

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHEA BERKHOUT

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an oral history interview with Dr. Dorothea Berkhout on May 26, 2021. This is Shaun Illingworth. I am currently in Hightstown, New Jersey. Would you mind telling me what city and state you are in today?

Dorothea Berkhout: Yes, I am in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida.

SI: All right. To begin, tell me where and when you were born.

DB: Yes, I was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1950.

SI: Tell me your parents' names, for the record.

DB: My dad was Dr. Peter Berkhout and my mom was Joanna Struyk Berkhout.

SI: Starting with your mother's side of the family, can you tell me whatever you might know about the family history, if there was an immigration story on that side, that sort of thing?

DB: Both of my parents had Dutch backgrounds. My mom's grandparents emigrated from the Netherlands. She had a grandfather who worked in the Paterson silk mills, who actually died of heat exhaustion and dropped to the sidewalk on his way home, because the silk mills were very hot.

He had a very young new wife whom he had just brought over from the Netherlands with a baby and she didn't know English. They were members of the Christian Reformed church, in Paterson. I guess she was befriended by people there. She ended up getting remarried. My mom has vivid memories of this second grandfather, who was not a very nice man. I guess her grandmother had to put up with the marriage because she was penniless. She became a seamstress, but she had a pretty hard life.

She had a daughter, who was my Grandmother Fanny, who passed away the month I was born. I never got to meet her. Her husband, my mom's dad, was an architect who apparently had the bad habit of smoking. He died young, in his fifties, so, I never got to meet him, but he designed school buildings in Passaic County. At one point, Russians came over to see his school building architecture and wanted it replicated in Russia. I don't know whether that happened or not. There's still one school that he designed standing in Passaic, New Jersey, but school architecture has changed a lot since back then.

My dad emigrated from the Netherlands when he was a boy and he had seven brothers and sisters. His dad was a baker and he was from the town of Ooltgensplaat, on the island of Overflakkee in the Netherlands, which used to be an island and now is connected by dikes. My dad would talk about, as a boy, he would deliver bread and baked goods, that sort of thing. He also would go out on the local dock and meet the fishing boats and eat raw herring from the boats. I've tried it once. I like pickled herring, I don't like raw herring.

[Editor's Note: The village of Ooltgensplaat, located in the Dutch province of South Holland, forms part of the Goeree-Overflakkee municipality.]

He was around eleven when his family came to the United States. They settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is a big Dutch immigrant area, and he grew up there. He was the only one in his family who went to college. He worked at a golf course and in a furniture factory (there are a lot of furniture factories around Grand Rapids), to put himself through college.

This was at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. Then he went to the University of Michigan to get a master's in biology. He returned to Calvin College to attend Calvin Seminary to become a minister. He taught biology at Calvin while he put himself through seminary. Then, he decided to become a physician and he went to the University of Chicago, Rush Medical School, and got his MD and moved to New Jersey with his brother.

[Editor's Note: In 1857, a group of churches in Western Michigan separated from the Dutch Reformed Church to form the Christian Reformed Church in North America. In 1876, the Church established Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary as, initially, a single institution, but, by 1906, the two had split into separate schools.]

Because my Dad and his brother knew people who were Dutch in the Christian Reformed Church, they stayed with them and they helped my dad set up his practice in Paterson. I grew up in the house that he purchased then. His office was on the first floor of our house--a waiting room, examining room, treatment rooms, all of that--and we lived upstairs on the top two floors.

He met my mother when he made a house call on my grandmother, who was ill. My mom was a schoolteacher at the time. She taught first grade.

SI: She had gone to one of the normal schools.

DB: Yes, in Jersey City. Yes, I think it was called New Jersey College, or maybe it's called that now, I don't know, but it changed its name over time. Yes, she had a teaching degree from one of the normal schools. [Editor's Note: Founded in 1927 (opened in 1929) as New Jersey State Normal School at Jersey City, New Jersey City University had also been named New Jersey State Teachers College at Jersey City (1935-58) and Jersey City State College (1958-98).]

SI: Did your father ever give you the story of what his trip to the US was like?

DB: Yes, I actually have a diary that his father wrote about the trip. Apparently, several family members got very sick, because they had a rough passage, but my grandfather wrote about how appalled he was that there was so much food on the ship and they would throw overboard all the leftovers. [laughter] So, he made a point of complaining that that was such a waste. That would have been, I don't know, before World War I, in the 1910s, that they came over.

SI: Did he actually finish the theology degree?

DB: Yes, he had a theology degree. He did not ever have his own church, because he decided then to go into medicine. I do recall, as a young kid, he would sometimes be invited to give a guest sermon, to be a guest minister somewhere, for an evening service.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about the neighborhood, the area in Paterson that you grew up in?

DB: Yes, I grew up right on the corner of Prospect Park and Paterson, very near Haledon. I had a great neighborhood. The kids would go out in the street and play. We'd play baseball at the local school's playground. I walked to school, I came home for lunch. We had a vegetable truck that came by. My mom and I would walk two blocks to shop at a bakery, a delicatessen, a fish store, and a grocery store. It was a very regular kind of neighborhood, I guess you'd say.

It was also a very Dutch community. In fact, my mom had a grandfather on her father's side, who had been the first mayor of the City of Prospect Park. It used to be all farms, and then, a lot of Dutch people settled there, and built houses. There's a street named after him. The last name Struyk is spelled S-T-R-U-Y-K, but, when I was growing up, everybody called it "Struck." So, I was always having to correct everybody about pronunciation.

[Editor's Note: Prospect Park, originally part of Manchester Township, was incorporated in March 1901. Adrian Struyk served as Mayor from its founding until his death in 1912.]

It has since changed very much. After my dad passed away, my mom taught in the Haledon schools and had a lot of Middle Eastern kids in her class. It was a very different ethnic grouping of people who were living there than who were when I grew up. There were more Dutch, Irish, and Italians, but I did go to Paterson School Number Twelve and I had several African American friends.

SI: Growing up, was going to church and the Reformed religion a big part of your life?

DB: Yes, it was. My dad was a deacon or elder in the church. We had two services on Sunday. In fact, before I was born, there was even an afternoon Dutch service, but, fortunately, I didn't have to do that. [laughter] So, yes, growing up, I went to church, went to Sunday school, catechism, and evening Sunday services.

SI: I was curious if any Dutch cultural traditions lived on in your family. Did you learn the language or cook the foods?

DB: Yes. I've tried to learn it the language, but my parents would use it when they wanted to keep secrets from me. When I was six, my dad actually brought us on a trip to the Netherlands and Europe. I got to meet the woman who had been his nursemaid, who came and visited us with this huge lace cap and traditional clothing. We had our picture taken in Dutch costumes, traditional dress with wooden shoes.

My dad had patients who would bake *banket*, which is a Dutch [pastry]. At Christmastime, we had a lot of the foods, like almond paste-filled butter pastry and various cookies that were Dutch, especially since my dad's father had been a baker. He used to get my mom to make things like *kletsoppen*, which are these lace cookies. So, we had a lot of that.

He spoke Dutch. My dad spoke multiple languages and, when I was growing up, he used to read me stories in different languages, French, German, Dutch, and English.

SI: You have two siblings. Is that right?

DB: Yes, I have a brother and a sister.

SI: Tell me a little bit about them.

DB: My brother's the oldest of the three of us. He is nine years older. All three of us went to the same schools, started in School Number Twelve in Paterson. There was a Christian School Association that we eventually went to, but they wouldn't take us at age four in the kindergarten.

We all started early because they admitted us in School Number Twelve at age four, and we started with half-year kindergarten that was full-day. He was very smart. My sister always tells me he was smarter than she was. He became a chemist and worked for Lederle Laboratories and, eventually, the Bayer Company. He's retired now.

My sister went to Marietta College, got her master's at Rutgers in microbiology when Rutgers College had just become coed [in 1972]. She told me that she worked over on the Busch Campus, at either what's now the Waksman Institute or Nelson. She said she had to walk three buildings away to find a women's room, because there were no women's rooms over there at the time. She used to sit at the edge of the golf course and eat her lunch sometimes. She said it was very nice over there.

She married somebody who she met at Rutgers, who was getting his PhD in microbiology. He had a postdoc at Harvard Medical School. They then went to University of Arkansas medical school to teach. My sister became head of a metabolic blood lab at Arkansas Children's Hospital, where she stayed for many, many years. She and her husband got divorced, but she remained there and retired only about four or five years ago. She has a house in Santa Rosa Beach. We knew about Santa Rosa Beach, where we now live, from her and from my son, who was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base nearby and trained in Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

SI: Did your family ever talk about how the Second World War affected them, both at home and, also, if they still had family in the Netherlands that they had been in touch with?

DB: My dad actually examined soldiers who went into World War II and there were several certificates signed by Harry Truman for his having done that. The Depression seemed to have made more of an impression (at least in what they talked about) on my mom and dad.

[Editor's Note: Harry S. Truman served as President of the United States from 1945 to 1953, following the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-45), who had led the nation's recovery from the Great Depression (1929-39) and participation in World War II (1941-45).]

They didn't really talk much about World War II that I recall, other than I knew that my dad had been very busy during that time. My mom had stopped teaching and she used to work with him

in the office on administrative stuff and record-keeping and all that. I guess, in addition to his regular patient load, he was examining all these men going in as soldiers before they went out.

SI: What did they say about the Depression that stands out in your memory?

DB: Well, I remember when my mom was close to a hundred, I was the person who had power of attorney and was going to be the executor of her will. Some people, when they get older, if they have some money, in order to avoid tax on the inheritance, they give gifts of a certain amount to children or grandchildren. She didn't want to do that, because she said, "I don't want my money to run out before I run out."

So, she was very conscious of the fact that they had to really be very careful, because of the Depression, which was such a terrible thing, feeling that money could be scarce and she had to be very careful with it. That was a very important thing in her mind.

SI: You described your early schooling a little bit. At that point, what were you most interested in? What did you enjoy about school, or maybe parts you did not like about school?

DB: You mean in elementary school? I don't know, I just liked doing well, although I had one teacher who told my mom I was too much of a socialite and I would talk too much, [laughter] but I did well. I got "As" and "Bs" on my report cards. When I got to high school, I was in advanced classes.

I majored in French and linguistics in college. I took Latin and French in K-12 school. Then, I also took German in college, along with French. So, whether it was my dad's having read to me all those stories in various languages, I'm not really sure, but I enjoyed studying languages. When I was in seventh grade and took Latin, I really got interested in the structure of language and learning new languages.

I also took art. I took painting lessons outside of school. Then, I took some art classes at school. I also took piano lessons, cello lessons and organ lessons, ended up sticking with piano, which I played all through high school and into college, and then, played harpsichord when I was in college, but I really practiced hard. I was playing in recitals, playing concertos with a local symphony, and enjoyed it.

I always said, "I really want to be a musician," but, unless you really excel and are really at the very, very top, then, you end up teaching piano lessons, which I didn't want to do. So, I realized I could not really--I wasn't good enough to make a career of it.

SI: What about outside of school? What would you do for fun? Did you have organized activities, like Girl Scouts or church-related activities?

DB: Not much of that, a little bit, but not much of it. As a kid, we played in the streets. I mean, hide-and-seek, we would play hopscotch, we would play games, that sort of thing. We would play baseball in the local lot of the school.

When I was a little bit older, we would get on a bus, a public bus from across the street would go down Haledon Avenue, we'd go downtown Paterson, shopping, my girlfriends and I. There was a beautiful department store, Meyer Brothers, in downtown Paterson. Then, there was Woolworth's that had records that we would buy--new records that were popular--there were shoe stores, and a Planters Peanut store. It was a really nice downtown.

My dad was in the Rotary Club and they used to meet at the Alexander Hamilton Hotel. You may know this, but the Great Falls, which is in Paterson, were discovered by Alexander Hamilton. He looked at them and said, "Wow, this would be great for an industrial city." Silk mills were built near the falls that powered the manufacturing.

[Editor's Note: Alexander Hamilton first visited the Great Falls of the Passaic River during the American Revolution and, later, as Secretary of Treasury, led the effort to build the nation's first planned industrial city around this potential power source. In 1791, the Town of Paterson was established, named in honor of New Jersey Governor William Paterson, a supporter of Hamilton's efforts.]

In fact, the Bloustein School [the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy] has a graduate student whose ambition is to become the Mayor of Paterson. He takes people on walking tours of Paterson, if you ever want to go, but it's totally different now. I remembered parts of it. The beautiful library--there's a Carnegie library--their beautiful library is still there, but a lot of the stores aren't.

Also, my dad had a patient who owned an Italian steak restaurant. We used to go out for dinner a lot on Wednesday nights and we'd go to Scordato's in downtown Paterson. There was another place called The Green Room where we would go to eat.

I did spend a lot of time with my family, but I also spent a lot of time doing homework and practicing the piano. Then, when I went to high school, other students weren't just from the local neighborhood, but were from many different communities surrounding where the high school was, which was in North Haledon. We would visit each other, but we'd have to have parents drive us to various places, until we drove ourselves.

SI: Growing up in the 1960s, you would have been in high school from 1963 to 1967.

DB: Right.

SI: Were you and your family talking around the dinner table about world events or the news?

DB: Yes. I was in my geometry class in high school when Kennedy was assassinated. I still remember that. Everybody says they remember where they were when they heard that news. My mom said she was in the car and she heard it. She thought it was a spoof, like Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* program. She didn't think it was real until it was actually on the news.

Then, my dad and I were watching--I don't remember if it was a Saturday morning or a Sunday or Monday morning--but we were watching the news and we saw Jack Ruby shoot Oswald

coming out of wherever he was being held in his cell. Then, I remember watching the Kennedy funeral. That was a big deal.

[Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy (1961-63) was assassinated on November 22, 1963, by Lee Harvey Oswald. Two days later, as Oswald was being transported, he was shot and killed by Jack Ruby. Orson Welles broadcast an adaptation of H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, set partially in Central New Jersey, on the radio on Halloween eve of 1938. Many listeners believed the Earth was being attacked by extraterrestrials.]

Then, all the activism that happened was actually later. In fact, I graduated from University of Southern California--I'm on my fiftieth reunion committee--I was at USC during the Vietnam War. During that time [actress and peace activist] Jane Fonda's gave her anti-Vietnam War speeches and we had the first Earth Day [April 22, 1970].

I was much more aware of political news once I got to college than I was in high school, but, yes, my dad would watch the news every night after he came up from treating patients and I would sometimes watch news with him and he would talk about events.

He was kind of a Renaissance man, I guess you would say. He was also the head of the Public Health Commission or Board for Passaic County. So, he was a big proponent of vaccinations. My family were among the "guinea pigs" who got the sugar cube vaccination for polio, but he also would look at the quality of water through his microscope. If there were problems, he would write it up and get people to fix the water filtration systems. So, he did all of that.

[Editor's Note: In 1953, Dr. Jonas Salk announced that he had developed a vaccine against polio. In 1954, clinical trials took place, and, in 1955, a nationwide inoculation campaign commenced. Later, Dr. Albert Sabin introduced a live-virus, oral vaccine delivered on a sugar cube.]

He organized a philosophy group, that would meet occasionally and talk about religion and philosophy. He was head of the board of the local philharmonic orchestra. He was involved in a lot of cultural and medical activities. He was a real community person, interested in serving the community and reaching out to the community.

He in fact had supported Norman Thomas for President, who was a Socialist candidate, at one time. I always assumed my parents were Republicans, because I grew up in a very Republican community and they didn't talk about their party affiliation, maybe because they didn't want me leaking it to other people, because I talked a lot. Then, I found out they had voted for Kennedy, and so, they were Democrats. My mom stayed a Democrat throughout her life. They were much different from the people in our community when it came to politics. [Editor's Note: Reverend Norman Thomas (1884-1968) ran in six consecutive elections as the Presidential nominee for the Socialist Party.]

SI: It is interesting that you brought up the sugar cube and the polio vaccine. I interviewed another child of a physician whose office was in their house and they remembered people lining up around the block when it first came out.

DB: Right. I'm sure if he were alive today, he would have been an early proponent of COVID vaccinations. I don't know how they got people to line up to do it, because you recall when COVID vaccination started, there was so much hesitancy. Yet, it worked.

[Editor's Note: COVID-19 first emerged in China in December of 2019. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, continuing through the time this interview was recorded.]

SI: Yes. You were only about sixteen when he passed away.

DB: Yes, right. Every summer, my family took vacations. My dad loved geology, among all of his other interests. We went to many of the National Parks. The summer of 1966, my sister was in her last year in college and I was a junior in high school. My brother was married and he wasn't with us, but my mother, father, Fran and I took a trip to the Southwest.

We had been to the Grand Canyon before, we went again. We went to Dinosaur National Monument, various places. We had an accident on a dirt road up on top of a mountain. It had rained and the road was slippery, and he was killed in the accident. It was during a plane strike, so, it took us days to get back to New Jersey from Alameda, Colorado.

Then, my mom, who was only fifty-five, went back to teaching after that, taught until she was in her early seventies. My Dad was already in his seventies by the time he died, but he was still working full-time.

SI: As you got further on in high school, did you ever do any part-time jobs or summer jobs?

DB: I started doing summer jobs right after high school. I worked at a telephone answering service. It was one of these operations that had a switchboard, where you would answer for doctors' offices or insurance agents and that sort of thing, where you would plug the hole and answer the phone with a headset. So, I did that for a couple summers. I also worked for the R. R. Bowker Company, which is a publishing company that publishes for the publishing industry, basically. They publish a lot of reference books. They issue a magazine called *Publishers Weekly*, where they review new books coming up. I had a freelance editing job working on *The Literary Marketplace*, which updates contact information on publishers throughout the world. I'm sure it's all online now, but, at the time, it was all paper. We would have to mail the slip describing them from the past version and ask them to update it and send it back to us. Then, we'd have to edit the documents and get it to the Bowker Company, but I did that for a few summers as well.

SI: It sounds like your family really encouraged the kids to go further in their education. I assume it was a foregone conclusion that you would go to college.

DB: Yes, I think it was always expected. I don't think anybody bucked doing that. Actually, I think my brother went to college for two years, and then, took a break, because he wasn't sure what he wanted to really do. A friend of my dad's, who was a scientist, worked at Lederle Laboratory, which became part of American Cyanamid, eventually. Pete worked there, I think

for two years, and then, went back to college and finished, and then, went and got his master's degree at Stevens Institute.

Fran went right through college after high school, as did I. Education was important. Many in my mom's family taught, including her, her sister and her brother. Her sister became a supervisor at Ramapo High School in Wyckoff and, in fact, was hired before the school opened to hire the other teachers. She got her master's in economics from Columbia, in the 1950s. That was kind of unusual for a woman at that time.

She taught, my mother taught and their brother taught math at Clifton High School. My brother's son taught physics at what was then called Newark College of Engineering and his sister taught music and elementary school. So, that whole family were teachers. My dad had taught. Of course, he had put a lot of effort into working his way to put himself through college and graduate school. So, yes, it was really important. I think it was always expected that we were just going to go on through college.

My dad would say to me, in terms of playing the piano--he did not play an instrument himself, but he really loved music--he said, "You should memorize that piece so well that if you woke up in the middle of the night, you could go sit down at the piano and play it." So, he was pretty forceful about doing well and doing your best, "Don't waste your time--you should read a good book instead of wasting your time," was a common comment from him. So, yes, a bit different from what some parents may feel right now. They might say, "That's too much pressure. We can't put that much pressure on kids."

SI: Before we talk about college, your high school was named Eastern Christian.

DB: Eastern Christian High School, yes.

SI: Was it a religious school?

DB: Yes. Well, it's part of the Eastern Christian School Association, which is part of the National Christian School Association, which is supported by the Christian Reformed Church of America. Christian Reformed Church is a break-off of the Reformed Church. You know we have the Reformed Church Seminary in New Brunswick. There's another one in Holland, Michigan, at Hope College, connected with Hope College.

So, they founded this Christian School Association that included elementary schools in a couple of different areas, Paterson, Prospect Park, Passaic. Then, there was a common junior high school in Prospect Park, and then, a senior high school in North Haledon. They still all exist. It was religious in the sense that we had to take a class like "Reformed Doctrine" and other religious classes. Teachers had to verify that they were Christian in the Reformed tradition.

SI: When it came time for college, what went into your search process? What were you looking for at that point?

DB: I need to give you some background on what went into my thinking about college choice. My dad had translated a book from the Dutch on creation and evolution. For the majority of people in the Christian Reformed Church, the Earth was four thousand years old and you didn't talk about evolution--it was heresy. He served on the Calvin College board in Michigan where he had gone to college.

After that book came out, people wanted to get him off the board because, they said, "We don't want somebody who believes in evolution on the board." I think he fought that for a while, but he stepped down from the board at some point. We all thought the way he was treated was awful and that people should be more enlightened.

He would talk about that, sometimes, at the dinner table, about people who had beliefs not based on facts and the Bible was not a science textbook, but included a lot of mythology. He was a very much a devout Christian, but he believed there was a lot of storytelling in the Bible to get the point across and one shouldn't take it literally.

As a result of what happened to him, I had wanted to have nothing to do with Calvin College because I thought, "This is way too conservative. They didn't treat my father well." My sister did not go. In fact, when he knew she wanted to major in biology, he said, "You shouldn't go to Calvin College, because you won't get a good biology education there." So, she ended up going to Marietta College in Ohio.

I was not going to go, but, then, after my dad died, I said, "You know what? I'm going to go to Calvin College. I think my dad would've wanted that." I don't know why, I just sort of felt some obligation to go there. So, I went for two years. I met somebody whom I eventually married, whose father actually had been taught by my father at Calvin when he was a Calvin student. His father was a physician and he moved to California.

I married his son, Loren, but, while I was at Calvin, Loren graduated and went to Claremont Graduate School in California. Although we weren't married yet, I transferred and went to the University of Southern California, so that I could be near him and his family who were there. So, I went two years to Calvin, two years to USC.

One of the bright spots of having gone to Calvin is that I got to go on an interim course in Montpelier, France, which included about twenty other students. We spent about a week-and-a-half in Paris, and then, we spent about four or five weeks in Montpelier. That was a great trip and I learned a lot on that trip. That was a highlight, and after that I majored in French.

SI: Tell me a little bit about the student environment at Calvin. Was it very conservative?

DB: Yes, it was very conservative and we had lots of rules. Women had to be in for the night with curfew hours. We had a dean of women and a dean of men. There were no men allowed in women's dorms and there were no women allowed in men's dorms, but I think that was pretty typical of all colleges back then. I think most colleges had hours that at least women had to be in. Most of the students came from Christian backgrounds and had Dutch immigrants in their background as well.

There were some wild people, as there usually are. So, one of the people I met then, participated in some activities with, was Paul Schrader. Paul Schrader is a screenwriter. His first screenplay was *Taxi Driver* with Robert de Niro. When he came to Calvin—he grew up in Grand Rapids, his father had not allowed them to see movies until *The Sound of Music* [(1965)] came out. Then, he was allowed to see *The Sound of Music*. That was his first movie, but he became immersed in film, eventually went to the American Film Institute in California and got his master's degree.

He initiated a film series at Calvin. I got to see a whole Japanese film series and all kinds of other interesting films. That was great. We also had an underground newspaper that I got involved with called *The Spectacle*, that was more liberal and anti-doctrinal. That was the '60s and we were getting into more of the protest movement that was going on across the country at the time.

SI: Would you write for this paper or were you involved in other ways?

DB: Yes, I wrote, I think, for the fine arts publications. Another good friend of mine was the editor of a collection of poetry and artwork. I did a lot of editing and helped him put the whole thing together. I myself didn't write articles in it. Eventually, in graduate school, I got involved with a film journal, did a lot of translation of film criticism from French into English and helped do editing and put that magazine together, too.

That was probably some of my earlier involvement in editing, although I was a photographer for and helped edit my high school yearbook. I guess it was kind of logical that I would get involved in it, but I just knew the people at *The Spectacle* and would go to meetings when they'd talk about the next round of articles and the editorial stance that they were going to take on issues. We'd have discussions about it. I remember trying to get people to subscribe.

SI: Would you say that the activism you saw on that campus focused on a particular issue, like the war?

DB: The war was part of it. That was a big part of it, yes. '68 was the Democratic Convention, when all kind of riots broke out in Chicago. Some people went to political rallies and marches, and participated in other kinds of political activities.

[Editor's Note: The Democratic Convention of 1968, held from August 26th to 29th in Chicago, Illinois, became known for the thousands of protestors who took to the streets to protest the Vietnam War and the political status quo and the violent crackdown unleashed by the Chicago Police Department in response.]

SI: Did they have any kind of protests or marches on the campus there?

DB: Probably not. At that point, Calvin had two campuses. They had the original Downtown Grand Rapids campus called the Franklin Campus, but somebody had willed them a great, big

piece of property on the outskirts of the city and they built a new campus there, which was for freshmen and sophomores.

All the juniors and seniors were still on the old Franklin Campus. That's where Paul Schrader and *The Spectacle* and a lot of other activities were going on. I wasn't actually living there, so, I don't remember what kind of protests might've happened there. I just remember it when I was at USC.

The Calvin student body was a more staid group of people, because they came from Christian backgrounds. Some of the people I hung out with were a little more radical, but, also, included a good friend of mine with whom I had grown up and who also went to Calvin. She married a faculty member there who became a named chair at Notre Dame. He was George Marsden, whose field was the history of Protestantism in the United States. He was a very liberal, forward thinking person, too. He kind of advised this group of more radical students as well.

SI: I was curious--is there a tradition pacifism in this church or was this part of the *zeitgeist* of the 1960s?

DB: Yes. No, it's not. The Christian Reformed Church didn't encourage being pacifists, not like Quakers.

SI: At that time, was it a big shift for you when you went to college, thinking about these issues and developing your point of view?

DB: Probably, although in high school, we had a few teachers at the high school who were more into philosophy and more liberal-thinking trends than others. One of them started kind of a discussion group among the junior and senior students, of which I was a part.

So, given that and my father's more liberal tendencies, I would say Calvin seemed too conservative for me in most ways, other than that I kind of fell in with this group who were considered radical. By any other standards, they were probably pretty middle-of-the-road, but they seemed radical to the Calvin College community.

SI: Tell me about going out to Southern California. What was that like?

DB: Well, that was a big change, although I had been out there to visit my future husband and his family. They were also, of course, from the Christian Reformed Church, so, it was sort of like a continuation of that whole Dutch religious background that I had come from.

I never got used to living in Southern California. It just seemed like a totally different climate and culture. I was always a very social. I lived in the residence hall at USC. I had a roommate who was local--she was from Manhattan Beach, it's called, right outside of LA--and made some very good friends, people across the hall. Then, our senior year, we rented an apartment together near the campus.

I have to say, thinking now about my fiftieth reunion, it was a great school. I had great classes and I learned a lot there. I majored in French and minored in linguistics. I took some great journalism classes and really enjoyed the whole education there.

After graduation, because I moved away from Southern California and, after I got divorced, I really didn't go back there and I didn't visit the school again. Now, I feel like I'm reconnecting with it after all these years. However, I've never been back to Calvin and I never will. I've never given them money. They're too intolerant and think, "If you're not like me, if you don't think like me, then, you're not part of us."

Southern California, although a private school and more conservative than, say, UCLA, I was there during this protest time. There was an active SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) chapter there. There were Buddhist monks walking around with tambourines. We had the first Earth Day. There was this huge field that everybody left littered. I remember, "How can this be Earth Day? You should pick up after yourself." Earth Day was on my birthday.

[Editor's Note: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was a popular student activist movement during the mid to late 1960s that expanded on college campuses across the United States. They protested against racial discrimination, the Vietnam War, inequality in the United States and for women's rights, but, eventually, fractured off into various splinter groups that advocated their own interests, sometimes through violent means.]

It was an interesting experience. It was also my first time going to a school with a football team. As part of my student activity fee, I got tickets to go to all the football games for free. I had to sit in the student rooster section and we would flip cards to spell out cheers. We would get these cards under our seats.

Then, for years, I never went to football games again, because nothing ever seemed to measure up to how USC's team played at the time. [laughter] In any case, that was brand-new for me, marching over to the stadium from campus behind the band. The stadium is right near campus in Exposition Park.

I also spent a lot of time with my then husband-to-be and saw a many different areas of Southern California, including Santa Barbara, San Diego, Joshua Tree National Park, where I had to go for a geology class and project. I really appreciated my time there. It's just that I couldn't get used to living there.

It was also very smoggy at the time. When I was there, I couldn't see the mountains that, normally, you could have seen, because there was so much smog. We had to wait for the Santa Ana winds to come and blow the smog over to Riverside.

SI: Either at USC or Calvin, do any of the professor stand out in your memory as being particularly influential, or perhaps not good?

DB: I'm not going to remember all of their names, but yes. Some of them, of course, then, I had in graduate school, so, I don't want to confuse them. I had a French professor, René Bellé, who

was French, from La Sorbonne, who taught at USC. He taught literature. He was really excellent. Arthur Knodel, I remember, who taught French.

I can't remember the woman's name, but she taught linguistics. It was an eye-opener to me to find out about how people made distinctions in a very scientific way among dialects. For example, she would ask, "What do you call the time of day between when the sun is about to come up and when it's risen?" and, depending on where we are in the country, we would use a different word. She was just trying to show us an example of how linguists do analysis of language. She also taught philology, how language has changed over time. That was a big interest to me.

Joe Saltzman, who had produced a documentary called *Black on Black* (1968), about the Watts Riots of August 1965, I had him for Journalism 101. He was great, and turned out that he and Harvey Waterman, who was our Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Rutgers, were good friends. Harvey had gone to USC. For years they jointly wrote a column for the *LA Times* reviewing new records, classical music recordings.

I didn't know about that connection until years later. I found that out years later after I met Harvey Waterman. [Editor's Note: Harvey Waterman served as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Rutgers School of Graduate Studies for over forty years.]

I think journalism was one of the best courses I took, because it taught me to write quickly, accurately, and start with the most important points first. We would practice on news service articles, where we put the who, what, when, where, and why at the beginning, and the least important facts toward the end, because newspapers would cut articles to fit their papers from the end. He also taught about interviewing techniques. I remember distinctly his telling us, "Don't eat a salami sandwich while you're interviewing somebody," he said, "because it will end up on the interviewee instead of in your stomach." So, he was very entertaining but also very good.

Bill Cosby was teaching at the time at USC. I didn't have him for a class, but some of my friends did. He taught a communications class, in a building nearby one of my classes, and when I came out of the class, his chauffeur was waiting outside of the building for him. Next door to my dorm was the film studies building, which was a rickety, old, wooden building. Now, they have a huge new building that was financed by director Steven Spielberg and director George Lucas, who was a student when I was there. He had just produced *THX-1138*. We used to see celebrities go in and out of the building, but I didn't ever take a film class. My roommates did and they thought they were great, but, I had to take a lot of required classes.

I took a local history class and had to do a project in the area. Then, I took harpsichord lessons from Malcolm Hamilton, who was the harpsichordist for the LA Symphony, and he was very good. I really enjoyed him.

Robert Otten, who took us to France, was a French professor at Calvin College and was very good. Those were some of the more memorable people from whom I took classes.

[Editor's Note: Malcolm Hamilton taught piano and harpsichord at USC for thirty years. Robert Otten served as a professor of classical languages at Calvin College from 1952 to 1987.]

SI: You graduated in 1971. Then, it seems like there were a couple of years before you resumed your education in Ohio.

DB: No, I went directly there. I graduated in 1971, got married that summer. We had the reception, in fact, at my mother's house in Franklin Lakes, rented a U-Haul and took some leftover furniture that she and my aunt hadn't sold at some garage sale and went out to Athens, Ohio, and started graduate school. My husband had already finished his master's at Claremont, so, he started in a Ph.D. program while I started a master's program. We had applied to several graduate schools, but Ohio University was the one school where we could both go that offered us both teaching assistantships, so, we went to Athens, Ohio.

My mother had suggested I put off getting married when I first told her we were going to get married. She said, given her experience, "You can't depend on a man financially supporting you. You should have a career before you get married," which is not the usual advice young women got back then in the '60s, '70s, but I didn't listen to her and I got married. We went on to graduate school, and then, lived in Athens for about six years.

SI: Was there a particular scholar you were working under there?

DB: I got my master's in French and had several faculty members, one of whom I liked the best, Richard Danner, and also Bill Carter, who left to go to France one summer.

It was the summer of the Watergate Hearings [1973]. He doled out his furniture to various graduate students to take care of it while he was gone. We took a black and white TV and I got to watch the Watergate Hearings that summer. He taught a course on Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*. We read and discussed all all eight volumes of Proust's great work in one semester. That was a very interesting course. I liked that a lot.

Then, I went from my master's degree to a Ph.D. in comparative literature. I had several good faculty members then, one of whom was actually in the English Department, Stan Lindberg. He was the editor of *The Ohio Review*, which was a literary review. After initially teaching first year French and then first year composition for my teaching assistantship, I was able to work for with him to edit *The Ohio Review*. I really enjoyed not teaching and doing the editorial work instead, and he was a great mentor. I was also able to intern for a semester at the Ohio University Press, which helped me in my career, as I worked in all the departments and got to understand scholarly publishing.

My dissertation director was Ray Fitch. I finished all of my courses and had my oral exams, and then, I left to take a job in New York. I finally wrote my dissertation and went back and defended my dissertation a few years later.

SI: What was your dissertation on? What was your area of research?

DB: It was on contemporary French literary criticism and Russian Formalism. It was looking at fiction and suspense and novels through the eyes of Russian Formalism and French literary criticism, specifically Roland Barthes, who was a pretty influential literary critic from France at that time.

SI: How long did you teach there? How long did the TA-ship last?

DB: First, I had a TA-ship in French for two years. Then, I had a TA-ship during my doctoral studies for four years that included teaching, then the work on the *Ohio Review* and then the internship at the Ohio University Press, which was what led me to my first job in New York for the Association of American University Presses.

SI: What did you think of teaching? Did you enjoy it?

DB: I did, but I got too impatient with students who didn't understand. [laughter] I felt I didn't have the temperament. My mom was a very patient teacher. You need patience to be a teacher and that wasn't my strong suit. I would get upset when they faltered, and then, I would also get upset when I agonized over somebody's grade and it turned out they took it pass-fail so that I hadn't needed to spend all that time on it.

While I was a TA, we took TA training, which included classes in pedagogy, but my main reason for taking the TA-ship was to help finance my graduate education. I didn't do it because I loved teaching *per se*. The students seemed to like me. I kept them engaged, but I realized it wasn't something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

SI: Tell me a bit about coming to New York. Were you separated from your first husband then?

DB: No, we both came to New York. We were both looking for jobs. It was a hard time for Ph.D. in literature to find a tenure-track faculty job. He had a Ph.D. in American literature and he'd been offered a one-year, non-tenure-track position someplace in Iowa.

However, I'd had enough of being in the Midwest and I was an East Coast person. I thought there would be many more opportunities in the New York/New Jersey area, because there are lots of colleges and other opportunities. So, he started off getting a few jobs at various places, teaching at St. Peter's College, Fairleigh-Dickinson, for example. So, we moved to Rutherford, which is where he was teaching, and I commuted into New York.

We did that for a couple of years. Then, since we had both done this work for the R. R. Bowker Company several years earlier, he ended up getting a job at the Princeton University Press. Then, we moved to Highland Park and lived there for many years, and he ended up going into publishing. I ended up in publishing for a while, and then, going into academic administration.

SI: Tell me a little bit about that first job with the American Association of University Presses.

DB: It was an association of seventy-six university presses, which are separate, freestanding publishers of academic work, like the Rutgers University Press, which was one of the member

presses, as well as Harvard, MIT, Texas, LSU--all the universities that had university presses were members there.

My job, since this was an association, not a publishing house, was to manage workshops and training and bring people together who were either in marketing, editorial or dealt with copyright issues. I worked with a woman who managed their annual meetings and training workshops and regional meetings. It was a lot of administrative work, but I got to meet a lot of interesting people, including the board of directors of the association with whom I would meet. That was fun.

I would commute into New York, walk across 33rd Avenue and the office was at 1 Park Avenue at 33rd. Then, I'd walk back and take the train back and go to Rutherford. When we moved to Highland Park, I would take the train from New Brunswick into New York. I was only there a couple of years, three years, something like that.

It was through that job that I met Irving Louis Horowitz, who then hired me at Transaction Press, which was located at Rutgers. He was the main speaker at the dinner of our annual meeting. I figured I was in Highland Park and, instead of commuting into New York, I could work directly in publishing in my backyard, practically. It was at the Livingston Campus.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Irving L. Horowitz (1929-2012) served as the Hannah Arendt Distinguished University Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University, Chair and Editorial Director of Transaction, which he founded while a faculty member at Washington University in St. Louis, and Chair of the Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy. He joined the Livingston College Sociology Department in 1969 and retired in 1992.]

SI: Tell me a little bit about that institution and what it was like.

DB: Irving Louis Horowitz was a distinguished professor, Hannah Arendt Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers, who had brought with him (when he was hired from Washington University) *Society* Magazine, of which he was the editor-founder-publisher. It was a social science magazine with a wide circulation that covered a wide range of topics. He then established a book publishing division and a journals publishing division.

In addition to *Society*, there were one or two other journals that were published there, but, then, we took on the order fulfillment for about thirty other journals. I was in the books division. I was made marketing and general manager. So, I oversaw the staff and developed marketing plans for new forthcoming books. I was there for three years.

I met Judy Waterman there, who is Harvey Waterman's wife. She was in production and design. I got to know Harvey, and then, eventually, through Harvey, I found out about the job in the Provost's Office at Rutgers and ended up going there.

SI: While you were with Transaction, was it independent of the University?

DB: Well, it was complicated. Transaction occupied the former officers' headquarters on the Livingston Campus. The building is still there, Building 4051. I think that eventually housed the telephone office or the computer store. It's across from the daycare center.

Irving was a faculty member, and then, he managed this whole other activity that he developed and brought there, but it was not part of Rutgers. The employees were not considered Rutgers employees. Ed Bloustein just sort of allowed him to have this extra space for his publishing enterprise. The relations of Transaction to the University was very strange. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Dr. Edward J. Bloustein served as Rutgers University President from 1971 until his death in 1989.]

Sometimes, if there were customer service issues, they would write to the President's Office and say, "I never got my royalties on my book," or "I did not get my order." There was a bit of a conflict and a confusion about the difference between Transaction and the Rutgers University Press did. There was a constant need to explain, "No, it's a different organization." I can't imagine that kind of loose relationship happening now, because he was using the space at the University for it. I guess Ed just felt, "This will keep him here at the University. He's a well-known professor," and he was a very prolific publisher.

He, in fact, was instrumental in getting me to finish my dissertation. He encouraged me to finish by saying, "You're a good Calvinist." He was Jewish, so, we used to talk about Jewish guilt and Calvinist guilt. He said, "You have Calvinist guilt--you should go back and finish your dissertation." So, in fact, while I was working there full-time, I did finish it. He had several graduate students, and was instrumental in getting them to finish their dissertations.

SI: What did you find most interesting about that position?

DB: I learned about more entrepreneurial thinking, because he was a real entrepreneur. I used to meet authors. In fact, I met former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in his office. He was one of the authors. He had some interesting political friends, but he was very entrepreneurial and made me more so, because I hadn't really thought about getting my degree in comparative literature.

Well, I did think, "What am I going to do with this?" but I hadn't thought about being entrepreneurial in what I did. I was always more academically focused. He said, "Well, this is all important academic work, but you have to be able to meet the bottom line. You have to be able to sell something people want and figure out what it's going to cost you to publish the book." So, I really learned a lot more about business skills and about being entrepreneurial and thinking about how to keep an organization afloat financially that, otherwise, might not make it.

In the case of a lot of university presses, they get subventions from their universities that allow them to publish monographs that may only sell a few hundred copies, but he couldn't afford that at Transaction. We had to make money, which is one of the reasons he took on order fulfillment for other journals, because, that was direct income we would get for providing the service. Those were important skills that I learned there.

SI: Tell me a little bit about making the transition to the Provost's Office. What was the job that you initially went for and what did it entail?

DB: The first job I applied for was called Executive Assistant to the Provost. I had been out on a two-month maternity leave after my first son was born, and Irving was getting impatient and pressuring me about returning soon.

Irving was a very difficult person to work for, so I was interested to see if there were some other kind of a position at the University for which I would be suited that might be a little more palatable than what I was doing. When I was visiting Judy Waterman, with whom I worked, I asked her husband Harvey if he knew of any positions. Harvey said to me, "Well, there's this thing called the green sheet." Years ago, job postings were on green sheets or yellow sheets. Yellow sheets contained the union jobs, green sheets contained the professional-managerial jobs, and on that particular green sheet was this position of Executive Assistant to the Provost. So, I said, "Okay, I'll apply for it."

When I applied for it, I was given an interview. I was told that there had been over a hundred applicants. They'd interviewed many people, but they hadn't found the person they wanted to hire. When they met me, they said, "We really want somebody who has a Ph.D., but who's really an administrator." So, I went to the front of the line, as it were. When Kenneth Wheeler, who was then Provost, heard that I'd been working with Irving Horowitz, he said, "If you can work for Irving Horowitz, you can surely work for me, because he's a difficult person."

[Editor's Note: The first Office of the Provost was established in 1949. In 1962, the title changed to Provost and Vice-President. In the early 1970s, the Provost and Vice-President position was abolished and Provosts were appointed to lead the New Brunswick, Newark and Camden Campuses. Dr. Kenneth Wheeler became the first New Brunswick Provost in July 1972.]

That was my first job in university administration. I stayed in that office for thirteen years, and then, I went to the Bloustein School for my other twenty-five years. I stayed in those two areas the whole time, although the Provost's Office changed over time. Kenneth left to become Vice President for Academic Affairs, and a new Provost was appointed—Paul Leath, who had been Associate Provost for the Sciences. I got promoted to higher jobs over my time in that office—to Assistant Provost, then Associate Provost.

SI: Tell me a little bit more about that initial job working under Ken Wheeler. What did the job entail again, but, also, what did you think of Wheeler and how the office was run?

DB: I came to that position right after Ed Bloustein had consolidated all of the faculties in a massive reorganization of the New Brunswick Campus. There had been several colleges that each had its own faculty. For example, there were four or five different history departments in the different colleges.

I don't know if it was true or not, but there was a story that four or five different history professors from the different colleges at Rutgers were all on the same plane going to interview the same candidate for their individual departments. Ed Bloustein used that as an example of

why Rutgers needed one history department. I don't know if he made that up or not, but maybe something close to that happened.

Kenneth Wheeler had been put in charge of implementing that whole reorganization. Although I had known nothing about this when I first got there, I got deeply immersed in what had happened with the reorganization. For many years after that, there was kind of fallout from it, including office and classroom space issues--how faculty felt about their department's space versus other departments' spaces--and how to consolidate student affairs-related areas.

[Editor's Note: In an effort to transform Rutgers into a leading public research institution, in 1981, the University merged the faculties of the independent colleges into a single centralized unit, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). Despite the reorganization and the increasing power of the central administration, Rutgers College, Douglass College, University College, Livingston College and Cook College continued to exist until 2006, when the liberal arts colleges merged into the School of Arts and Sciences and Cook College became the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.]

There had been someone in my position when I first started there, Virginia Lussier. She was leaving and showing me how to do my job. My job initially was to handle a lot of the communications for the Provost, including assigning incoming mail (this was before email) to the four other Associate Provosts—Jean Parrish, Associate Provost for humanities and arts, Paul Leath, Associate Provost for sciences, Bob Pack, Associate Provost for personnel, and John Salapatas, Associate Provost for business space/finance. Kenneth wanted them to prepare responses for him, and then, we would discuss them.

We'd have weekly staff meetings. I helped to organize several committees and other governing bodies. There was a Council of Deans. All the deans on the New Brunswick Campus reported to the Provost. We'd have weekly meetings—sometimes monthly meetings—and I'd have to prepare the agendas by making sure that issues were put on the agendas for discussion.

Kenneth also hosted a lot of people at his house for dinners to try to bring them together. He would try to get various faculty to meet each other, because they had all been in different colleges. These social events were not for people in the same field, but he creatively used non-academic interests that people might have in common, such as birdwatching, and invite that group who otherwise would not have met. I worked with his secretary, to get these groups together and compile biographical information on everybody so that he could be a good conversationalist. I oversaw some of that.

I helped hire the secretarial staff. We bought our first display writer computers when I was there, so, I helped with getting IT support for the installation of these machines. Eventually, I took on more responsibilities over the years. When Kenneth was appointed by Ed Bloustein to move to Old Queens to become his Academic Vice President, Paul Leath, who had been the Associate Provost for the Sciences, became Provost. He promoted me to Assistant Provost maybe Associate Provost, and I initiated a faculty newsletter for the New Brunswick Campus. There'd never been one.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Paul L. Leath, Professor of Physics, first came to Rutgers in 1967. He served as Associate Provost for the Sciences from 1978 to 1987 and Provost of the New Brunswick Campus from 1987 to 1992.]

Paul was a leader who viewed the New Brunswick Campus as the flagship campus of Rutgers. When Ed Bloustein passed away, Fran Lawrence became President. He deemphasized the roles of the different campuses in favor of a “one university” theme. He did not allow the New Brunswick Campus to be called “flagship,” and eventually he asked Paul Leath to step down. Joe Potenza, who had been an Associate Provost under Paul, then became Provost.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Francis L. Lawrence served as Rutgers University President from 1990 to 2002. Dr. Joseph A. Potenza, Professor of Chemistry, first came to Rutgers in 1968. He served as Provost of the New Brunswick Campus when the office was abolished in 1996.]

The faculty verbally protested Fran Lawrence and his administration in 1995 and 1996. Lawrence apparently blamed the Provost for not preventing this criticism and eliminated the entire office. I was notified around Memorial Day that my job would end in a month on July 1st, which wasn't expected--there was no warning about this. The people who were tenured faculty could go back to their departments, but the staff had to find other employment--except for two people who went then to work in the central administration—Karen Stubaas and John Salapatas.

Over my time there, there were three different Provosts with whom I worked and I took on more and more responsibility. We also hired someone to handle coordination of all of the peer external reviews of graduate program that had been initiated under Executive Vice President Alec Pond.

Alec Pond had been Vice President and had advised Ed Bloustein that the only way we were going to get into the Association of American Universities was to make sure that our graduate programs were of top quality. The idea for these reviews came from Mathematics Professor Danny Gorenstein. In fact, the first university committee that oversaw these reviews, the CSPAD Committee (Committee on Standards and Priorities of Academic Development) was familiarly called “The Gorenstein Committee.” We brought in these external reviewers who would rank our programs among all the programs in the country and recommend what was needed to improve. That was the way we strengthened many of the programs and got into the AAU. I oversaw some of that process for the external review teams who would come in. I helped oversee how recommendations from external reviews were implemented in the various departments.

[Editor's Note: Dr. T. Alexander Pond served as Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer under Rutgers President Dr. Edward Bloustein from 1982 until Dr. Bloustein's death in 1989, when he took over as Acting President. In 1990, he was appointed University Professor in the Physics Department and retired in 1997. Dr. Daniel Gorenstein joined the Rutgers Department of Mathematics in New Brunswick in 1969 and was the Jacqueline B. Lewis Professor of Mathematics at Rutgers University and the founding director of the Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science, a National Science Foundation at Rutgers, at the time of his death in 1992. In the 1980s, Dr. Gorenstein chaired a faculty task

force that dealt with the issue of evaluating graduate and professional programs, a committee that evolved into the Committee on Standards and Priorities in Academic Development (CSPAD).]

SI: I was going to suggest we pause here. We will pick up with that next time, but I also want to ask about those years under those three Provosts.

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

Reviewed by Zach Batista 11/22/2021

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/17/2021

Reviewed by Dorothea Berkhout 2/4/2022