before. Believe me, we all scored because anyone who had hot hands didn't get the ball, you took him out, the other guy out of the game, and said, 'Beat them.'" That's the best game I can remember. All the other games, there's so many, but that I remember because I remember Nat Holman telling me, it's unbelievable, he said, "You don't score if you can't get the ball."

SI: That is another great place to stop. Thank you, again, for all your time.

LW: Thank you, I hope I haven't taken, it's two-twenty, my goodness, I've taken all your day.

SI: That is okay. This is what we do for a living.

LW: Okay, that's great, made me think about things. It's really wonderful.

SI: If there is anything else, you can always add that to the transcript. Thank you very much.

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

Reviewed by Jessica Ondusko 12/3/07

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 1/29/08

Reviewed by Kathryn Rizzi 10/8/18

Reviewed by Linda Weiss 10/24/2018