

**University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives
Vietnam-era and 1960s Oral History Project**

**Interviewee: Joseph Rank, 1968 Alumnus, Longtime Champaign-Urbana Resident, and
University Employee**

Interviewer: Spenser Bailey, Student Life and Culture Archives

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Method: In-Person, Urbana, IL

Length: 4:35:42¹

Spenser Bailey: All right, so let's begin. So this is an oral history interview for the University of Illinois Archives. My name is Spenser Bailey. I am an archives research assistant here. I am speaking today with Mr. Joe Rank, who is a university alumnus and longtime resident of Champaign-Urbana. The date today is July 16th, 2024. We are at the University Archives on the U of I campus. And we are speaking in person today and making this recording and Mr. Rank, first of all, thank you very much for your time. It's great to meet you and have you here at the Archives and if at any time you want to take a break or anything, just let me know and we can pause or do whatever we need to do and then go from there.

Joseph Rank: My pleasure.

SB: Great. So I will begin then and say first of all, Sir, thank you again. And could you tell me your full name and about when you were born?

JR: My name is Joseph Rank, R-A-N-K, go by Joe. I was born in Moline, IL on June 19th, 1947. Juneteenth Day, but we didn't celebrate that until much later so.

SB: Good way to remember it though perhaps. And you know what was life like growing up for you? Do you have brothers and sisters?

JR: I'm an only child. My parents, both World War 2 veterans, my dad was an army Sergeant, my mother was a Navy Petty Officer. Yeoman. They married, they settled in my dad's hometown of Moline, IL. And my dad worked for Sherwin-Williams Company, the paint company as a regional salesman. And, in 1952, he was offered a managership of, you know, one of the regional paint stores. And he had a choice of a number of places. Iowa, Eau Claire, WI, Kokomo IN. And he chose Champaign, IL. And I think that was a defining moment in my life because everything that's happened to me since somehow relates back to Champaign and the university. There was a housing shortage, of course, after World War 2. And so, when we moved to Champaign, we spent two nights in the old Inman Hotel in downtown Champaign, which has now been renovated as

¹ **Transcriber's Note:** This transcription was originally created by Microsoft Word's AI transcription tool, and then was edited for clarity and fidelity to the recording. Some "filler" words – "Um," "Mm hm," and others – were not included in this transcription. Additionally, repeated words and phrases were removed when possible. I endeavored to write a transcription as faithful as possible to the conversation between interviewer and interviewee. That said, there may be some errors, so anyone considering citing any part of this interview is encouraged to listen to the relevant part of the conversation and make their own determination of what was said.

apartments. Before moving to an apartment on Euclid St. right on campus, block from the Armory, two blocks from Memorial Stadium.

So, my exposure to the university was very, very early on. We lived right next to the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity house and weekend nights were noisy. I remember that. And the, at homecoming time, the homecoming decoration contest, all the fraternities and sororities went all out and built elaborate functioning displays, the homecoming displays and that was quite a thing. My dad would take me down to watch the Marching Illini rehearse. Stadium at the time the doors were open and we would go down and climb up the ramps up to the upper decks. It was, you know, it was, better than a playground.

And our neighbor downstairs was a army captain, taught ROTC at the University of Illinois. He had been a World War 2 veteran. He'd served on MacArthur's staff in Australia, has some interesting stories, but, I would go over with him to the Armory. So that was my exposure to the Armory, early on. And of course, the deck was a cinder deck. They had howitzers and tanks. All kinds of interesting gear to play on. And so that that had a lasting impression on me. I remember the during the year, the homecoming dance was over at what was then called Huff Gym. And I believe the Count Basie Orchestra was playing. And so, Dad, we didn't have tickets to it, obviously, but we went over and sat on the steps and listened Count Basie. So my association with the university is almost from earliest memory.

SB: You grew up right there on campus, if I may ask, do you know what made your dad decide to pick Champaign over the other locations?

JR: Well, I think I think my dad recognized this was a this was a college town and there were a lot of opportunities here. As opposed to a, you know, blue collar factory town and. I think the presence of the university probably influenced him very much to come here.

SB: And when you said you mentioned you would go and see the Marching Illini practice, that was, they would practice in the stadium itself in those days?

JR: No, they practice, well, they, over the years they've moved all over the place. But as I recall, at time they practiced where the education building is now. That was one of their early practice fields.

SB: So that would have been before that was built, of course. So that would just have been an open field at the time.

JR: There were a lot of open fields at the time.

SB: Now you have to go pretty far south to find them. It's been built up. And what was it like, if I may ask, you know, living like on campus and, you know, of a lot of families do that these days. Was it more common back then? Because of the housing shortage?

JR: Yeah, I suspect I suspect the reason we lived there was because there was availability of an apartment and we had a contract on a home that was built out in the Fairlawn subdivision.

Pennsylvania Ave. East Pennsylvania Ave. And, you know, tracked homes and the, in the middle of a cornfield. Pennsylvania Ave. between Vine Street and Anderson was a dirt road. And to get to the subdivision, you had to go on Washington Street and Urbana to Anderson, to there was nothing, nothing east of us, when our house was built.

SB: Just fields?

JR: Just fields. And of course, that, that that grew up, not a tree in sight, but people were glad to have homes and the and you look now at Champaign, Urbana and you see the lovely subdivisions you know, southwest Champaign. You know back then the professionals, you know, dentists, doctors, professors, lived in these little 3 bedroom prefab homes and that was the standard of living back at that time and people were glad to have it. I remember going to kindergarten and we carpoled with my classmate Nancy Peltason, whose father was a grad student at the time, political science grad student, and of course, he went on to be a chancellor of the university.

SB: I was going to say, Peltason, that rings a bell.

JR: So, my playmates, you know, by and large, were children of faculty members, professors and deans and support staff so, life was very much focused around the University of Illinois. I mean, that was the, Champaign-Urbana was very conservative at the time. There was very little diversity at the time, the international students that were here were by and large grad students, and they didn't bring their families. So that's something that's really, really changed. Champaign-Urbana was segregated, of course, living where I lived, early on we weren't aware of it. I mean, that's just the way life was. And there was very little interaction among them. Among the races.

So, I went to parochial grade school, St. Mary's Grade School. It was torn down, I think, in 1978. But I went there through 8th grade. It was on Park Street in Champaign, now a parking lot for the OSF hospital. It was staffed by Dominican nuns from Wisconsin. And very much classical education the four R's: reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. The stereotype of nuns is ruler-toting disciplinarians, that wasn't my experience. They were very caring. The Dominican Order was known for their scholarship. They ran colleges and every summer, various orders of nuns would come to campus to work on master's degrees or advanced degrees. And they rented sorority houses along Wright Street. And so that was quite an odd picture, seeing nuns coming out of the Pi Phi house and Kappa Alpha Theta and that in the summer.

SB: So it was a sorority women during the year and the Dominican sisters in summer?

JR: Well, Dominicans and Benedictines and you know the all the teaching orders would come and the campus was, Wright Street looked like a giant convent during the summer.

SB: We've got to find a picture of that.

JR: Oh, there, there are pictures, I think in the *Illio* a couple of nuns coming out of the Kappa Alpha Theta house.

SB: I'll have to scan that and send it to the good sisters of Kappa Alpha Theta. Here's the here's what your house, your house has had a lot of history.

JR: You know, a lot of grade school memories. It was an interesting experience, we had an old school bus that made 3 routes and it would start out in the morning, very early in the morning and pick up the people farthest from the school. And then we were the first home in the afternoon. But I can remember, you know, being picked up at 6:50 in the morning and then getting to the playground and waiting in the frigid cold until the doors opened, you know, at a quarter to 8. But we were the first home in the afternoon, so that was good.

SB: Well, that would, that would give you the more time to do your homework and then go and play in the afternoon. So you'd probably rather have that than the morning.

JR: That's right. But so I guess maybe I've always been an early morning person and I guess that was the way it was. Then, of course, the boys from 4th grade on were all altar servers, altar boys. Of course, we lived in Urbana at Saint Patrick's and St. Mary's was about a mile away, so. We get up in the morning on days we served mass and my dad would drop us off at the church, and then we'd walk, you know, the mile. And go up to University Ave. and walk along University Ave. to, you know, Wright St. and that's about where the school was. And at the time, there was no Beckman Center. There was, you know, none of the hotels and stuff on University Ave., was mostly residential, boarding houses, a lot of students lived in boarding houses at the time. So Illinois Field was right by the school.

SB: That was going to be my next question. So that was still there at that point?

JR: Oh yeah, then and that's where, you know, Illinois baseball team played and I remember my grandfather coming to visit and we, you know, we went to, we went to Illinois baseball games. And sat in the wooden bleachers it was a pretty rustic baseball field.

SB: Was it nice to see a ball game there?

JR: Of course it was. You know, there were a lot of a lot of things at the university that we did, you know, through grade school and high school. Going to baseball games. My dad had season tickets to the basketball games in Huff Gym. Of course, Huff Gym only held about 5000 spectators, so the basketball season tickets were A tickets or B tickets, so you got every other game, you know, you didn't get all the games. And of course, the Assembly hall, now State Farm Center, opened when I was when I was in high school so that that changed. And we went to, we went to football games. That was an interesting thing. Men all wore coats and ties and fedora hats and, uh, Smoked. Everybody smoked.

SB: So everyone was smoking in the stands?

JR: Everybody's smoking in the stands, you know, you, you didn't realize how ubiquitous smoking was until it wasn't. You know, now you notice it, but back then, you know, people smoked in classrooms, but the professors had the, you know, in their offices, you know pipes, cigars, cigarettes. It was just all over the place.

SB: It's really something. Here at the archives, we have a lot of copies of university magazines, various publications, and the vast majority of them have a full page, full color cigarette advertisement right there on the back cover.

JR: Yeah.

SB: And you know, and that's not something that I was really aware of as much until I started working here in the archives. But I mean, I remember smoking sections and restaurants in Illinois. It wasn't nearly as ubiquitous as it was when you were young, of course, but it was still less so.

JR: One of the things you could go back and go through the U of I, I mean the *Daily Illini* online, and search "Smoking McKinley hospital." When they pulled the cigarette vending machines out of McKinley Health Center, which at the time was operated as a hospital too, there was a big to do about the, you know, you're taking away our rights. But they had smoking in in the hospital.

SB: If you know where to look in the main library, I mean, you may be aware of this, on the inside of one of the front doors that face the old undergrad. There's a sign about where you can and cannot smoke in the building, and it's been, it's faded, but it's very clear that the stone has been like washed, but that somebody marked out where the sign is and kept it there as a little time capsule.

JR: So we're still at, we're still at grade school and so, I think the first inclination, interest in politics was the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon race. And of course, Kennedy was the charismatic Catholic, and Nixon was the gaffe-prone Republican and, I don't know, of course, the partisan politics it wasn't vicious back then, well, know, by comparison.

I didn't know whether I was a Democrat or Republican at the time. I do know that, I remember the McCarthy hearings.

SB: That must have been when you were relatively young.

JR: I was young. I mean, it was on, it was on television and and radio and...

SB: They were televised, even then?

JR: Oh yeah. What a jerk he was. We all liked Eisenhower. Eisenhower was, you know, things, if you were middle-class white in the 50s, things were pretty, pretty good. And things were fairly prosperous. Well anyway, so 1960, our class, you know, we made a big deal because the Convention was going on, both Republican and Democratic Conventions. So we had miniature conventions. So I ran for class president. And I defeated Penny Patterson, Penny Patterson was the sociologist that taught Coco the gorilla how to talk.

SB: Really! And she was a classmate of yours?

JR: Yeah, she is a grade school classmate and she's famous. She was on Johnny Carson's show, you know, Google Penny Patterson. But so I that was my claim to fame, now she went on to show me.

SB: Were you an eighth grader at the time?

JR: I was an eighth grader.

SB: You were an eighth grader.

JR: Yeah, yes.

SB: You should write her a letter and just let her know.

JR: Let her know?

SB: Send her a reminder.

JR: "You've bested me. You've got a whole Wiki."

SB: Well, once I'm done interviewing you, I'll write one up for you.

JR: So anyway, I graduated from grade school, St. Mary's in 1961. The Urbana schools, junior high was 7, 8, and 9, the high school was 10, 11, 12 so I spent a year at Urbana Junior High School, the Saint Mary's people, the Champaign kids of course, went to Champaign. Urbana kids went to Urbana Junior High School. And so that was, that was my first experience in a bigger school, it was a great experience. Good teachers. Then we went on to Urbana High school. And at the time, Urbana High School was clearly a top-notch college prep class I mean.

The expectation was that the majority of its graduates would go on to higher education. I mean, we had some, we had the shop classes, auto mechanics and stuff like that, but clearly college prep. Now I could say, you know, most of my classmates were children of faculty members and staff and administrators.

SB: So there's still this involvement with the university is omnipresent.

JR: Right, right. The one of the best teachers I had was Gary Wehlage. He was a postdoc at U of I, teaching history at Urbana High School. He went on to be a distinguished professor at the University of Wisconsin.

But he taught history like I'd never, you know, heard history before, you talk concepts. His big deal was the, you know, the frontier hypothesis and the Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism concepts that, you know, you really don't think a high school kid, get, you know, high schools, dates and dates and names. So, that interesting that Gary Wehlage and that history year really explained to me much later when I was working at the Alumni Association on the,

working on history for the 150th anniversary university sesquicentennial, understanding the land grant concept, which was all part of that Manifest Destiny. You know, civilized the West.

So anyway, that was a really amazing course, although my interest at the time, I had a great junior high school science teacher and my high school chemistry teacher, Carolyn Conrad. Her husband, Doctor Conrad, was an eminent biochemistry professor at the university. And his research was on liver enzymes and that. And so anyway, during the summer between my junior and senior year of high school, my chemistry teacher Carolyn Conrad got me a job working as a lab assistant in her husband's lab. And that was quite an experience. It was in what's now Roger Adams Lab. But it was East Chem at the time. And so, I did that, so I decided that maybe I would be a chemistry major and so we can talk about that when we get to college. While I was in Urbana High School, I played in the band, and...

SB: How did you get into playing music, if I might ask, were your folks music people as well?

JR: No, the folks weren't music people. It's just when I got to, when I got to junior high school, all my peer group, they were in the band, so I figured I'll take that up. So that's one of those things that's stuck with me. I played in the Marching Illini, and then, after college, of course, didn't have any opportunity to play, and when, when my oldest son was in fifth grade and he started playing saxophone, I said, "You know, I've got some muscle memory," and so I played along with him and so when we moved back to Champaign-Urbana, I started playing in the summer band at U of I, which I still do. I'm not the oldest person in it, but I'm close to it. And then during the semesters, there are a couple of ensembles that are open to community members. And I've been doing that. So I've been doing that off and on for the last 30 years.

SB: So you had a bit of a hiatus when you were in the service, but picked it back up when you arrived back here.

JR: Picked it back up. So anyway, I looked back and we can, the big influences in my life, of course, the University of Illinois was pivotal in just about everything. But band, ROTC, pretty much those, the University, band, and ROTC, and that pretty much shaped what I do.

SB: If I might, oh, sorry...

JR: Go ahead.

SB: If I may ask, it's a more general question. Just cause I'm keen to just hear your perspective on, you know, I've lived here now for eight years, you know. And here you've got me beat by quite a few. But if I may ask, more generally, what was it like to grow up here as a as young man in the in the 50s, in the Eisenhower years and then the early 60s.

JR: The growing up here I mean, in school activities, the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, school, you know, school activities. Crystal Lake Pool in the summer time, you know, we would ride our bicycles. We were free range kids, there was no doubt about it. You rode your bicycle from, you know, Southeast Urbana, up across University Ave. which is US 150.

Today, I think parents would have a heart attack if they knew their nine or ten-year-old was on his own. You know, we go to the Crystal Lake swimming pool, come back, here was an A&W root beer stand at the corner of Broadway and University, now a coffee shop. For nickel, you'd get a root beer and the Little League in the summertime. There were activities that virtually everybody participated in. It was like the days when you had three television networks. And on Monday, everybody would talk about the last episode of Alfred Hitchcock presents or so on, so the culture was very homogeneous. OK, you didn't have 200 channels of cable television. You didn't have specialty magazines like you have today. And so the culture was very homogenous.

Kids of that era, I mean, you can interview 100 kids and many of them would tell you the very same things, you know, you know, Cub Scouts, band. Before sports on television, on Friday nights, townspeople would go to high school football games, you know, you get, Champaign-Urbana game, which was the big rivalry back then. 6000 people, you get as many people to high school football game back then, as you do a, you know a lot of the sporting events today. So that was, go back to the, I think because of the university and the professors that that went abroad for sabbaticals. We had a bigger world view than somebody growing up in Mattoon or you know. You're more aware of things. During my, grade school, high school we had the Cuban Missile Crisis, and I remember that was very scary. I mean, we took our cues from the parents who were, you know, clearly concerned.

SB: What do you remember about that specifically?

JR: Well, I mean, I remember, well, that was that was the height of the Cold War and the arms race, you know and the atomic testing, you know. You know, every other day there was, in Nevada, there was a, you know, a test. And then, of course, the Doomsday clock and all that, everybody was... I don't remember the duck and cover drills that they had. You know where you. nuclear blast, you're gonna get under your desk, like that's going to help you. There were some people in Urbana that built fallout shelters. I remember being envious of a neighbor down the street that had a fallout shelter that they used to. It was a place to play and until they needed it, you know. So you lived under the specter of, you know, the Russian bombers coming over. Of course, Chanute Air Force Base, 19 miles north of Urbana. Back then, the, it was still an active runway and you had the bombers, you know, taking off and landing and flew over. You know, you can hear the drones of the airplanes. And that was, you know, had our binoculars.

SB: And those would have been probably B-47s at the time?

JR: B-47s, there were, you know, B-36s.

SB: You saw a Peacemaker come through? That must have been really something with, what, 10 engines at that time?

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So anyway, that was, you know, you're very aware of, very aware of that. And then of course we, you know, we had our binoculars and we will watch for Russian bombers, you know, as if they make it this far without... The radio stations, they're two points

on your radio, AM radio dial, continental, CONELRAD, you know, in the case of an emergency, turn to 640 and 1240 or whatever...

SB: Because they would have been marked on every radio?

JR: Every radio, every radio they looked like little diamond shape things where you tune to. So, you lived under the specter of annihilation. It didn't keep us from having fun. But you know, yeah, that was always in the back of your mind. I remember in 1956, out of the blue, a young Hungarian girl shows up in our class, speaks very little English. But her parents had fled the Soviet invasion of Budapest with just what they had on there. And so, you know, there were families in Champaign that took them in, and she was only there for a short, you know, maybe the rest of the year. My perception of Russians and the Soviet Union through that experience, through, you know, the arms race, through the Cuban Missile Crisis, through my time in the Navy, and beyond, to this day is, don't trust them. They're not our friends, and there was a time when we wished they were, you know, the Gorbachev and glasnost.

SB: Through the 90s.

JR: Yeah, that was, you know, when the, fall of the Berlin Wall. But I mean, I think my feelings, you know towards Russia haven't changed. There's another thing that I remember from grade school, because it was the talk of the town, in the faculty circles and my friends' parents and stuff like that. There was a classics professor here, Revilo P. Oliver, are you familiar with that name? He was a Holocaust denier. He thought Roosevelt was a war criminal and should be tried for war crimes, was one of the founders of the John Birch Society, which was an ultra right group.

And, I didn't think about it then, I thought here's another kook, another McCarthy type. The interesting thing at the time, is the university was rooting out communists. You know, loyalty oaths and all that. So we can't hire any communist or socialist, but, boy, we can, we can sure keep a right-wing extremist.

SB: He was a, I don't want to say he was a character because that's not quite going far enough, but this he's come up in reference requests and I think his papers are over at the main location, such as they are.

JR: Yeah, yeah. He wrote for, I forget what the title of his the magazine or periodical that he wrote for. But it was, you know, very vitriolic.

SB: So growing up, you were aware of the Cold War.

JR: Oh, very much aware of the Cold War.

SB: But you said you took your cues from your folks?

JR: Well, folks, and friends' parents and friends. And, of course, you know, you go to school and then, whatever the parents were talking about that day, you know, they talked about, we talked about. Very aware. I can remember when President Stoddard was ousted from the university, vote

of no confidence, because of his support of Doctor Ivy and the fake cancer drug and all that. You know, I thought at the time, you know, I was probably 6 or 7, my folks said, "Well, I'm sure they're going to throw him out of the house," you know, Florida Ave. and I thought, you know, that's sort of cruel, you know, evicting this guy...

SB: Right over there.

JR: ... house. And I thought that was really cruel. But, you know, your perceptions as a kid, but I mean, we were very, very aware of the internal politics of the university and the, it's just the environment you grew up in.

SB: And had you, I don't think I've asked this yet. Had your folks attended college?

JR: No.

SB: No.

JR: Neither one, although my mother, when I started school, she started working at the university, and so she was, she had a number of support jobs. She worked in the College of Education and psych, key punching on the old IBM, you know, key punch cards. Then she went to what was then the College of Commerce and Business Administration, now Gies. Now she was, you know, one of the secretaries to the Dean. I remember going to the David Kinley Hall. Ironically, the entire administrative structure of the College of Commerce and Business Administration fit into one suite of offices on the second floor.

SB: Not like that anymore.

JR: So the university is basically. Each college, each department, each unit has almost replicated the administrative structure of the university. You got to have your own, you got to have your own finance people. You got to have your own building service workers. You must have your own this, you have to have your own that. Alumni relations fundraisers. It's bizarre, but anyway, it was pretty compact back then. So I know a lot of the professors that she worked with and then ultimately she wound up in continuing education. Back then, before Zoom, professors would go out to remote sites in the university to do evening classes and whatever. And so, she was the coordinator of all the schedules and the university had a fleet of small planes that would take, so she would arrange for the planes and the pilots and whatever to get to Galesburg and back and get to, you know, get to Rockford and back and she retired from that position. So she was associated with the university.

So, I go back, I'm trying to list all the roles I had at the university. I was a student. I was a student employee. I used to work registration at the Armory. I was a graduate. Was an assistant professor. We can get to that someday, you know, volunteer, Alumni Club. A donor, came back, as an administrator, you know, Alumni Association. Retiree, parent of four U of I grads. So I think I've had had about every role at university somebody can have.

SB: And now you're an interviewee about your experience.

JR: Yeah.

SB: You can add that one.

JR: So anyway, I think we finished high school.

SB: If I may ask, I ask this whenever I'm speaking with someone who was around at that time. Do you remember when Kennedy was shot?

JR: As a matter of fact, I was just going to get to that. I was a junior in English literature class. And it was, you know, about 6th hour, and Stan Hines was the instructor. Stan was a World War One vet. He'd been gassed with mustard gas in the trenches of World War I. You, know, was jaundiced from that, but he came in.

SB: Even after all that time, he was still...?

JR: Yeah, well, you know from 1917 to 1962 is like yesterday. [Laughs]

SB: Yeah. [Laughs]

JR: But he came in and he was in tears and he broke the news. And of course, that was over Thanksgiving weekend, as I recall, and so you know, it was very somber that whole weekend. You know we everything, black and white television. And yeah, that had a pretty profound effect on everybody. So ironically, when we moved back to town, and we bought a house in Urbana about two blocks from here. My oldest is a junior at Urbana and, so, it was parent-teacher conferences, and so we're in this classroom and I realize it's the very same classroom that I was in for the Kennedy assassination, now it's a history classroom, and he's got a timeline of American history on the wall. And so he's talking about our son, and then I looked up and it just dawned on me, you know? That was the thing. And, you know, I'm sitting here and I said, "You know, I was sitting right here when that happened." And he was maybe a first- or second-year teacher and said, "You know, you're interrupting me." I said, "You don't understand. You don't understand. Every one of those ticks on that timeline is one of those moments that everybody knows exactly where they were." And go back and World War One the guy that broke the news to us...

SB: Was there!

JR: And so once again, I think that's my, the Gary Wehlage approach to history, not dates and things, but concepts and things.

SB: You had also learned in that same school.

JR: In the same school. Well, we better get to college, huh?

SB: Perhaps so, but I'm sure, even if we need to speak again, which we might, because you've got so much, like I'm just thrilled to be hearing your perspective on this, you know, and my personal interests in history are the 20th century United States. So hearing your perspectives on things that you experienced when you were growing up. I'm just taking mental notes and thinking about, you know, how can I, how can I cite this in an article or something like that? Very interesting.

JR: This is unrelated to the conversation, but I have a real, I'm an amateur historian, OK? I wasn't trained as a historian, not really, but the 1930s US, I mean, I'm fixated on the 1930s because I think the parallels between the 30s, worldwide, and today are, you talk about history repeating itself or echoing it's incredible, just incredible.

SB: Yeah, we always find ourselves, you know, looking, looking back, you know, and we're speaking, if I'll just speak for the record that last weekend was the, someone took a shot at Donald Trump, which is first time in 40 years that...

JR: Right.

SB: ... someone who was president of the United States has been hit by a bullet, so it's.

JR: But the problem is that most people don't look back. They don't, they don't have that appreciation for trends.

SB: People live in the now, there's not as much, retrospection, perhaps? I don't know if that's the right word.

JR: Right. So anyway, that's off the topic.

SB: If I might ask, then, you know, when you were in a college preparatory curriculum at Urbana and you know, you had this involvement with the university. I don't know if many young men would have been as involved with the places you were young. You know, already at the Armory, you said playing on the howitzers and things. Was there an idea in your home that you would go to college?

JR: Oh, absolutely.

SB: It was expected.

JR: Absolutely. And it was, you know I'm going to go any place I can walk.

SB: You wanted to...

JR: I didn't apply to any place else.

SB: Only here at Illinois.

JR: Only here.

SB: Only here.

JR: And of course, you know, times have changed a lot. I mean, I had four kids, another generation and the university is a much more selective place and you have to have backup schools and we didn't have backup schools. I mean, it was if you graduated from a high school in Illinois and you had, you know, at the top half of your class, you got in. And then it was survival of the fittest. I mean, they fully expected that, you know, good number of people would drop out or flunk out. That was the constant. Now today, it's much different. As you know, they try not to admit anybody that, you know, doesn't have high probability of success. But, so, I wasn't worried about not getting in. I mean, I finished pretty high in the class, my high school class but I.

And then I started out as a, for one semester, as a James Scholar, but life intervened. [laughs]

SB: And when it came time to start, start at the university, first of all, what, when were you a freshman? What was your first year?

JR: 65.

SB: 65.

JR: So got to back up a little bit.

SB: Uh huh.

JR: The way the fraternities worked, back then, is... So in the early 60s, we didn't have PAR and FAR, the university relied on the fraternities to provide housing for undergraduate men, the, go to it, *in loco parentis*. Only seniors and married students could live in apartments, so there wasn't the proliferation of apartments you have now. So, so the fraternities were, I'd say, the predominant housing option for undergraduate men. So, in the spring of your senior year, they had formal rush, and so it was a weekend. You'd come down to campus and basically, you pick places you were interested in, then, you know, the whole matching process and so you knew where you were going to live.

SB: Uh huh.

JR: And of course, in high school, coming back with that pledge pin on was a big deal. I mean that was a big deal. And you're a big man on campus, if you have you, you pledged a fraternity.

SB: So you participated in that.

JR: Participated.

SB: What was that experience like going in for the weekend and meeting the brothers and things like that?

JR: Well, it was, I don't know, you just went from place to place to place, and it was a chemistry check. I guess in retrospect and then having participated on the other side, the some of the aspects of *Animal House*, you know, regarding pledging were, you know, they focused on the people that match their, their profile and so on. Townies were in big demand, even though you didn't necessarily live there first year, which I didn't. I lived at home my first year. Now, part of that was financial, townies were a big deal because townies could drive. Freshmen couldn't have automobiles on campus. And so, you know, all the houses would try to get three or four townies to provide the transportation needs.

SB: Because you could use your folks' car or keep a car at your folks' house.

JR: Sure. I had a car.

SB: You did.

JR: I had an old junker, anyway.

SB: It's a car. Did it have four wheels and it ran?

JR: Four wheels, yeah, three-speed on the column.

SB: Well, that's all you need.

JR: So anyway, that was how men, by and large, planned where they were going to live and back then, because only seniors and married students could live off campus or in apartments. The fraternities were really strong, I think. And that, you had diversity of, you know, age groups, so you had upperclassmen that, that, that provided a modicum of responsibility. You don't have that today, the way the current system works now, you, you come to campus and then you pledge and you're still in your housing contract, so you move in your sophomore year. By and large, they make you do that, and then you're off to an apartment after that. So, you you've got nothing but a bunch of sophomores and everybody knows that sophomore year is the dangerous year.

SB: Yeah. But in those days, most of the men would live in the house?

JR: Yeah, for, you know, three or four years.

SB: Mm-hmm.

JR: So the experience, you know, it was, Sunday nights, coat and tie dinner, you know candlelight, bring your dates. You look through the old *Illios* and you see the group pictures and everybody's got a blue blazer, gray flannel slacks, you know, striped necktie. And you see an occasional rebel has got a Madras sport coat on, you know? But it was it was very homogeneous, OK, things were conservative people, career aspirations for business, engineering. You know, in our, in our house anyway.

SB: And which fraternity did you join?

JR: Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

SB: SAE. Uh huh.

JR: We had our fraternity advisors. Fred Turner, the Dean of students, had been a national president of SAE, so he took a particular interest in us, so we didn't get away with as much as, as maybe some of them. And of course, Tommy Arkle Clark was ATO, and he had been a national president there, but so we had Fred Turner.

Paul VanArsdell, senior, was a professor in the College of Business. He was an advisor. Walt Keith, professor of landscape architecture. So we had some really good role models, you know, on the faculty.

SB: So the advisors would have been faculty who were members of the fraternity?

JR: Right. And then we had some civilian, non-university advisors too. They were the people that took care of, you know, took care of the finances and that.

SB: Would they also be local men who were alumni of the fraternity?

JR: Yeah. So anyway, one of our one of our advisors was Bub Barthelo and Bub Barthelo was a local real estate developer and he owned the Chances R, which was *the* bar on campus at that time.

SB: Where was it located?

JR: Well, it was located over on the. Chester St. Just west of 1st St. later became C St.

SB: Oh, and then collapsed a few years ago?

JR: Collapsed a few years ago. But that was the bar. And of course he, a lot of the fraternity brothers were employed there. We had a house band. Three of the four were SARs, The One Eyed Jacks, which was a very popular band here on campus. The lead singer in the One-Eyed Jacks, who was a fraternity brother of mine, Bud Carr went on to be the music producer for Oliver Stones. All the film credits for Oliver Stone movies, you know *JFK* and *Platoon*, and Bud Carr was the music director for that, so. They were a good band and that was the place to go on Friday night, Chances R was the place to go on Friday and Saturday nights, particularly when the One Eyed Jacks were playing there. But the bar scene was, the bar scene was just part of life. I don't think it is wild as it is today, once again I think we were fairly conservative, at least for a while.

KAMS, we went to KAMS.

SB: That was there by that point?

JR: Oh, KAMS had been around since the '40s.

SB: Oh, really?

JR: KAMS down on Daniel St.

SB: Yes.

JR: Oh, yeah, been around, 40s.

SB: And it was in that same location!

JR: Well...

SB: Or nearby?

JR: In the block. So there was Kammerer's Drug Store on the corner and that eventually became a Espresso Royale.

SB: That's right. Uh-huh.

JR: So Kammerer's, and so, KAMS was right next door and that was called originally Kammerer's Annex and it was diner during the day and it was a bar at night. So I mean, it's a place you go have lunch and or whatever. And that was through the 60s. And, further down was a bar, Stan Wallace's Gridiron. Stan Wallace was a football player in the 50s and he had a bar and that was a more upperclassman bar than KAMS.

SB: So a freshman might not go into Stan's, or not as much.

JR: Probably not. OK. KAMS was wide open. The Midway Cafe, which is Illini Inn now. That was close to the fraternity. So we spent time there.

SB: The SAE House was where they are now?

JR: 211 East Daniel. So, confession. I think one summer maybe between junior-senior year of high school, couple friends and I went to the Midway Cafe and we were down in the basement with our pitcher of beer and the place was raided. And, so anyway, the cops coming down the stairs in the basement, cop comes down the stairs, and of course I recognize him. He recognizes me as a friend of my dad's.

SB: Oh, no.

JR: He pointed to the three of us at the table and, "Get out of here." You know, I don't know if he ever told my dad or not.

SB: Maybe it's for the best you didn't.

JR: I was involved in a raid, while I was still in high school, which was, you know, once again the interaction with the University was pretty...

SB: It was there, so you went from seeing the Marching Illini as a little boy to almost getting busted by the police drinking beer at a campus bar when you were in high school.

JR: There was a, excuse me, an infamous raid at KAMS, this might have been 66, but it could have been 65. Illinois Secretary of State Paul Powell, Paul Powell was a political hack who had amassed quite a fortune. As Secretary of State, well, he had a police force that enforced driver's licenses. So Paul Powell, comes to campus, raids KAMS with his, rounds up a whole bunch of people, takes them out to Memorial Stadium. No, you know, no Miranda rights or anything like that.

SB: He personally on the raid?

JR: He, yeah, and his staff.

SB: Of course.

JR: And, you know, they're looking for phony ID's. And. This was one event, and I missed it by about 1/2 an hour, so I, once again fate. So this was an event he hadn't coordinated with Champagne-Urbana police. So the Champaign, Urbana police and University Police were irate, livid, you had the everybody on the right and the left, the civil liberties people and the, you know the law and order people, we're just livid about this this raid. Roger Ebert was the editor of the *Daily Illini* at the time, and he did expose. And Roger Ebert, by the way, went to Saint Mary's with me.

SB: Did he really?

JR: St. Mary's School.

SB: Did you know him?

JR: Oh, yeah, five years, five years ahead of me. He was an altar boy at Saint Patrick's. Yeah. So I knew Roger, and so we were in grade school together, but the way the high school worked, we weren't in high school together. Because he...

SB: Oh, he would have been a little ahead.

JR: Yeah. So anyway, Roger wrote an expose. But he found out the head of the Secretary of State Police force, a guy by name of Porky Porcaro.

SB: You can't make this up.

JR: Can't make it up. Was a felon. And so, you know, they uncovered this and so anyway, Paul Powell, he defends the guy, says, "Well, you know, I don't, I you know, I'm not going to judge the guy on his past. I was at his wedding last week and he was in the altar, before the altar, and I knew he'd made his peace with God." Da da da da. Well, Porcaro's other wife files bigamy charges when this comes out. I mean, it's just a great story. It's, you know, it's you could make an Animal House type movie out of it. So anyway, Paul Powell and he eventually died and he, when they went through his, he lived in a hotel in downtown Springfield, and they went through his room. He had, you know, thousands of dollars and crazy other stuff in shoe boxes in his apartment.

SB: That's Illinois politics for you.

JR: Illinois politics. So anyway, that's that. That was the big raid. Now you know, of course we had, the big deal on the fraternities and the sororities were dances. You know, formal dances. There were 3 tuxedo rental places on Green St.

SB: They must have done a booming business.

JR: Because you know, you have to rent a tux for these events. The pledge dances were the most politically incorrect things, you know, once again, it's the times and you can't you can't look at them through today's lenses. But they were, so the SAE's and the Phi Epsilon Pi, our houses were next to each other. Phi Epsilon Pi was a Jewish house and of course we, we were not a Jewish house, but, although if you look at the roster we were a Gentile house. OK, so, anyway, this was probably 1965, and we had a joint punch party with the PEPs. It was called the Gaza Strip.

SB: [Chuckles] Even then?

JR: Even well, this is before the '67 war. So, you know, got a dump truck full of sand and put, put it in the driveway between the house with strings and barbed wire. The Jewish boys come with their checkered tablecloths, and you know, they made burnouses. And the SAEs, they've got their yarmulkes...

SB: Oh, you changed places? [Laughs]

JR: Changed places. You know, that was, once again there was, there was so little diversity on campus that that wasn't, you know it was just a fact of life. The Kappa Sigs across the street from us, their pledge dance was based on the old television show *Hogan's Heroes*, which was about a prison camp stalag. So there's was Stalag 17 and so they, you know, they dressed as Nazi officers and the American pilots, ok? The..., it will come to me, house...

SB: If you tell me where you're thinking of, I might be able to recall it.

JR: It's a new house. I mean, relatively new house at Chalmers and 1st St, it's a southern fraternity.

SB: Pi Kappa Alpha?

JR: Pikes. Yeah, Pi Kappa Alpha, you're right. Pikes. Their formal was a Confederate ball and they were, you know, they rented Confederate officers costumes. The women all came with their hoop skirts, hoop skirts. Phi Gamma Delta had their Fiji island dance. That was their pledge dance and they came with not black face, but body paint, grass skirts, bones through their nose. Spears.

SB: Oh, man.

JR: Yeah, it was a different time and, you know, you look back and you and you say, "Oh, I'm glad I'm not in any of those pictures."

SB: It's remarkable, you know, it seems like there were more fraternities on campus at the time.

JR: Oh yeah, there were 57 of them.

SB: 57! Did they all have houses?

JR: Most of them, yeah.

SB: Most of them did.

JR: Yeah, some of them were major specific, the you, know Triangles were engineers, the Alpha Ro Chi were architecture and then, of course, you had Farmhouse and AGR and those. Yeah, our pledge dance, the SAE pledge dance was, and this was something throughout the whole fraternity, SAE around the country.

SB: Other chapters too, uh huh.

JR: Yeah, was an Irish wake, the Paddy Murphy dance. And so, you know, the story goes, Paddy Murphy's a brother who's, you know, visiting and dies. So they have a wake. You have a coffin and a dummy and we had rented a hearse and went picked up the dates at the various sororities.

SB: In the hearse?

JR: In that funeral [unintelligible]. You know the little flags on...

SB: Oh my goodness, all the all the guys with cars would, uh huh.

JR: Yeah, I mean, like I said, different time. Looking at the time, so talk about, I started out as a chemistry major. And really liked inorganic chemistry. And the, you know, had an instructor that that was, I admired. I thought he was a great guy and very personable. So, sophomore year is organic chemistry. And at the time, we had the open labs. You know, you could go in anytime you wanted to do your, you know, you had certain experiments you had to do. This is before designer drugs, so you don't have that anymore, but. You know, I was a, it's 4:30 in the afternoon, it's Miller Time and I, you know, first of all, I didn't like organic chemistry. And I

looked at the people who were classmates of mine. And they were very much more dedicated to, you know, they would, you know, that was their passion. And my passion was not there. So anyway, the, that was a rough semester for me. Yeah, I was sort of rudderless, I didn't know what I wanted to do.

SB: Was this also your first semester living on campus?

JR: It was, it was.

SB: What was, if I may ask, what was the transition like between living at home and coming to campus to actually living, you know, in your fraternity house?

JR: And I've lived it vicariously. I mean, I spent an awful lot of time there, you know, with, with my pledge brothers and fraternity brothers.

SB: Oh, even though you weren't sleeping there, you would frequently be at the house?

JR: Oh yeah, you would, you'd be there. You know, back then the social life on campus centered around whatever your housing unit was. I mean, so the fraternities had their dances and their outings and whatever. Sororities had the same, residence halls had intramurals so, you know unlike today, where you have 1000 registered student organizations. Your primary reference group back then was your housing because all your activities flowed through them. And there were, you know, there were a few honoraries and things that that sort of crossed, you know, that activities like Star Course and Interfraternity Council and those things, the *Illio*, the *Daily Illini*. Those were, other than the music groups, band, choirs, and whatever, Glee Club and ROTC, which we can talk about in a minute. Those were the only things that sort of, were umbrella things. Everything else was so, your housing, your choice of where you're going to live pretty much defined what you were going to do.

SB: Mm hm.

JR: So, you know, back to my major, I was, sort of, flailing around. I thought about teaching of chemistry. And, you know, I wasn't too excited about that. A couple of the fraternity brothers were advertising majors. And I sort of liked their lifestyle and they watched a lot of television and read a lot, and I was a writer. I mean I that was one thing I got from Saint Mary's and Urbana High School was, you know, taught writing and I could write. My grandfather was a newspaper man, so there was a little bit of that in my blood. And so I said, you know, I'll try this advertising. It's more of a other directed type, you know, outgoing personality as opposed to the introverts that were in chemistry, you know.

SB: Well, you're in college. It's the time to try different things.

JR: Yeah. So anyway, I switched to advertising and it was through the influence so. When I look, when I look back at my time in the fraternity, I mean, there's a lot of people that to this day that's still their primary connection to the university is their fraternity. You know that's their connection.

SB: When they'll think of campus, of their time at U of I, mostly be about the fraternity.

JR: Right. And when they come back, it's to visit fraternity brothers or whatever. And and, you know, my view on that was, it was a time in my life. It was a good time in my life. It influenced a couple of my major decisions, my ultimate major. My choice to go into Naval ROTC was influenced by fraternity brothers. So, you know, it served a role in my life and is that my primary connection or my in my primary circle friends are not people I was in fraternity with although, you know, I'm still friendly with a lot of them. When I enrolled in the university, it was the first or second class where ROTC had not been compulsory for undergraduate men. Undergraduate, freshman and sophomore.

SB: Mm hm.

JR: I mean ROTC was huge, it was, you know, and 4000 cadets filled the Armory.

SB: The Armory was the Armory at the time.

JR: Armory was all armed forces, so there was no there were no other departments in there at the time. So, you know by 1965, it became voluntary. Although the Vietnam War was picking up, and so...

SB: And people were aware of that heating up over there?

JR: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. A number of people said, "Hey, I'm going to, if I'm going to be, go to Vietnam someday I'm going to be an officer, not a, you know, not a ground pounder." And so, you know, a lot of a lot of people stayed with it. Even though it was optional, so I think they went from 4000, Army went from 4000 to 1000 you know.

SB: So, it went down, but it was still very popular.

JR: It was still a big deal. So, I chose not to. I chose not to do it. So I'll take my chances.

SB: So, you didn't join your first year?

JR: Did not.

SB: If I might ask also, you know, your father had been in the service in World War II...

JR: Right.

SB: ... and so had your mom...

JR: Yeah.

SB: ... well, it seems like almost at that time almost everyone's dad....

JR: Every role model you had in life, male role model, served in World War II. You know, it's your teachers, your coaches, your band directors. You know, even some of the clergy, you know, have been chaplains. And the draft was going on.

SB: There was still the draft? The draft was still going on.

JR: The draft was...and that was the other incentive to make a C average. Because if you failed to make, at the time that we were on a five point scale. If you failed to make a three point average you went on probation and you had one semester to get your cumulative grade point average above a three point, a C. And if a second semester you didn't make your probation, you were out. And so, probably 25% or more, of freshmen every year either failed or withdrew because they saw that it was, they didn't have it in them. So that was a big incentive to stay in good standing.

SB: Because once you're out of the university, your name was back in the draft pool.

JR: Right. And I'm not so sure that the administration of Fred Turner didn't notify the draft boards, you know.

SB: So Dean Wormer in *Animal House* and Fred Turner might have gotten along?

JR: Dean Wormer in *Animal House* and Fred Turner might have gotten along, yeah.

SB: You know, with your father having been in the service and all of your role models, you know was there there an expectation that that you and your friends who were men would also join up or were your folks more of the opinion of what we were in the service you know and you should do something else. Or was it a balance?

JR: There wasn't, there wasn't a push either way and just, you know, do whatever you want. So when I was a freshman, the Vietnam and the draft and the probation and all that sort of ways on you. Couple of fraternity brothers were in Naval ROTC. And of course, they were talking about how, you know, Naval ROTC you got an opportunity to, you know, serve aboard ship as opposed to living in country Vietnam in a tent. You know, there's more prestige, there's more opportunity, nicer uniforms. And so, so I looked into Naval ROTC. Well, my eyesight at the time was, didn't qualify. You had to have 20/20 vision. And you know, of course they were in a position they could, they could, they could dictate that because there are more people want to do it than. You know, followed around that, you know didn't do anything.

So my sophomore year, by this time, Tet Offensive in Vietnam. Big build up. And also we needed a lot more naval officers.

SB: So this was 66-67?

JR: Yeah, 66-67. So, they came up with a two-year program. And, in the meantime the eyesight standards, if you were correctable to 20-20, you, you know, and you weren't horribly blind, if

you're correctable to 20-20, you could go in. So, I applied. The summer between my sophomore and junior year, the Navy had three colleges, campuses where all these two-year students would go. I got sent to Purdue, so I spent that that summer at Purdue, taking all the classes that a freshman or sophomore would take, plus a good dosage of PT and and drill and stuff like that. So it was like boot camp, we had Marines yelling at us and and stuff like that. So, then I came back and now I'm in in naval ROTC. I'm a junior, junior year the curriculum is navigation and operation, so it's all the piloting and, you know, the celestial navigation. All this somehow just really turned me on. I mean that I've got something, I've got something to latch onto. This is really exciting stuff.

SB: You really liked it.

JR: I liked it, got into it and, so advertising, that's sort of, that's a means to a goal. OK, my goal is to graduate. Go to sea, now, I didn't know what it wanted to do after that. But anyway, got into, got into really got interested in that. Then the summer between my junior and senior year, you go on a cruise, they call it, so they send you out to sea. And so I spent part of the time on an old diesel submarine. I decided I didn't like diesel submarines.

SB: Was that 1968?

JR: 68.

SB: So they still had the old diesels from like World War II in service?

JR: Yeah. I decided I didn't like that and, it's good because they were phasing them out anyway and I didn't have the math background to apply for the nuclear propulsion program. So anyway, then spent time on a cargo ship, and just really enjoyed that. It was out of Norfolk and we went down to Guantanamo and first time I ever stepped foot in Florida was in Key West. Most people come from Georgia or Alabama, you know, but I...

SB: You took the more direct route to the fun part.

JR: Yeah, first time. So anyway, so that did that in 68. Was, boy, that was a year of reckoning.

SB: Joe, I'm gonna run and use the men's room. If that's alright, I'll pause.

JR: OK.

SB: Speaking for almost an hour, it's wonderful.

SB: Ok, I'm going to...

JR: So anyway, just a brief aside about my role in the Alumni Welcome Gallery. So I started at the University of Illinois Alumni Association in 1995 and was vice president there until 2011, when they generously offered to buy out. If I would retire early, to get the budget back in whack. And so I retired, but then they hired me back on a 40% basis, which happens a lot at the

university. And I worked on a number of history and traditions, things for the Alumni Magazine, and for the alumni center. And then, of course, the sesquicentennial comes up, and I do a lot of work on the sesquicentennial. So we started out to, initially wanted to do a little timeline at the alumni center, and we had a bunch of volunteer writers with different styles and different visions. And we said, you know, this can't be done with amateurs, we've got to hire somebody that that's got a, and I was only part time and so I could, you know, there's no way I could manage a project like that. So we identified Ryan Ross who you know.

SB: Mm hm.

JR: Ryan was a young archivist, history major, library science major. And so I hired him, and he's mini-me. And he took the ball and ran with it and I spent time here and in archives and online and everything else. Developing content that he could integrate and locating artifacts.

SB: So I've worked with, I wanted to mention this to you before I forget, I don't have time to speak about it today, but I one of my hats that I wear, I tried to emulate Ryan in a lot of my work with a student culture and he's helped me. I actually was in touch with him a couple weeks ago. I'm writing, among other things, Ellen and I are working on is getting the interface for our blog revamped so it's more user friendly and I've been writing blog posts in preparation for that, and I wrote one which you might be interested to see about when Kennedy visited here at 60.

JR: I was there!

SB: You were there?

JR: Yeah.

SB: Oh, we're going to come back to that. Oh, that's great. About when Kennedy was here in 60. We have a great sequence of photographs taken by somebody for the *Courier*, Bob McCandless.

JR: Oh, I knew Bob.

SB: I came across those photos in the Alumni Association photo file, which I processed. So I thought, "Well, this is a great thing to show off." But the blog post that I'm working on now is, you, because when we spoke on the phone previously, you mentioned you had an interest in Walter Short and Kimmel.

JR: Yes!

SB: Yeah, who is a 1901 alumnus, which you, which you probably know.

JR: Yes.

SB: And I'm writing about him. And there was another man who, who was also a U of I alumnus, who was one of the first, who was the first Illini to die in World War II, William Schick.

JR: Right, yeah.

SB: You're already beating me.

JR: Well, I did the research that found him.

SB: On the Gold Star Illini?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

SB: When my father was growing up in Chicago, William Schick's folks lived a few doors down from my dad's family...

JR: Wow.

SB: ... and my dad remembers, he remembers like helping them with groceries and things like that. I think they had other children, but they, you know, he remembers, you know, he told me this. I was a young man reading about history, you know, he mentioned this and he said that, you know, even after, so this would have been in the mid to late 60s. So that's 25 years after their son's passing. You know, they still had a prominent picture of him in his uniform. And he said their grief for their son was still quite noticeable, even to a young boy helping them out. And then when I started doing more reading, I came across this photo of his B-17 at Hickam Field. You know, and somehow, I came across that he was an Illini. And I thought I need to write a blog post about this.

JR: About this, well, one of the things that I'm involved in right now is, Naval ROTC has just established a Hall of Fame and the first inductee is a 1969 graduate who I knew very well. David Skibby was a second Lieutenant killed in Vietnam. Got the Navy Cross, which is the second highest award after the Medal of Honor. And so, Ryan and I are working on a display in the Welcome Gallery and the ROTC unit is having a reunion and induction. And so, anyway, that got me onto, there's another Illinois graduate, Kenneth Bailey, won the Medal of Honor. We're trying to get a replica Medal of Honor for the display. And the thought occurred to me is Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross you know the highest, second highest awards for valor are big deals and so I'm in the process of trying to track down the Illini who have earned those medals.

SB: Because it's, is it two or three that have been known to have won the Medal of Honor?

JR: I only know of one.

SB: I'm thinking of something else, but that's the man that you're aware of, yeah.

JR: Kenneth Bailey, of course, Danville native, Kenneth Bailey Academy is a school in Danville. So anyway, he and then, another one, fellow Navy pilot, earned the Navy Cross in the Battle of Midway. So he's a pretty impressive guy.

SB: Well, if you and Ryan need a hand with that display let me know. I'd be happy to help out.

JR: Yeah, right now I'm going the easy route and going through the, doing keyword searches in the in the *Daily Illini*. The *Daily Illini* was incredibly robust in its day, I mean national news, whatever. But during World War II, it reported on the doings of alumni and former students and you know, whatever. It's really a great resource. So that's on my bucket list.

SB: I've been writing starting on the, thinking of a two blog post series on William Schick and Walter Short. Both Illini, intersected in their lives at Pearl Harbor. Schick, of course, died and Short's career was ...

JR: I nominated Short for the Army ROTC Hall of Fame and he didn't make it. And I was a little miffed because save for his very brief time at Hickam Air Force Base or Hickam in Honolulu, he had an incredible career. He was only one of two cadets that was nominated by the President of the University for a regular Commission in the Army, and he was a national pistol champion just, you know, and held every leadership position in the army up, you know to three-star general. And the, one of the criticisms was, well, what will the Pearl Harbor survivors think? Well, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association is defunct because there's only a couple of them left. And by the time we found the children of Pearl Harbor survivors, it was too late, but they fully endorsed it. They said he was a victim of Palm Harbor just as much as, you know, our dads and uncles, so we'll try again. But he got a bum deal. And the fact that he could have requested a court martial, which would have probably exonerated him, but the war was going on. He thought that was a distraction. And then you looked at the Republicans were trying to, they needed, the Republicans were trying to put the blame [for] Pearl Harbor on the administration. And I think the administration wanted a quick scapegoat or two. To get it off, and that's, you know, it's partisan politics.

SB: And that's where they found them, Short and Kimmel.

JR: That hasn't changed. And so the fact that he didn't fight it, he went on to work in a defense plant and died a broken man.

SB: Yeah, it's really, that's what I'm hoping to, you know, write about him as just a, OK, here's this, he's known for this failure, this defeat, which maybe he had response, not full responsibility for, you know, and but here is his career.

JR: I think he was Phi Beta Kappa. He was bronze tablet, or if they had the Bronze Tablet back then, he was president of the Mathematics Club.

SB: Yeah. And one of the literary societies. That's why I'm gonna write about that. And yeah, I even talked to Ryan about maybe writing it for the alumni magazine at some point or later.

JR: Well, I would, I was hoping they would do it this year when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame, but they are doing a story about this David Skibbe, so I've tracked down a number of his friends and his former fiancée and so the writer is...

SB: Oh, that'll be remarkable. Yeah, well, I'll keep my work on Short on deck for when he gets, hopefully, gets inducted next year. But yeah, if I may, I should probably pivot back to asking you about your time here.

JR: Go back to the university, huh?

SB: Yeah, I mean, but I can honestly, I can sit here and talk to you about all this stuff all day. It's been great to just get your perspective on so much.

JR: When JFK was here, you know, I was just part of the crowd that. And as I said earlier, JFK was young, charismatic Catholic, therefore, I think my... You know, I don't recall a whole lot of politics in our house. My folks were Democrats, but my grandfather was a longtime member of the International Typographical Union. So, he was a union guy. My mother grew up in, in a little coal mining town in Tennessee. And Roosevelt brought him the TVA, and that was the best thing that ever happened to him, you know. They had electricity before Philo had electricity. They leaned Democrat. And I remember, '64, going down to the Illinois Central Station and seeing Goldwater.

SB: He came through in '64?

JR: Yeah, it was whistle stop. Not that I was a Goldwater fan.

SB: What was it like to see Kennedy in '60, where did you? Did you cut class from high school to come to the quad and see or from grade school to come to the quad and see him?

JR: You know, that's one of the things I don't remember the circumstances, how I got there.

SB: But you were there, you probably would have been about 13, 12 something like that?

JR: Yeah, yeah. So we got there. You know, back to grade school, was, grade school was pretty primitive. You had a blackboard and a cursive alphabet above it, and a crucifix above that, and that was technology. I can remember two times in grade school, when we had a television in the classroom. One was when Pope Pius the 12th died and they had his funeral and Ray Timpone, Timpone's restaurant, the Thunderbird, Ray senior brought a little portable television into the classes.

His daughter Deanna was a classmate of mine. So we watched that the other time the television was in the classroom was when the Milwaukee Braves were in the World Series, the final game.

Our sisters, our nuns were from Wisconsin. And they were avid Milwaukee Braves fans. And we had a television brought in.

SB: That's a remarkable juxtaposition of the Pope's funeral and the World Series. Did the Braves win?

JR: Braves won.

SB: [Jokingly] So you guys got a break on homework that day?

JR: We did!

SB: Oh, you actually did?

JR: We did.

SB: Oh, that's remarkable.

JR: Yeah. So we're back at 1968. Back to the future.

SB: Went on a bit of a tangent, but that's all right, that's the best part about doing interviews.

JR: So you can cut and paste and make this sequential.

SB: And so in 68, you were saying before we took a break, you know that it was a very consequential, very consequential year, what would have been your senior year. What did you mean by that?

JR: It was the year that really dawned on me what the what the immediate future, you know, held. First of all, you had the Tet Offensive in '67, the North Vietnamese. over land and the war really escalated at that time. Then you had, you know, Martin Luther King assassinated and that was that was an interesting thing too, because one of the perks of being on active duty or being in ROTC is we could fly space available on military aircraft. And so, on breaks, and I think it was semester break because, semesters, went over the Christmas holidays. So your semester break was in January, February and graduation was until June, so you know they moved it back. But so semester break. A couple of us drove down to Scott Air Force Base near Saint Louis up on the board to see where flights were going. And let's go to Washington. And so this Army guy that had befriended me back in 1952 was retired now from the National Security Agency and he was living out in in DC.

SB: Was he the man who lived in the, in your building?

JR: Yeah, yeah. So anyway. We fly out to Andrews Air Force Base, and as we were flying over Washington, DC, was on fire. It was on fire cause Martin Luther King had been assassinated while we were on our trip. The one buddy was with me, he lived up in Stamford, CT so he, when

he got to Washington, he took the train up to Stanford. But I stayed with the folks in Washington. And, of course, the older gentleman that, we went to downtown Washington. We went to see the Capitol. We went to the White House. I mean, he had the security clearance to get us in. But three or four blocks away, there were fires. We went to the big department store in Washington, was Woodward and Lothrop, and there were National Guard in the store. You know, protected it. So that was a real surreal experience. You saw the beginnings of some, you know, some real tough times and then shortly before I went on my summer cruise that summer to Norfolk and Guantanamo and Key West, RFK was assassinated. And so, you know, the question was, are they going to postpone this or whatever? Of course, I wanted to, excited about going. At the time you're more concerned about your immediate plans than the consequences, but anyway. That was a shocker. And then, getting back at the end of the summer and it's the Democratic National Convention, and they're bashing heads.

SB: Oh, boy.

JR: Oh, January 1st of 1968, or about that time, Christmas, the North Koreans captured the USS Pueblo and imprisoned the 67, 68 crew members. So you realize that these little interesting times, the anti-war movement was just sort of picking up about that time.

SB: So previous to around 67-68, there hadn't been much anti-war activity on campus?

JR: No, no, you know. You could, if you're looking at a dividing line, 65-66. It was blue blazer, gray flannel slacks, fraternity pin. Everybody either wanted to be a Mad Man from Madison Avenue...

SB: Be an ad man, uh huh.

JR: ... or an astronaut, you know it was, you know, engineering and that. And I can remember the fraternity, the membership in the fraternity was very geographically dispersed around Illinois. We had southern Illinois people. We had people from the Quad Cities. You know, smattering of 312, Chicago area, Decatur, Springfield, whatever it was, it was geographically diverse. So, we had some rednecks and some, you know, the sophisticated people. But the spring of 66, we, the pledge class, you know, maybe 30 new members. All from, not all, but mostly from North Shore and Western suburbs. And, culturally, they were about five years in front of everybody else. I mean, they were starting to be hippie, pot smoking. I mean, pot was not, that was a rarity back in 65-66. I mean, if somebody smoked pot, that was grounds for dismissal. I mean, that was that was something else.

SB: You'd have to go see Fred Turner.

JR: You have to go see Fred Turner and Fred Turner had a little spy network.

SB: The Dean Clark Spy Network was still there.

JR: Yeah. And you know, there's rumors that, you know, the CIA had somebody here.

SB: Wouldn't have surprised me.

JR: An agent. Anyway...

SB: There was a shift, you'd said?

JR: Oh, '67 I mean, it was like night and day. It was really like night and day. And, Willard Broom, I don't know if you're familiar with that name. He was the associate Dean of Students.

SB: We have an interview with him as well.

JR: And Willard will tell you... '67, and that was the end of *in loco parentis* too. *Animal House*, he says, "*Animal House* drove culture here." I mean it was like, This is what they're doing. We're free." You know, this is our permission to, you know.

SB: So, there was, you said, a very noticeable shift in that era.

JR: It was, I mean, it was like night and day.

SB: How did that show itself? You know, are there, is there any example or something that brings to mind that change?

JR: Dress. The anti-war started to develop. I mean, in our fraternity, I think, '65 and '66, fiscally, we were very conservative. Some of our members had meal jobs and other, you know, fraternities, mostly sororities. Back then you could work your way through school, you know. You could, no student loans, no student debt. I mean, if you work, you could, you could pay your tuition and room and board. And so very much at, the North Shore, Western suburbs kids were affluent. Money's no issue. And that was, you know, that was another thing. "Oh, my parents will take care of this. You know, I can break a window. No big deal."

And, like I say, it was stark. I moved into an apartment, my roommate was an Urbana High School friend. He was an anti-war guy. Matter of fact, he went to Canada rather than be drafted. But, you know, we respected each other's, he knew that I was in ROTC and I was, I was still living in '65 and '66.

SB: When the anti-war movement here really started to pick up, was there a conflict between ROTC students and some of the people in opposition to it? Or was it more like they were in opposition to the institution not you all personally.

JR: I didn't sense that until after I left. I mean, I graduated in June of '69, and I don't recall any overt discrimination. I had one professor, Harry Skornia.

SB: We have his papers in this building.

JR: Who was a professor of radio television. You know, on Thursdays when we wore uniforms and there were a few of us in his class and he would make derisive, not about us, per se, but the

war. So that was the only, faculty thing, you know, back then, the faculty were pretty conservative.

SB: Very different than it is now.

JR: Oh, yeah. I mean, in the business school particularly, I mean they thought the Keynesian economists were, at best, socialist and at worst, you know Communist.

SB: Which was a grievous insult in those days in most circles.

JR: What's that?

SB: Calling someone a communist.

JR: Oh yeah. One of the Deans of Commerce got, he was a Keynesian and the free market, the economics guys, Bowen was the guy's name, Dean Bowen. And they got him ousted because he was way too liberal.

SB: Wow. Sorry, go ahead.

JR: So anyway, back to my roommate, John Hagen, his dad was a poli sci professor, sociology professor. But he, you know, we lived our lives and we didn't talk politics. We didn't talk. We had a circle of friends that, and so then my senior year, he graduated, went to Canada because he would have been eligible for the draft. He wasn't in an exempt position.

SB: What would an exempt position have been?

JR: Teaching. So you know, there were a lot of grade school, high school teachers that went into the profession, you know, in that era that were, I don't think they were motivated by the love of teaching. Clergy – you know, if you wanted to go to the seminary, you were exempt there.

SB: If I might ask, also, were there, you know, there wasn't, you know, you and your roommate had some political differences on the subject, but you got along perfectly well. You know, what was the attitude when the protests began? What was the attitude of the ROTC corps on campus, towards the you know, there wasn't much hostility the other way.

JR: But I don't remember the protests.

SB: Oh, you don't, they hadn't started by that point.

JR: It was, no.

SB: No.

JR: And ROTC was still, you know, there was still 1000, 1200 hundred men – no women – at the time. So I didn't sense it. So, I'll see, what else happens while I'm still in school?

SB: Well, if I might ask about the Armory. You know, because you said the Armory at that time was all ROTC of the different branches, right? Did the Air Force have an ROTC at that point – they did.

JR: Yes, yes.

SB: Yes, they did. They did, but the Marines were part of the Navy.

JR: Marines have always been part of the Navy.

SB: That's right. So if you were an aspiring Marine, you would be in naval ROTC?

JR: Correct.

SB: And so at the Armory at that time, you mentioned that when you were a young man, they had all sorts of weaponry and things to train on. And was it like that in your time as well?

JR: Not so much. Most of the technology that the Navy had, they put in, you know, right after World War II and most of it was, the technology was obsolete. I mean, there were some things, you know, there was a five-inch open mount, gun mount like you'd find on a destroyer of the time and you know. We learned the positions and stuff like that.

SB: That thing was still in there! That's what I wanted to ask.

JR: It was, it was. It was there. So I came back to teach Naval ROTC in 1972. And it was gone by that time. They also at the end of the hallway, if you go from the where the Navy offices are towards the center on the north side, there was a big lab where they had a ship's bridge simulator and a Combat Information Center simulator. You know, with the plotting table and stuff like that. And you know, basic familiarity with it, but it was, the technology was obsolete at the time.

SB: So you were doing more classroom learning in there?

JR: It was classroom.

SB: And the expectation would be that when you would do a cruise or when you would join, go on active duty, then you would learn more about whatever you needed to hear then.

JR: So, the curriculum, the ROTC curriculum, the freshman year was, you know, sort of an introduction to naval science and then shipboard systems. You know, a little engineering. The sophomores did weapons systems, so it was more book learning. And a lot of physics, physics that LAS students could understand. Then the junior year was navigation and operations and then the senior year was leadership and military law and you know, sort of capstone.

SB: So, the idea would be that by the time you graduate, you'd have a fairly good basis in being a naval officer.

JR: Right, right. And, you know, most everybody when they graduate, they would go to some sort of intermediate technical training. I mean the pilots would, you know, that would be a year long or more thing the submariner, same thing. I was a surface officer. So I had some specific schools and gunnery and anti-submarine warfare and ship handling and stuff like that.

SB: And that would be building on the basics that you had learned, the theories that you'd picked up at that point.

JR: So anyway, if you go back to the Army ROTC, particularly up until the '60s, was branch specific, so you had field artillery and they learned, you know, so they were doing a lot more than technical training. You had Signal Corps which is, you know, communications and whatever the engineers, combat engineers and so on. So, it was branch-specific and, you know, the army, of course that required a lot of staff to do that. And then as the ROTC became voluntary nationwide, we were one of the last schools that, you know, went voluntary. But we're, you know, we can't afford to do this for the small numbers. Let's concentrate on the basic concepts, do the technical training in smaller numbers, you know. So, that changed a lot.

SB: And I really I'm realizing now that well, first of all, I want to mention the we have people coming in that are going to need this room in about 25 minutes. So, I don't want to cut you off. You know, I'm thinking I might want to ask if you'd return at another day to speak more.

JR: Sure.

SB: Just so I get that down now, but I'd like to ask. I realize I've completely neglected to ask you about this. How did you join the Marching Illini? So, to walk back a little bit, how did that come about?

JR: Well, you know, I played in high school and a lot of my, a lot of the upper classmen that I knew joined the Marching Illini. It was one of those, you know, things, I don't know [unintelligible] expected to do it, but that was just one of the things you did.

SB: Did you join as a freshman?

JR: Yes.

SB: You did, uh huh.

JR: So back then, it was 175 males. Male only. And there's a lot of misinformation about that that, you know, people think that that it was, you know these all these misogynist men you know, don't like women. The University of Illinois Band, particularly the Marching Illini, was considered an adjunct to ROTC.

It provided, you know, military music for parades and whatever. It fulfilled the ROTC requirement back when ROTC was compulsory.

SB: Oh, it did, ok.

JR: So, a lot of the incentive to play in the band was to avoid ROTC, you know, substitute ROTC. As a matter of fact, there was a verse, "We're marching for dear old Illini, to get out of the ROTC, here's cheer for our band director, he's the one who is setting us free."² [Laughs]

SB: [Laughs]

JR: OK. And of course, you know, by the time I started, only the juniors and seniors would have experienced that.

SB: Uh huh.

JR: If there ever there was a time for a mediocre musician like me, to earn a spot in the Marching Illini, it was 1965. Because first of all it was all men, so you didn't have any competition from women. And a lot of people dropped out because it was no longer giving them that. So there was that little window of a couple of years where it wasn't very competitive. Now it's, you know, there's four or five applicants for every spot.

SB: Tryouts, oh, yeah.

JR: So, that's how I got in and it was fun.

SB: What was your favorite activity to play at, a football game, or would you rather play music for a parade, how did that work?

JR: This is another, this is another interesting thing. Back then, the Marching Illini played at six home games a year, maybe, and we did go to an away game. We never went to a bowl game in my time. But it was a fall only. You rehearsed Monday through Friday afternoon, like from 4:00 to 5:30. So it was it was 7 1/2 hours a week plus Saturday morning, you know, in the game. And when the season was over, it was over, ok? You played in, played one of the concert bands. You want to play... [unintelligible].

SB: If you were more into music, you would do that?

JR: Yeah. And then the basketball band was sort of a subset of the of the Marching Illini.

SB: Kind of even like it is now, kind of.

² This comes from "March of the Illini," which the Marching Illini play as part of the famous "Three-in-One" at sporting events and other celebrations. The actual lyrics are:

We are marching for dear old Illini
For the men who are fighting for you
Here's a cheer for our dear Alma Mater
May our love for her ever be true...

JR: You can try out for basketball band without being in the Marching Illini.

SB: I didn't know that, OK.

JR: Yeah, I mean, there's just so there's so many kids that want to play and they're, so you know, and it's up to 400 people in the Marching Illini today. And still there's, you know, people trying to get in. And so, the basketball bands and they got volleyball band and you know, so there's plenty of opportunities. So, the time commitment was fall only. Maybe 10, 10 hours a week and I had a job too. I worked at a men's clothing store over at Lincoln Square, so I was in ROTC, band, worked. ROTC was just like a three hour class you had, you have Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A 50-minute class Thursday, was a hour and 50 minute drill. Did a PT test at the end of the semester. That was the total commitment.

SB: So it wasn't as much of a commitment as it is now.

JR: Oh, today, Marching Illini is grueling. I mean, they do performances on Friday nights at high school events. They do Chicago Bears, they do this. It's grueling. ROTC, even the kids are out five days a week running PT at you know, 6 o'clock in the morning.

SB: Yeah, because I was, I looked you up in the yearbook, you know? And I was like, "Alright, let's see what he was involved with so I can write up some questions." And I'm sitting there thinking, "OK, we got SAE, Marching Illini, ROTC. Somehow had time to be a student and probably had to sleep every once in while, how did this guy do all of this?"

JR: It was less.

SB: I was thinking of it in the commitment of today. It's interesting to hear that it has changed in that way.

JR: And I think that's a disservice the, you know. One of my big gripes with ROTC right now is it's, you know, the whole concept of reserve officer training is to create a liberally educated, well-rounded... If you want career officers and from the start, go to the Naval Academy and that's a, you know, that's a big. But if you want people that know how to interact with the world, you can't them in. And this is your primary reference group and all your activities center around this. Marching Illini, to a certain extent, is the same way. You're losing the connection with the rest of the citizens.

SB: And it's reserve officers training, yeah.

JR: And the other thing that from the time that I was a student until today, is they had this obsession with STEM majors. Advertising major would not, never would be permitted today, you know, political science major or linguist. Well, God only knows that the armed forces need linguists. They need political science people who understand the relation understand the Constitution.

SB: Mm hm.

JR: You know, the Constitution is more than the 1st and 2nd amendments.

SB: Yeah, that's an interesting perspective.

JR: And you know, and we'll get into this when we talk about the military career. But one of my assignments, I was commanding officer of a military enlistment processing station where we did all the aptitude testing, physical exams, swearing in, shipping applicants off to basic training. And we administer that enlistment oath 10 times a day to groups of you know, up to 30 people. And, I think now, You know. "I, state your full name. Do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States." It's the Constitution of the United States. OK. And it just gripes the heck out of me that you know, the January 6th protesters and some of the other people are military people or ex-military people who swore that oath. You know. Did they not know what that? But that goes back to, we're not teaching civics. We're not teaching history, we're not teaching.

SB: Yeah, there's very much an emphasis on STEM. And I mean in, in when I was in high school, I was one of those students that I went to a college prep high school, public but...

JR: Which one?

SB: Up in Lemont, I'm from the suburbs.

JR: OK.

SB: You know, all the clubs and a lot of them were STEM related. I did them, you know. And I tell people that I'm going to come down and go to the University of Illinois. "Oh, you must be studying engineering." "No, I'm studying history." "Ohh. What are you going to do with that?" "I'm doing this." But you know, just that, almost the expectation, that the idea that someone that was into those things in high school wouldn't be doing that for a career was like alien to some people.

JR: Yeah. You know, it's like, say, Naval ROTC particularly is adverse to South of Green Street, OK, majors and I don't think that leads to a balanced officer corps.

SB: Yeah. It doesn't seem like it.

JR: You know, I was talking to one of the Army ROTC professors the other day and complaining about that. And he was saying, that well, we get some Navy ROTC people who transferred to Army ROTC because of the major, you know, they want to make and he says, "You know, the best platoon leader I ever had was a theater major." You know, so you know it's learning the people skills, and, you know the leadership and.

SB: To lead people, you know, an officer is a leader is and that's at least the way I can always understand it.

JR: Yeah, yeah. But, that's the way it is.

SB: Well, Joe, I'm going to pause the recordings for now. I'm anticipating that we might speak again about more of your time here, but is there anything about at least your time at the university that we haven't talked about that you'd like to mention before we pause?

JR: Well, when we get to the next session, I mean, I had the I had two years of teaching here, so.

SB: I'm keen to hear about that as well.

JR: And then then of course, my time at the Alumni Association. But so the Navy career is next.

SB: Very good. Well, we've been speaking for almost two and a half hours, which is just incredible. I'm very pleased to have the time to talk to you today. So Joe, first, thank you very much for. We'll take a pause on this interview session and we'll speak again.

JR: You're welcome.

SB: Wonderful. Just wonderful. This is just great.

JR: That's a wrap that you know it's all of a sudden the flood of memories come. Back that. Yeah, well.

SB: That's why I like doing a two-part interviews because, like, you know, when I met when I interviewed Jim, I, you know, got home and thought about, "OK, what did we talk about, you know, because he was in Korea too and thinking of, OK, let's talk about that and let's know what follow up." World War 2. You know things, I hadn't even thought of and, you know, I'd say something and he goes, "Oh, yes, right." About his memory is for someone who's almost 102, is... You said you said he was doing well last time you'd spoken to him?

JR: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

SB: Yeah, he's gonna, he's got. He's got more years left on him.

JR: Well, he wants to take his family down to New Orleans to the, next summer, to the World War Two museum.

SB: He'll be 102. Oh, isn't that something?

JR: That's an amazing facility down there.

SB: I've never been. I would love to go at some point. Is it?

JR: I mean, if you want to see the best. It rivals the Smithsonian in terms of its professionalism, but the museum. There's so much interactivity, it's just incredible.

SB: Like one of the first job apps I submitted was to down there, unsuccessful of course. But I was, I've been I like Illinois a lot, but something like that might make me might make me think about it.

JR: Keep trying!

SB: Oh, yeah. I actually had on Friday, I had an interview up at UIC's archives in Chicago, and that was pretty good, it's possible.

JR: Now that the Alumni Associations have split, there's the three campuses or the three universities now. The second city attitude I think is still there, but not as bad as it was. I mean, they thought they were the red headed stepchildren of the Urbana campus.

SB: Yeah, there's, there's still some back and forth, I think, but.

JR: Ohh yeah, yeah the guy, Jason Walk, I don't know if you know that name.

SB: No, I don't think so.

JR: He was sort of their unofficial historian or maybe official historian for a while. I mean, he's just really rabidly anti-Urbana. And, you know, the ironic thing is, UIC has really embraced Navy Pier as its origin story. And in fact, Navy Pier was an undergraduate division of the Urbana campus, and so...

SB: Like Galesburg?

JR: Like Galesburg. And, remind me when we get to Galesburg, the Alumni Association here.

SB: Yeah.

JR: Anyway, the Urbana campus doesn't recognize, you know, they've ceded it to UIC, but in fact, it was a feeder to the Urbana campus. It was Urbana faculty. It was Urbana curriculum. But it was Urbana management and so Chicago Circle was a whole new creation. And then when Circle and the Medical Center merged to form UIC that alienated a lot of medical campus grads, because they identified with Urbana.

SB: Because it was the medical campus of Urbana!

JR: Yeah, and many of them did at least a couple, three years. You didn't have to get a bachelor's degree before you went into medical school back back in the day and so many of them, I mean, they're orange, and bleed orange and blue. And as a matter of fact, the student union up there was called the Chicago Illini Union.

SB: Mm-hmm.

JR: And so, I was in the alumni association when feeling the aftershocks of that.

SB: That had already occurred when you joined the UIAA.

JR: It hadn't been that long, but still, there was that. And then UIS came along and UIS which just tickled silly to be part of, put University of Illinois in their name.

SB: It's an interesting dynamic.

JR: And the alumni wanted to be known as Illinois graduates, not as Sangamon State graduates for many reasons.

SB: Of course, if I may speak before I before I forget on Galesburg, I may have told you this. I may not have, but I was doing a Veterans History Project interview with a gentleman who you may know, his name is Kenneth Roellig. He lives down in Tolono.

JR: Ok.

SB: And he was in World War II. And I met him, I saw an article about him in the *News-Gazette* and got in touch with him through that. And when I was in, when I was speaking with him, I got to the point of where I said, "Well, when you got out of the service, what did you, what did you go and do or what was your path?"

And he said, "Well, I went to the University of Illinois, Galesburg." And I've been talking to Ellen previously about, Well, how cool would it be to meet some Galesburg alums if I can find them." And, you know it was, they're all World War 2 vets or just a little bit younger. So it's tough. I stumbled into this guy who just lives right there, so I actually came back and interviewed him with my work hat on and talked to him for a couple hours about Galesburg. So that was pretty cool.

JR: Army Mayo General Hospital...

SB: Yes.

JR: ...was the origin. So anyway, when I was at the alumni association, it was the 50th anniversary of the Galesburg campus. The establishment of the Galesburg campus, and there were some alums that came. And of course, most of the buildings have been torn down. There's one built building that was the headquarters for the hospital that's still up. And so we erected a monument out there and we had a dedication ceremony and, you know, the programs and stuff are all over in the alumni association archives, they ought to come over here. But anyway, we rounded up a bunch of Galesburg alumni and we had we had a nice ceremony there. Arnold Webber, who was the president of Northwestern was a graduate of, was not a graduate, he attended...

SB: Attended Galesburg

JR: And he was not, he was not a veteran. He came from Brooklyn. And he, you know, he would he, he was very entertaining at the thing he said you know, "He says I was an 18 year old kid from Brooklyn, most of the students were GI's, seen combat, here I arrive in a three dollar suit and a \$0.50 cardboard suitcase. And everybody called me pretentious."

SB: That was actually, when I was talking to Mr. Roellig, he said, you know, when I asked about his fellow students and what that was like, he said, "You know, there was there were those of us that were ex GI's. And he said then there were those folks that were coming just coming out of high school who hadn't been in the service, who were just coming to college for the first time."

JR: Yeah.

SB: And he said, he said they had two he remembered in his like dorm room, or his bunk room with a bunch of guys, he said these two young high school kids showed up, you know, with their coats and ties on walked in the door and said, "Where's all the girls?"

JR: So anyway, he was talking about the campus, the campus that was built in 90 days, Weber was saying that and he says, well, he said, "I'll tell you what. Take it from the president of Northwestern University, in today's academia, he says, you can't get anything done in 90 days." It takes three years to come up with a campus parking policy. And he said, you know, back in those days, he says the students, we're just glad to have a roof over their heads and their whole rack to sleep in. And he says, and three meals a day. And he says they were very grateful. He says, you know, at Northwestern, if the residence halls run out of Captain Crunch for breakfast, we have a protest. But he was, he was great. I don't know if he's still alive or not.

SB: I'm going to look.

JR: Yeah, Arnold Webber.

SB: Arnold Webber. I've already written it down. Just because you know, finding, the idea that we'd be, Ellen and I talked about it. I thought, well, how cool would it be to talk to some Galesburg alums and just figured like it's just going to be tough and then I'm talking to this guy and, "Oh, I went to the Galesburg campus," and I'm sitting there thinking, "Oh my God, can I come back and talk to you about that?" And he goes, "Oh, yeah, anytime!"

JR: Yeah.

SB: So that was very good. He's, believe it or not, he's 98 and still lives on his own and apparently was chainsawing things at his Christmas tree farm the day before I'd met him.

JR: Super.

SB: And he sent me home with four jars of home canned tomato sauce. They're built differently, yeah.

JR: Yeah, super guy.

SB: But yeah, so should I, shall I start?

JR: Start!

SB: Alrighty, so this is we're continuing an oral history conversation from last week. My name is Spencer Bailey. I'm an archives research assistant at the University of Illinois Archives. I'm talking today with Mr. Joe Rank, who is an Illini alumnus of the class of 1969. And also has taught here in the 70s and then was also involved heavily with the Alumni Association and still is in all sorts of different ways, so we spoke previously about his time as an undergraduate and his early life, also here in Champaign, and now we're going to speak a little bit about his graduation, military service, and return to U of I as a professor of naval science. Is that right?

JR: Grad student as well.

SB: Grad student as well and later work with the Alumni Association. So yes. So I think previously we were talking about your last year when you were coming up on your graduation. So would you speak a little bit about what those last couple of semesters and what it was like here when you were about to graduate?

JR: Right, I think I left off with the turmoil of 1968, which, you know, the assassinations and the Democratic National Convention and that.

SB: That's right.

JR: So that's where I left it. I want to go back the, I may have given the impression that I was not all that into my major, advertising. And you know, I selected it because it was I could, I could, all my chemistry, it was a two-year program at the time and they wanted people from all different disciplines to be in the program. And so all of my chemistry credits transferred so that was a big plus. I could still graduate in four years.

And so, the introductory course to advertising was Advertising 281, introductory, introduction to advertising, and it was taught by Professor Charles Sandidge. And I quickly learned that Dr. Sandidge was really the founder of advertising education and Illinois was really the first school or among the first that that taught advertising as an academic discipline and he was really a persuasive professor. He was very, very keen on advertising ethics because of the reputation over the years that advertising had, so he was very inspirational and I enjoyed him very much. So, I, you know, I still, it was a means to an end. I wanted to get my commission and go on active duty in the Navy, but I enjoyed my advertising classes.

My senior year, so this would be 68-69 We had an advertising campaigns class and it was a group project and we would do a semester-long advertising campaign that involved research and media and media selection and creative and so on. And we were lucky to have Hershey Foods, Hershey Chocolate had never advertised. They never advertised. This is 1968. And they were just looking into advertising. So, they picked two or three universities that had advertising programs and basically throughout the challenge to, you know, come up with ideas. You know, brainstorm how they would do it. And so, we learned all about chocolate. Everything to know about chocolate and Milton Hershey, Milton Snavely Hershey, who created a boys school and in Hershey, PA. Really an inspirational story. So, we came up with an advertising campaign and that was really interesting to see the whole advertising from research to final execution. And, ironically, a couple years ago there was a television series called *Mad Men* and one of those episodes, Hershey, this takes place at the same time Hershey's going to the Sterling Cooper, the advertising agency and the television show and basically doing the same thing that we did many years earlier.

SB: As college kids!

JR: College kids. I mean, obviously, our ideas were never used but, but it gave us a great experience. The other funny thing as part of the advertising curriculum, I had to take a couple journalism classes and the first one was news, right? And I can picture the professor. I can't remember his name, but day one, he says, "How many of you went to a Catholic grade school or high school?" Probably a third of us raised our hands. And he says, he says, "Everything the nuns taught you about creative writing, forget." He says, "In journalism, news reporting, it's subject, verb and sparing use of adverbs and adjectives, so forget all the all the vocabulary words you had to learn. We don't use them." And so I thought that was funny. So, I'd gone to a Catholic school and learned expository writing and that was it. Subject, verb, sparing adverb and adjective.

SB: And that was the first day of the course, right away?

JR: First day of the class, so that was fun.

SB: And if I might ask, kind of based on those experiences you've just recounted, you know how much interaction was there when you were a student between professors and students? Would it be, would there be office hours, would they, you know, encourage you to speak to them after class to discuss topics. Or would it kind of depend on the faculty and the students in question?

JR: It depended on the faculty, I think. I was, you know, they all had office hours. And I can only remember a couple times going into office hours, basically, to request clarification on a test I didn't do so well on or whatever. You know, the faculty were very accommodating.

SB: They were.

JR: They are old school and most and most of them, you know, some of them had been war veterans and whatever and they, I think they, a couple in particular were really, you know, they've seen, they'd seen the real world and so they were not, they were not products of 30s and 40s

academia. You know the, you know, the professor on the ivory tower, on the marble column. They were pretty down to Earth and particularly in advertising and journalism, which were career oriented. You know, they're they wanted to prepare you for a job. As opposed to, you know, going on to grad school and getting, you know, getting an advanced degree or whatever, they were, so it was more of a practical experience. I know they like to distinguish between training and education. And, I think that for certain fields, you got to have a little bit of both and you can't be entirely abstract. You got to have some real, and advertising certainly is was one of those fields. So anyway, that was, I just wanted to get that out that that I did enjoy my major.

SB: Yeah.

JR: And it turns out later on I got to use it quite a bit. So senior year once again, it starts dawn on dawn on you that you're leaving. War is still going on, so you, you know, there's some apprehension about that. I think for many of us who were in Naval ROTC, we were pretty close. Stan Wallace's Gridiron, the bar on Daniel St. was sort of a hangout. We spent more time there than we should have. A couple of the Naval ROTC classmates were bartenders there and so spent an awful lot of time there and probably skipped a few classes. But Pabst Blue Ribbon on tap, bratwursts. And today, whenever, Hey Jude, the Beatles song, or Bottle of Wine, it takes me back to the 1968, 69 because that was all that was on the jukebox the whole.

SB: The big hits?

JR: Over and over and over again. So Hey Jude and PBR, you know, takes me back to that time.

SB: So you got along well with your cohort mates in ROTC and you were all pretty close.

JR: Yep, we were. So, coming up on graduation. The I did not go through the commencement ceremony. 68-69, starting in 67, you know, that was, graduation was sort of viewed as, the commencement ceremony was viewed as, that's pretty establishment. I mean that's ultra establishment and a lot of people chose not to go. For me, the commissioning ceremony the day after was, that was the pinnacle. And so, so you know, a lot of people I knew did not go through graduation. So I regret that. I wish I had. But we didn't.

So anyway, graduated in June of 1969. Drove to San Diego, went on active duty in the Navy. Served on two destroyers for three years, I had a service obligation of three years as a result of Naval ROTC. At the end of the three-year period, I really had no intention of staying in the Navy. At the time the war was winding down, so it wasn't that the...

SB: Would have been around 71 or 72?

JR: 72

SB: 72.

JR: 72. But so the assignment officer in the Pentagon or Navy headquarters called up and said, "Well, what would it take to keep you in the Navy for another couple of years?" So I threw out, I

said, "I'd like to teach ROTC at a Big 10 university." And he looked at my undergraduate transcript, which was, and he said, "Fat chance." He said, "I could never get you a place because the way ROTC instructors, they're, you know, they have the rank of assistant professor. They have to be vetted by the Military Education Council. Which is part of the Provost office. So they're from among the faculty."

SB: Of the university?

JR: Of the university, and so they vet the qualifications. Well, fortunately, the professor of naval science was still the one that was there when I was a senior and he pulled for me, he recommended me. I went to the Dean of, at the time, College of Journalism and Communications and I said I'd like to come back to grad school. Knowing that if I were admitted to grad school, that would, that would certainly help my chances of being assigned here, and he said, "Well, you know...." I said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I've been working 18 hour days for the last three years. I think I can budget my time well. If I succeed and I know I will, you can take credit for it. If I fail, you could say I told you so. I'm not asking for any assistantship, any financial aid or anything, I'll be paid by the Navy. So what do you have to lose?" He says, "You sound like an advertisement." [Laughs]

SB: Had you thought of going to Graduate School? Like when you were an undergrad, you know, you knew you would commission in the Navy for a few years, had you thought of graduate school at the time or did that come to you later?

JR: I had no concept of graduate school. I mean, I just was going to do my do my time in the Navy and see. So anyway, I want the assignment officer said that, "Hey, I've been vetted and I've been accepted to grad school." And he said, "OK. Where you want to go?" And I said, "Well, I know there is an opening in Illinois." OK, so they sent me, sent me to the University of Illinois. So I did two things. I taught naval ROTC. I taught the senior class, Principles of Naval Leadership. And I worked on my master's in advertising and for my masters, I had a young first year Assistant Professor, Kim Rossell, who was not much older than I was. And that was his first year of teaching and course it was my first year of teaching at the college level, Kim went on to be Dean of the College of Media, it eventually became Media.

He was a great guy and then I realized that I was in Professor Sandage's last class and I was in Kim Rockville's first class as a grad student. So, two very well-known people in the in the advertising business. Matter of fact, Doctor Russell went on, when Sandage, he'd written the premier college textbook, advertising textbook, and when Sandage retired, took that over so anyway, so that was the grad school side. So, I taught principles of naval leadership, which was, you know, military justice, case studies, and leadership. And, at the time, I think there was still some blatant anti-war feeling among the, some of the faculty. And the question of how many hours of credit will we allow for ROTC as an elective? And so, College of Engineering said, hey, we'll give you full credit, but we still have to have 140 hours of engineering, OK?

Agriculture at the time, they said, you know, fine, we'll give you, you know, you can have credit. LAS said that, leadership is not a viable academic subject. You know, there's no body of research and all this. And the ironic thing was the College of Business had a couple of people auditing my

class because they wanted to start a leadership track so, so we sort of compromised. I modified the syllabus, added a number of popular management texts, Peter Drucker and some of those and we changed the course title to Principles of Naval Management. All of a sudden, that's fine, it's a semantics thing. So, you know you taught the same thing, but it was a lot of, uh, case study type thing. Here is a situation, and how do you deal with it? And you go around the table and, you know, come up with ideas of how to follow and that's exactly what, in grad school, we did case studies for advertising and consumer behavior and stuff like that, so. A couple of other things while I was, the time I was on the faculty here, by 1972 the protests had pretty much died down. I the bulk of the campus protests. They really, really didn't gear up until the fall of '69, in the spring of 70 was particularly bad, with the National Guard and all that, and I was on the other side of the world at the time so.

By the time. I came back in the fall of 72, Henry Kissinger was in Paris. The peace talks going on, the war was the war was dying down. Campus, the protest had pretty much run its course. But apparently there were, in the state of Illinois, among parents and high school counselors, there, there was the perception that the large public university was not a safe place. You know you better, better, better you go to, you know, one of the smaller schools or private schools. Well, at the time, Dan Perino, professor Dan Perino was the Dean of Student Programs and Services in in the student affairs. And I'd known Dan for a long time and he came up with the idea of why don't we send some representative students and faculty members, you know, representing a diverse group. And have, go out to high school nights, you know, recruitment nights, which they did back then. And so I went out with him on a number of them to, area suburban, Chicago suburban high schools and you know I sort of had two roles. I was a faculty member, but I was, also represented the establishment. You know, the military and ROTC is still thriving, you know and but it's optional. And we had people that were, you know, on the other side of the spectrum and you know, "Hey. You know. You know you can be as liberal as you want here. Nobody's, you know." It's not a *in loco parentis* thing anymore. And so that was that was one of the things that that we did, the other thing is, with Dan Perino, of course, he had the Medicare 7 or 8 or 9 Dixieland group. You're familiar with...?

SB: No, I'm not actually. What was that?

JR: Dan was a musician, of course, he taught it at Quincy High School, at Urbana High School. That's when I knew him. Then he, I think to the University of Illinois and the School of Music, running the summer youth music camps, among other things. Then he went over to student affairs, where he was Dean of Student Services, Programs and Services.

SB: So you had known him briefly before you arrived at college, through Urbana High School.

JR: Oh yeah, I know. Yeah. And so anyway, you're familiar with Project 500.

SB: Yes, of course.

JR: They brought 500 African Americans on campus and there was a big incident at the, in the Illini Union protest. And Dan called up several of his friends that were musicians on the faculty,

Stan Ron, who worked in the Student Affairs office, John O'Connor was a professor. Wakefield, Professor Wakefield in the School of Music. And they started doing a jam session, Dixieland jazz in the South Lounge.

SB: Was that right when the sit-in and the protest was going on there?

JR: Right. And basically that sort of diffused the situation, I mean music has that effect on people.

SB: Was that when you were a student or had that been after you had graduated?

JR: This was after I graduated so, so this would have been the fall of '69

SB: OK.

JR: We have to check to see when Project 500 was here, but that I think that was fall of '69. Anyway, so people said, "Well, what's your group called?" And they were all 65 or older and they said, "Well, it's, just call us Medicare. Medicare, and it's 7, 8, or 9 depending on how many show up. So you know, I'm sure you've got a lot of material about Medicare, 7, 8, or 9, but it became a thing.

SB: It wasn't just a one off.

JR: It wasn't a one off. They did concerts at Krannert. They did fundraisers. You know the annual WILL television fundraiser, they played, they would go out to alumni clubs around the state. They played at the State Fair on Illini Day at the State Fair. It was a, you know, and it lasted for years. And the instrumentation, you know, changed depending on who was available and, so I think by the time they ended, probably 200 people have played at one time or another with that group.

So anyway, I was, while I was still on the ROTC staff here, the Medicare group did a swing through the Western states during spring break. They played, they played at Phoenix, they played, you know, in Los Angeles. They played in San Diego, well, I arranged, when they were at San Diego to get them to play on an aircraft carrier. And you know, it was a jam session on an aircraft carrier.

SB: Which carrier?

JR: Well, it was a helicopter carrier and I'll have to look it up, but, anyway, that was a fun thing.

SB: That must have been something on the so they, but they were up on the deck of a big....

JR: They were on, well, it was in the hangar bay, the carrier and there were several of the sailors who were musicians and they sat in.

SB: They went and got instruments and came up?

JR: They came up.

SB: And were you there for that?

JR: I was there for that.

SB: Wow, uh huh.

JR: I flew out for that. And another thing, this is another Dan Perino story, his sometime in 72 or 73 the Navy band from New Orleans played at Krannert. And they had a steel drum group. You know the 55-gallon tuned drums. And so Dan was just fascinated by the steel drums so he had me contact the band leader in New Orleans and you know, "Where did you get the drums?" Well, there's a guy in Puerto Rico who hammers them out of 55-gallon drums. Well, I want to find out who he is. So Dan somehow got the school music to fund \$1000 or whatever for a set of steel drums. He thought that that this would appeal to the Latinos on campus because Dan had already helped form the Black Chorus, so that was another one of his musical things and Quad Day, of course as well. He was responsible for that too. But so he thought, you know, this would be a great thing for the Latinos.

So they ordered the drums. We arranged for a Navy training flight to stop at Willard and refuel, but it had the drums on board.

SB: Was this while you were still...?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

SB: So did you have something to do with the Navy plane?

JR: Yeah, I pulled the strings to make that happen. So, you know they, it was a training flight from Puerto Rico to Glenview Naval Air Station up near Chicago and of course they have to stop for fuel along the way and they stopped.

And the drums came off. Well anyway, Dan introduced the drums. Well, turned out that the Latinos on campus were not Puerto Ricans and the steel drum is part of the Spanish. Island genre and it didn't appeal to the mariachi. So the drums, the drums didn't last very long. Well, the drums lasted for a long time, but they went in storage for a while. And then for a while back several years ago, there was a U of I steel drum group in the School of Music called I-PAN. And they used those drums to start with.

SB: So they'd been in storage for all that time?

JR: Yeah, but then they were resurrected not as a student organization thing, but as an ensemble of the School of Music. So we did that.

SB: So they eventually, they got some use.

JR: They got some use. The other, the other thing that we did when I was here, the, you know, I was the advertising major, so I, you know all the PR., additional duties, you know, fell to me. So it's the 25th anniversary of Naval ROTC on campus, so we said, "Let's have a reunion. Let's have it in conjunction with the football game." And so, "We said, well, you know, let's invite all our alumni." Well, at the time, there were about 750 naval ROTC graduates; where, no one knew. So I went over to the Alumni Association and I said, "Hey, can you tell us where our alumni are?"

And Lou Liay, who was the executive director, he was the director of records at the Alumni Association at the time, later became executive director. Lou said, "I don't know who your people are." He says, "If you can tell me who your people are, we can possibly track them down." You know, for a couple months I spent hours and I had some of my students spending hours over at the Alumni Association going through the, going through the files and coding our graduates. We had a nice reunion but, the interesting thing was that that was the first instance where they ever appended an activity code on an alumni record.

Ok, so that you could go back and, so fast forward to today, there's probably 1200 or 1300 activity codes, correspond to fraternities or, you know, athletics or whatever. So that was the very first activity code. And it caught on.

SB: So your involvement with the Alumni Association had actually started when you, before you had become part of it?

JR: Yeah, and it was a fluke. I mean, it was the Alumni Association that sent Medicare out to California.

And it was the alumni association that you know, helped us, put on the reunion. And so that was my, you know, that was my introduction to the Alumni Association. So anyway, that was, those were sort of the... Oh, of course the big thing was, I, while I was here I met my wife, who was a senior in marketing. And I met her at a party at one of the ROTC staff officers' house. And we started dating and, one of the first dates we had. I played in U of I summer band, and so I was, I was playing in the band on the auditorium steps and she was sitting on a blanket, but she still married me after that.

SB: You must have made quite the impression.

JR: So anyway, yeah, we, I think back and just about every good thing in my life from my career, careers to my marriage of 50 years, you know somehow ties back to the University of Illinois. You just can't, you can just connect the dots and there you know, every decision you make.

SB: This place has a way of doing that for people.

JR: It does. So anyway, my time was up here. I, sent to Newport, Rhode Island, for a Navy school, to go back to sea, another destroyer tour. Ironically, 3 or 4 years later, job comes up in the Navy, the advertising manager for Navy Recruiting Command headquarters. So, I threw my hat in the ring for that and they said, "Well, you know, you know you're scheduled to, you know, go

on to be executive officer and a commanding officer of a ship.” And I said, “Yeah, but how many people in the Navy have bachelor’s and master’s degrees in advertising?” And they said, “I don’t think there are any.” “Well, you’ve got one.”

So, I wound up, I spent three years working in in Washington running the enlisted programs national advertising campaign at the time, this was 1980, 1980 to 83, we had a \$20 million budget. We had a New York City advertising agency, Ted Bates just like the one in Mad Men, same personalities. We had a minority agency in Chicago. That took care of our minority advertising and then we had a direct response, direct mail advertising agency also in Chicago. So, we had a big budget. And, so I used my University of Illinois training, education in the Navy. The advertising campaign at the time was, “Navy. It's not just a job, it's an adventure.” That went on for a number of years and, you know, it was successful when it was parodied on Saturday Night Live.

SB: I mean, how do how does really know they've made it?

JR: What’s that?

SB: How does anyone really know they've been successful unless they're on SNL.

JR: SNL. We were parodied on Saturday Night Live, so anyway, did that and then for three years, three more years I was deputy director of our Armed Forces Radio and television service, which was sort of College of Media related. We had the television and radio stations at overseas military bases around the world, and on Navy ships and submarines.

SB: Had you graduated with your master’s when you left your position teaching?

JR: I did.

SB: Did that happen to coincide? Or did you have to, like, finish any courses after you had left teaching.

JR: Well, no, I completed it while I was here.

SB: Well, that's good.

JR: I did radio, television. I like to say I was the number two guy and in the largest owned and operated network in the world. Back then, ABC, CBS and NBC could only own 7, they can only own and operate 7 stations. We had 30 or 40 stations.

SB: Transmitters all over and then sending to ships and submarines at sea?

JR: Right. So, did that. And then I had another, my final three years was, I was a regional public relations person for the Secretary of the Navy for the Midwest, so the upper Midwest states again, you know, related to my undergraduate and graduate training the end of that assignment. So, I had 20 years I was eligible to retire. Uh. While I was in that job in the Chicago area, I

volunteered for the, on the board of the West Suburban Illini Club, which was a regional Illini club. So I, you know, kept my contact with the university.

SB: And you're still applying your pair of Illini degrees, even as you're moving forward in the Navy.

JR: Right, so essentially the last, the last nine years in the Navy were pretty closely tied to my undergraduate and graduate experience. So I retired from the Navy in 1989, went to work for a real estate development company in the Chicago area that, among other things, we're looking at redeveloping closed military bases.

SB: God knows there were a lot of those at that time.

JR: Well, in 1989, there was a big round of base closures and I wound up back in Champaign. Working on the redevelopment of the former Chanute Air Force Base with Kyle Robeson, big name in Champaign, Urbana, Robeson School, Robeson Meadows, Robeson crossing. Used to be the Robeson Department store. He was one of the investors and then there were couple brothers from Rantoul, wrestlers, and so they purchased the 750 units of military base housing the officers club, the exchange, the commissary, the golf course. And so, I was the marketing guy for them. Renamed all the streets and on the golf course, so we gave it a golf course theme. And. So I was working myself out of a job there because of it.

Things were going very well and my wife is, the kids now I've got 4 kids. They're all in school. We're looking at college. My wife says, well, I think I'm going to look at the university and see if I can get on this extra help or something. And so, she did that and she worked at the Foundation for a while as an extra help. And then she saw she saw a position description for, basically, the membership marketing person for the Alumni Association. She says, "I think I'm going to apply for that. I said, "The hell you are. I'm going to apply for that." So, so of course I knew from, you know, 15-16 years earlier, I knew Lou Liay is now the executive director.

So, I applied for the job and eventually they re-designated Vice-President, Membership and Marketing, I did that for, from 1995 to 2011 and that was the first time I retired. Retired from the, actually, it was, retired from the Navy in 1989 and worked in the real estate business for six years. Alumni Association, 95 to 2011, retired again when university was tightening their belt, they offered buyouts for people. I was at retirement age, so I retired. Uh, 60 days later, after I met the minimum required time off, they hired me back 40% basis and I worked from 2011 to 2018 and, I retired just, well, COVID had just started or just was starting.

SB: So anyway, when are you gonna sign back on again, no one says you can't unretire a third time!

JR: I could. I think I'm, well, you know, I still am active with the Veterans Center. I'm an advisor there. And I do some proofreading and story generation for the alumni magazine. So, I'm still involved. Got 4 kids. All four have undergraduate degrees from Illinois. One has got a master's from Urbana, one has an MBA from. UIC. Two of my daughters in law are U of I grads. So, it's in the family.

SB: It certainly seems like it.

JR: Yeah.

SB: If I might walk back a little bit to, you know, when you when you got back here in 72 as a, to be, both start as a graduate student and to be a professor of naval science. Had you, when you were an undergraduate in ROTC before, had you thought about being on the other side of the classroom in the past like, you know when you would be in the Navy, had you considered, “Oh, I might like to do this from that side someday,” or was it something that came to you when you were at sea and away for a little bit?

JR: I don't think I had ever envisioned myself as a teacher. Although when I was, my first three years on active duty, I thought my dream job would be to be the Professor of Naval Science, the top, the top guy here. I mean, that's, and so anyway, that was sort of in the back of the head, but the problem is that those jobs don't go to mass communication specialists. They go to pilots, submariners, or, you know, ship drivers. So, pretty much my career choice in the Navy sort of got me off that track. I couldn't do that, and so I you know, I teased the guys that have, you know, since I was here as a student, I've known most of the people who have had that job. And I said, “You know, the advantage to what I did is, I don't get transferred at the end of three years. You know, I can stay as long as I want.

SB: So they would, so the professors of naval science who are all Navy officers, they would do three-year terms and then...?

JR: Three or four year assignments, yeah.

SB: Three or four years. And you know, when you got back here in 72, so you you've been away for three years at sea and doing, God, I can't believe I'm going to say this, Navy things. When you had been here as an undergraduate, you know the *in loco parentis* era was shifting away. You know, we when we spoke earlier, you mentioned there's, you know, shift in '67 and things are changing. You know, what was the atmosphere in campus climate like in 72 when you returned?

JR: You know, I was amazed. Uh, by 72, draft was over. Uh. Protests of 69, 70, 71 had petered out. Things were getting back to, you know, 65, 66-ish. You know the big protest in 1973 was streaking and my wife, who was then my fiancée, I recall in the spring of spring of 73. You know, we heard there's going to be a big mass streak on the Quad, and so we went down and saw the horseback streakers and the wheelchair streakers. You know, it was interesting.

The ROTC honors day, you know, they have a big, big thing where all the midshipmen cadets, you know, get their awards for being the top this or top that was in the Armory and, you know, the ladies of the DAR and the American Legion Auxiliary are there with their medals and their checks and stuff, and sure enough, three guys streak right across the Armory floor. So probably some hyperventilating. [Laughs]

SB: [Laughs] So it was kind of a shift in the sense of the, you know, the anti-war protests quieted down, you know, Vietnam was, you know, was the war, was the involvement over there was winding down. So it was becoming more of, kind of like just college again?

JR: Right. Right. Like I say, I missed it, my, my mother at the time was at the time I was gone, was working in Illini Hall. You know, fall 69, spring in 70, and she, she felt threatened because of the, you know, the protests on the. I know my dad wouldn't, he wouldn't let her drive to and from work he would come, you know, take her. Come pick her up because you know you don't want to have to walk across the Quad or walk across Wright St. to get your parking spot.

SB: Because the Guard was called out for some of that.

JR: And I missed it. Like I say, I missed it, not that I regret missing it, but I, you know.

SB: Like you've said, you graduated and went to sea just before it heated up, and by the time you arrived it had quieted down by the time you got back.

JR: Yeah. Very much so. The other, the other thing, particularly the students, who were in ROTC. It was a different mindset from the time when I was here, the time when I came back to teach. When I was in school and perhaps a decade before, very much influenced by the draft, you're motivated, this was a "you're hedging your bets, you know you're going to serve might as well do it on your own terms."

The kids that were students, students that were here in 72, 73, 74, different motivation. You know, they were motivated by patriotism, patriotism, the scholarship opportunities. You know the adventure or whatever. It was a totally different mindset. I enjoyed teaching. Those students, because they were there because they wanted to be, not because they were, you know, semi forced to be.

SB: Mm hm.

JR: One of the young men that, Bob Work, Robert O. Work.

SB: That rings a bell.

JR: The honorable Robert O. Work. Deputy Secretary of Defense under both the Obama and Trump, didn't last very long with Trump, but I had a Marine Corps major general in my class. He became, he wasn't a major general..

SB: That'd be something to have, a two-star in your naval sciences class.

JR: A Navy 2 star. So it was a pretty, very successful group of people.

SB: If I'm doing my math right, you'd be about 25, 26, 27 when you're, was it you know, because you were not, you were relatively close to the students in age. Was it easier for you

to connect with them than maybe an older professor or, you know, perhaps a captain or a commander in charge would have?

JR: Yeah, I think so. And I think the advantage was recency of experience. OK. I mean, I've just been there.

SB: Yeah.

JR: Yeah. So it's like today somebody that has come back from Afghanistan has got more credibility than somebody who maybe served in the first Iraq war, you know, different.

SB: Mm hm. It's more applicable, you can relate.

JR: It's applicable. So no, I think the other thing, this is just part of the military culture. You know you're taught to respect the rank. OK, so you know, ideally, they respect rank and the person. But I mean, even as an undergrad, you know that if you're a freshman, you're in awe of the seniors, OK, they're 3, three or four years older than you. But you know they've been through it.

SB: They've been there and done that.

JR: You go to Boy Scout camp, the first year campers are in awe of the high schoolers you know and so that you know, I think. Now I'm just speculating here. It's easier to be a 25-year-old, 26 year old Assistant Professor of Naval. Science then a 26- or 27-year-old professor of anything else, OK?

SB: Yeah.

JR: You know, that's just the way it is.

SB: When you said when you spoke to the administration and advertising to get your admittance as a graduate student, you'd mentioned that you've been working 18 hour days and balancing your time in the Navy. What was the experience like of being, you know, you were a student and you were teaching, you know, how did you keep that, how did that work for you in keeping that balance?

JR: Well, part of that is just maturity and time management. When I was an undergrad, I was like every undergrad, I think is you put things off you, you wait till the last minute to write your paper. You cram for your exam. You study late night.

SB: Yeah.

JR: I mean, I was used to getting up at 5:30 in the morning. And you know, getting a half day's work done before 9:00, you know? And. And so I had that discipline, in grad school, never spent an all-nighter. Whether I had, you know, podium time, you know, classroom teaching, whether I

had office hours or was I preparing to teach or doing my class work, you know, I, I'd be at work for the library at 7:30 in the morning. 5:00 in the afternoon, I'm done, because I've got it all done.

And social life in grad school was a lot of fun.

SB: Did you still have the same hangouts that you did at places as an undergraduate? Or did you maybe gravitate to Champaign or Urbana instead of Campustown?

JR: Well, I think Stan's was gone by then and that was our, that was the go to spot when I was, but I think, campus-wise, Murphy's was the place for graduate students and faculty. Murphy's was a, was not quite the frat bar that that, you know, the others were.

SB: Yeah.

JR: So that was, you know, a lot of people went to Murphy's.

SB: I'm a proud regular of Murphy's, even today.

JR: I like Murphy's, Murphy's has expanded, but it hasn't changed, OK?

SB: It's still, the vibes in there are very similar.

JR: Yeah, so that's, yeah, there, there were three bachelors on this, the ROTC staff, or actually two on the staff and one was here getting his doctorate in nuclear engineering. But the three of us, we pretty much had a routine. Monday night, we'd go to my apartment and Monday Night Football, Tuesday night, we, House of Chin and Hawaii 5-O and whatever. Wednesday night was date night. You know, it was sort of a, you know, the weekend was do your laundry and stuff like that.

SB: You had a good routine going.

JR: We had a routine going. But House of Chin, Jolly Roger was a pizza place.

SB: Where is that? Where were they at?

JR: Well, you know where Timpone's is?

SB: Yeah.

JR: Well, Ray Timpone, Sr., who had Timpone's, had a bar over in Urbana or restaurant over Urbana by Bunnies. You know where Bunnies is?

SB: Yeah.

JR: OK, it's over there. It's, it's since been torn down, but that was that was a go to place and Murphy's, obviously, Murphy's was a...

SB: And you mentioned there were, you know, a couple of these folks were other young Navy officers who were teaching. How many professors or Navy personnel would there be? The staff of the unit at the time?

JR: Well, there was a professor of naval science, who was, you know, 20 plus year guy.

SB: He'd be that, he was in charge?

JR: Yeah, it was a navy captain or a marine colonel.

SB: Those ranks are equivalent, right?

JR: Yeah. And you'd have an executive officer who was a commander or a lieutenant colonel. There was always a marine officer instructor who was in charge of drill and physical training. He was a major or captain Marine. You'd have a gunnery sergeant, you know a marine assistant. And then there were four Navy lieutenants that taught the four grade levels and usually there was a submariner, there was a surface person, there was an aviator and, you know.

SB: To give the students the opportunity to meet someone from each of the different disciplines they might go to?

JR: Right, right. So, it's bigger today, it's smaller. But of course everything is smaller today. Except administration. [Laughs]

SB: But that's always growing.

JR: Student body is and student body has not grown at the same exponential rate that administration has anyway. So. So that's the way it was.

SB: And did you, did the Navy and the Marines have much interaction with the Air Force and the Army personnel you were sharing the building with?

JR: We did.

SB: Uh huh.

JR: We did. Yeah. I think that was, my wedding, I had all the services were represented.

SB: Ah. Were you married here?

JR: I was married here, yeah.

SB: And so not only, not only did you meet your wife here, you guys tied the knot here as well.

JR: Ohh, she was a university brat, too. Her dad was a business manager in civil engineering.

SB: Had you known her when you were younger?

JR: [Shakes head no.]

SB: No. But you're, maybe you walked past each other once or twice at the fair or something when you were young.

JR: Who knows? She's five years younger than me.

SB: That's really something. What was it like being a being a newly married man? Were you, were you here on staff as a professor for very long after you guys tied the knot or?

JR: No, we got married, we got married the day after I transferred.

SB: Oh., ok, so not long at all, yeah.

JR: So, well, there there's a story to that. We were originally going to get married, I was going to be transferred at the end of June and we were going to get married at the end of July. But that meant I had to fly out to Newport, find a place to live as a bachelor for a month. Fly back to get married and then go back and we realized that that if we were married the day before, actually, it's the day before I transferred. If we were married before I was transferred, she would be considered a dependent and all her expenses would be paid. So we moved the wedding back a month.

SB: Yeah.

JR: To beat the system.

SB: You certainly wouldn't be the first military couple to tie the knot at an expedient time.

JR: It happened a lot in in World War 2.

SB: Yeah, it's, but yeah, very much so. You know, and when you, if I may pivot a little bit, you know when you came back and you retired from the Navy in '89, had you ever considered staying in the Navy longer than 20 years?

JR: Actually, I could have and it would have been attractive, but we were settled in the Chicago suburbs. We were in Glen Ellyn. I had two, two places I could go as a follow-on assignment from my Chicago assignment. I could have gone to London as a public affairs officer for the Navy component in Europe or to Naples, Italy in a similar role for the Mediterranean and Africa, in the Middle East. The problem, the problem with both of those overseas tours and a family of four, you know, five.

SB: Yeah.

JR: Wife and four school-age kids is the is the disruption to the kids and the schooling and whatever. Then you get over to Europe, and you have to get back. So, I mean, they'll send you back, but you never know what the options are going to be then. And trying to, if you decided to retire there, you know, doing the job search... So as it turns out, I had opportunities in, at the 20 year point in Chicago, so for family reasons we decided to, you know, to punch out at the time.

SB: It made the most sense.

JR: I would have never wound up back at the Alumni Association...

SB: Of course.

JR: It's one of those, one of those, karma.

SB: It led you here. You know when you came back and you became involved again in campus, you know, working for the Alumni Association. If I might ask a third time about the, you know, the campus climate, you know, and what and the culture here. You know, you'd been a student in the waning days of the *in loco parentis* era and seeing that shift, you know, come back when there was a bit of a shift back towards traditional college in a way, you know, and then you're coming back here in the 90's the wall has fallen. The Cold War is over. You know the information age is coming. You know and culture has, of course, shifted. You know what was it like to, what was, were the students like? What was campus like? You know, in the mid-90s and you know and how did it compare to the way that you remembered it?

JR: I think in the, when I came back in the 90s, it was almost as if it were 1965 in terms of focus. The kids, the kids that I knew, of course, the ones that you see at the alumni association, the student ambassadors, the student alumni. They're pretty squared-away, kids, but I mean that the career focused, very much career focused, preppy, OK? The preppy look was in. It was, you know, it was like, 30 years before, 40 years before.

So was, in that regard, it was, now the challenge is, my, I was responsible for revenue generation for the Alumni Association. Membership, membership, you know, giving all the, you know, that wasn't primary thing, foundation and campus development. We're looking for donations, you know, but couple things that were hiccups. The Chief, elimination of Chief Illiniwek. That was, for the members of the Alumni Association who tended to be older, that was devastating. And a lot of anger, a lot of anger and, you know we did a survey at the time, that, for political purposes, was never widely released, but of the alumni that responded to the survey, 80% for the chief, 20% not.

SB: It was that skewed.

JR: It was that skewed. I suppose if you did it now, with the, you know, the Chief's been gone.

SB: There's more time, yeah.

JR: It wouldn't be 20-80. But it would be sort of like the country is today.

SB: Yeah. And if I may, if I may ask, when you ran this survey, was this in 07, right around when the Chief was retired or was it in the 90s when those conversations were happening but hadn't coalesced yet or sometime in between?

JR: This would have been, this would have been in conjunction with a, we did a, the directory, alumni directory, in 1998, which is the 125th anniversary of the Alumni Association. Every addressable graduate got a piece of mail and it was a census. Basically it was, "Here's what we know about you." We pre-populated with, you know, name, class, year or whatever. And so you know, update your occupation, all these, all these things and the backside of it was attitudinal survey, value of your degree, whatever. And then there was a very carefully neutral, you know, carefully worded neutral thing on the chief. And so, so you know it's skewed by the people who respond, I mean that was. You know, but everybody had a chance to respond. And the people who responded are the ones who feel strongly on one side or the other. So. So I think it was a pretty good feeling of, so, and our board members. We, the Alumni Association have to take a stand. We have to support our alumni, I say, "You know, wait a minute, do you want to be the alumni of this faction, the Association of this faction, you want to be the Association of this faction, or do you want to represent...?" So, my approach to that, was our responsibility as an Alumni Association is to be an honest broker. We tell alumni what the university is thinking and doing without passing judgment on it.

SB: You're passing the information.

JR: We advised the university, here's how alumni respond. So, you know, I thought that honest broker role was very appropriate for an association because you could see as time goes, you know, the opinions are going to. And so you want to lose your future to the past. You know, the reality is, it's the older alumni that have the resources for, to guilt the university, although if, you know the people say, "If you drop the Chief, I will never give another cent." Well, most of those never have anyways, you know, so.

SB: I've heard that before.

JR: So, as time went on though, the university has been more direct and that you, Alumni Association, need to endorse our... so I think, and of course, the resources, you know, they. So, I think, the independence of the Alumni Association is, has waned over the years.

SB: It used to be more independent of the university administration?

JR: It used to be financially, it was independent and it isn't so much anymore. And part of that is the the need for private giving has just gone crazy and it's the reality we live in today. So that was, the Chief was the first thing, the admissions scandal was another thing that that just really torqued alumni off.

SB: That was the clout scandal in like, 07-08?

JR: That was the clout, yeah, the admissions. And so, that's sort of a segue into to the, one of the one of the things, one of the things, one of the ideas I had is that you were looking. We were looking, looking at administrators that were coming in from other institutions. Michigan, for one, but others. And they had no concept of our history, traditions and culture. So, you got to be careful with the Chief Illiniwek issue. The current chancellor³, I think he's, God bless him, he has navigated that pretty darn well, but that hasn't always been the case.

So that that, you know, that's an important tradition. It was a tradition for many years. But we don't do that anymore, OK? We don't do the bonfires anymore. We don't do this. I mean, there's new traditions that have supplanted the old traditions and you know, that's just that's the reality of it.

SB: Things change.

JR: So the other one, that got more than one administrator, was the shared governance.

SB: And what was that exactly? I've heard the term, but I'm not quite familiar with it.

JR: Well, the idea that you build consensus with the faculty before you, you know, dictate something. So, we had we had the Chancellor, the President, rather, Hogan comes in. And he's got a mandate from, he thinks he has a mandate from the Board of Trustees to consolidate the back office functions of the university. And so, basically, you've got the university and then you have the campuses but the back office functions, you know, Purchasing, Legal, all the HR, all these things. Why does each campus have to have a separate?

SB: Mm hm. Each of the three.

JR: Each of the three. Why does it have to have their own everything? When it's much more efficient. Well, that was the mandate he thought he had. And he may have had it. From the Trustees. But so, he comes in and we're going to centralize stuff. Chancellors revolt. I mean, totally revolt. So, he's gone, OK? I mean, the Board of Trustees doesn't back him. I mean, maybe that's not what they told him originally, but they sort of backed down. So what happened is now we've got three separate universities. I mean, totally, they're not even. I mean, the only thing that is the Board of Trustees and the central administration, which is, yeah.

So, you know, everything is decentralized and that's the way it is now. But you know, that could have been avoided, I think if Hogan had understood that this campus has a very strong tradition of, the Deans are, Deans are very much involved in overall policy, so. We put together a committee called the History and Traditions Committee. And it was a group of influential alumni, emeritus, faculty, alumni leaders, donors. We said we ought to create a syllabus of 10 or 15 things every administrator needs to know about campus traditions and cultures.

Here are the sacred cows. OK. Tread on them lightly. OK. And so, so this committee we come up with, you know, with the list of things. And of course, nobody avails themselves that you know,

³ Robert J. Jones

it's one of those exercises, but it gave us an idea of, why don't we tell the story? Of the university, how it came to be 3 campuses, you know, it started out as one and then we got a medical center here and we acquired it and then, you know, go along and then World War II and Galesburg and and, you know, do it, the idea, like a subway, you know?

SB: Yeah, yeah.

JR: Diagram and here's how we got to where we are, here are the milestones and then superimpose the milestones in American history that you know, that sort of relate to the, and you know, here's the here's the Land Grant Cct. And here's the, you know, the all the way. And so, we're going to do this. We've got a beautiful wall in the Alumni Association, let's have this as, sort of a, tell the story of how the university came to be. And, so then, "Well, why don't we do a history and traditions website?" A portal rather than to create a site, you know, point to history and tradition topics that exists in various units.

SB: Yeah.

JR: OK. And so, we did that. And then then the sesquicentennial comes up, and say, "Well, how can we do something," and then it dawned on me that, you know, I had kids going to college visits. And, you know, frankly, the University of Illinois at the time was pretty underwhelming. We were pretty, pretty satisfied that we could get all the candidates we wanted and you know, we didn't need to recruit or toot our horn. You know, you go to Notre Dame and see their visitor center. You go to other, you know, other campuses and they've got amazing visitor centers or welcome centers.

So why don't we, why don't we take this timeline idea, expand it to, have exhibits permanent exhibits, rotating exhibits, whatever. So we, the history and traditions committee, this group sort of expands a little bit and we start working on it and we get some really good volunteers. I don't know if you know Lex Tate.

SB: I don't think I've ever met him, but I know who that is.

JR: Lex Tate's husband, Warren Tate, is the sportswriter, she was a, she was the public affairs for 3 or 4 presidents of the university, and a great writer. So, she starts and several other, you know, people well.

Well, we find out that, you know, we got a lot of good content, no consistent style, you know, no consistent theme. We need to get a consultant in here to sort of guide our, we did an RFP, we brought a consultant in and they came up with this, yeah, well, you're talking about a welcome center is what you're talking about. You're talking about a visitor's center. And so, they came up with this magnificent plan and we started working on it. About the time I retired. So this is going to be my retirement project, my 40%, my 40% project.

SB: Yeah.

JR: Once again, can't do it on a part time basis.

SB: Yeah.

JR: So, we looked for a full-time staffer to guide it, I can continue to support it, our volunteers could continue to provide input, but somebody to execute the plan. That's where young Mr. Ross came in and he's been spectacular. He's been spectacular.

SB: Yeah. It's always a treat to work with him or give him a hand with something.

JR: So, so basically we, a lot of fits and starts we continued to develop content for a long time, identify artifacts that people were hoarding in their basements and their departmental offices and whatever. And of course, Ryan worked with Ellen here, so we got an idea of what kinds of things you have. And so, we wound up with the, everything but the funding. And we went, I think we went through three chancellors and two presidents during this period. And so, every time there was a change, we had to resell the concept to the Administration. Originally, we were going to have it in the library, we were going to have homages to the other two campuses. That was a tactical error.

SB: That didn't go over so well.

JR: That did not go over well, they don't exist, OK. So, anyway we finally, uh, Bill Sturtevant at the foundation identified the Richmond family, the Richmonds had already donated the main floor gallery to the, for the Alumni Association, they also did the teaching studio for WILL. And so when he presented the welcome gallery to the Richmonds, it resulted in a in a significant gift and so basically all the planning had been done. It was just, execute it.

SB: When Mrs. Richmond passed away her family, or they made some donation of papers and material to us, and that was one of my processing projects when I was an undergraduate.

JR: Yeah.

SB: So, I got familiar with, you know, what an Illini legacy they've had.

JR: Well, and the Richmond Tower, the bell tower at the courthouse is Richmond's, very, very generous, generous people. So that, you know, my legacy at the Alumni Center, Alumni Association, I think is the concept of the Welcome Gallery, which Ryan executed to perfection.

SB: Yeah. It's come to fruition in such a wonderful way, and it's always a treat to go and see it.

JR: The other, the other thing I'm pretty proud of, that at my time at the Alumni Association was 2002. It was just after 9/11. We had a group of World War 2 veterans came to the president of the Alumni Association at the time and said, "The 1946, at Memorial Day, the President of the university pledged that we would have a World War 2 memorial befitting our sacrifice. And when are you going to deliver?" Well, the boss, I was the only veteran on staff, says "You deal

with the veterans.” So anyway, we put together a steering committee of alumni and retired faculty, Dan Perino was one of them.

SB: Was he a World War II vet?

JR: He was a World War II vet. John Cribbet, who was the Dean Emeritus of law. Tim Nugent, of course, Galesburg, World War II and DRES and veterans from all the services and all the wars. I mean, they were, it was a steering committee of about 20 people. And, so, chaired by Steve Van Arsdell, who was in Urbana High School, he was a year behind me at Urbana High School, but a good friend. He was at the time chair of the Deloitte and Touche, OK, worldwide. He eventually became chair of the Alumni Association Board, but at the time he was just on the steering committee. And, anyway, we did a lot of researching. You know how other schools had done it and, of course, Memorial Stadium was, how you going to beat Memorial Stadium? You know, that's World War Two, World War One. And, so we had some input from faculty here and, you know, it was a multi-million dollar project and you know, we want to honor the promise. But where are we going to come up with the money? And so in looking at the original documents from Memorial Stadium, the book *The Story of the Stadium*. There's a page in there that talks about, you know, 10,000 served in in World War I. And who knows, in future wars, maybe 20,000 well, turns out it was 20,000. Well, I mean, they predicted it in. 1924. And so we said, “Wait a minute, the original dedication leaves open the opportunity to extend the dedication.”

SB: Of the stadium?

JR: Of the stadium. And so, we did, we went through Archives, *Di*, the alumni publications. And we identified at the time 945 additional people, Illini, who had been killed since World War I, so one was down in the Banana Wars, '20s. You know, up until, at the time, Gulf One. And so, we raised about \$100,000, erected four limestone tablets in the entrance to the colonnades.

Same quarry from the limestone for Memorial Stadium in Indiana. And we added the names of the 945 and in 2002 at Homecoming, had a big rededication. So that was something that I'm proud of, we did it without, in a proper way without spending an incredible amount of money to create something that could never match.

SB: How can you top Memorial Stadium?

JR: They, I mean, we had to convince DIA because they, you know. “You know, this is our stadium.” “Well, yeah, it's your stadium, but it's an opportunity for broader engagement.” Yeah, you, invite the families back, you know, and I can't tell you how many times while I was still working that I'd get a request and go over and get a ladder out and chalk and the crack paper and do a rubbing and send to some relative.

SB: Like they do at the wall in Washington.

JR: Exactly. So, I mean, I was doing that for a long time. I think there, there's about three names that still have to be added from Afghanistan.

SB: But they will? Is there space?

JR: No, there's no space for that. So they got to come up with another...

SB: Something.

JR: Well, they could, below that thing is to say, get another block of limestone it could be done. But somebody's got to spearhead it.

SB: Yeah.

JR: You know.

SB: That's remarkable, Joe, that that you've had, this, you know, the university has touched your life in so many ways. You know, from growing up next to a frat house when you first arrived in Champaign all the way through...

JR: Yeah.

SB: ...spearheading these initiatives at the Alumni Association. If I'm doing my math right, you and your wife and all four of your kids and a couple of children in law are all alumni?

JR: Yep.

SB: So just, looking back, if I may, you know. You know, we've been speaking for almost two hours today, and well over two hours last time we spoke. You've told so many wonderful stories and recounted so much, you know, is there anything that I haven't asked you about, you know, about your time here or anything in relation to that that, you know, anything that stands out in your mind as a fun story, or an anecdote or an experience that you'd like to recount?

JR: I'll think about it tonight. It'll come to me, it'll come to me at midnight.

SB: Well, I wouldn't say no to a third visit either.

JR: Ok, well, if I come up with something, we've covered the thing...

SB: You're always welcome here at the Archives. I'm thrilled to get your perspective. I mean, talking to alum from any time is fascinating cause everyone's got their own experience about how this place has affected them and how they've interacted with it and what they've taken away. But you've had so many of these different interactions throughout your life and you're still here, you said you're still involved over at the Veterans Center. And you're coming here and letting me talk your ear off and ask a bunch of questions. So, your involvement is and you still live here in town, I assume?

JR: [Nods] As a matter of fact, this is another interesting thing. I looked back at the first contribution I gave to the University of Illinois was in 1969. The band department wanted to commission an oil painting of the second director of bands, Mark Hindsley. Mark Hindsley was here from 1934 to, 1934 to 1990-something. I should know this by heart.

SB: But you said 1934 to 1990-something?

JR: Yeah.

SB: Wow.

JR: OK, he was the, you know, might've been, he might have been 80s.

SB: Well, still, that's half a century.

JR: Take that back. 70-something.

SB: 70 something.

JR: Yeah, I know the lineage of the band directors, but anyway, so anyway, yeah. 1970-71. So, he was here only the second director of bands. But it was a \$5 gift for this oil painting, hangs in the the Harding Band building.

SB: [To Ellen Swain, unlocking the door.] It's unlocked, Ellen!

JR: Hi, Ellen!

Ellen Swain, Archivist for Student Life and Culture: I can be quiet.

SB: We're about done talking.

ES: Ok, okay.

SB: Joe has shared so much and just for the recording, this is Archivist of Student Life and Culture, Ellen Swain who is popping in for a moment. We've been speaking about, he's got so much of a wonderful perspective. But what were you saying about the oil painting?

JR: So, Mr. Hindsley was the director of bands when I was a student, and he would direct the Marching Illini for the Star Spangled Banner and for the Three-in-One. He had long before giving up the Marching Illini role, but he, you know, he was the head of the band department. So anyway, we moved back to town. My wife is from Champaign. I'm from Urbana. She went to Champaign Central. I went to Urbana High school, big rivals in those days. And so, the big question is where we're going to live.

SB: Savoy! [Laughs] Sorry, carry on.

JR: So, so, you know, we're looking through real estate listings and whatever. And back then, the *News-Gazette* on Saturday had a real estate supplement and there was always a cover photo on the front page of the supplement. And, I said, "That's Mr. Hindsley's house. I've always wanted to see the inside of that house." It's a mid-century modern house. I said, "I've always wanted to see it." said.

And so we told the realtor said, you know, this is everything we don't want. It's on the corner. It's on a busy street. It's a ranch. But I want to see it anyway, so we go and we've got the kids with us and kids say, "Get it!" So...

SB: Don't tell me...

JR: We bought it.

SB: You bought it.

JR: I live in the Hindsley house. And it's a little museum to Mark Hindsley, and there's a lot, a lot of artifacts from his time.

SB: That's remarkable that you want to go tour on a whim and just see and...

JR: It was, you know, you know, it's three blocks from Urbana High School. Just, you know, right across you can see it from here actually if you go up on the hill. You can see it. But so that's we wound up, we wound up, we wound up in the Hindsley House. So, let's get you know, he was a very detailed guy. And his memoirs are in the Urbana Archives, Champaign County Archives. And so, you read through his memoirs and, you know, building of the house and all the famous composers and politicians and whatever that he's entertained in that house. So, we're playing a playing a piece at the summer band last Thursday night by Norman Dello Joio, who is a, you know, 1950s, sixties vintage composer and I said, "I've seen a picture of him sitting in my living room."

SB: What a connection there! If I might ask, what you mentioned, on the topic of the bands, I was keen to ask this and forgot to earlier. When you returned to U of I both for your stint in the mid-70s as a grad student and professor, and then to the Alumni Association, were you ever involved with either SAE or the Marching Illini as like an advisor or an alumnus.

JR: No. No, I didn't. Like I said, I did play in the summer band one summer where I was, while I was on the staff here. And when we did that Navy reunion back, the 25th anniversary, I did the, I did get the, Everett Kissinger was the director of the Marching Illini at the time. He'd been the director when I was at school and we got him to do a pregame show. Saluting the Navy, Navy ROTC. So I, you know, I did have interaction with him, but I...

SB: You didn't, that had been, those were your experiences as an undergraduate, and you had moved, moved forward and moved on a little bit.

JR: Yeah.

SB: And one last question, if I might ask, I'd be, you mentioned him very briefly earlier in our last conversation, I'd be remiss if I didn't ask. When you were a student, did you ever have to go and stand before Dean Turner for something?

JR: Yes. [Laughs]

SB: Oh, you did? Well, what was, you don't have to tell me what you did, but I'm just keen to ask about what that experience was like.

JR: Well, the SAE fraternity, and it's not just the Illinois chapter, it's done at many of the chapters. I mentioned the Paddy Murphy dance, the Irish wake concept, where the house is decorated as a funeral home.

So decorating, and of course, this is the pledge dance, so it's all the freshmen. And putting it on and so you know, one of the sad things about funerals is I don't think they do it so much anymore, but back in the day, you know, all the flowers at the at the funeral service. They take them, take them out, dump them on the on the grave. After they closed the grave, well, we needed some flowers and they were going to, you know, they were thrown away and they were still good. And so we, we had flowers at our Paddy Murphy dance.

SB: Where did you get the flowers?

JR: Well, it was Mount Hope Cemetery, which was very close to campus. [Laughs]

SB: How appropriate to get some funeral flowers from! [Laughs]

JR: Walking distance. So, Dean Turner had the pledge class, so standing at attention in front of his desk.

SB: Is that the same desk that Ellen has?

JR: Yes, yes.

SB: Same desk.

JR: Yeah. So, so back when I came back, on staff here, Alumni Association staff, I was over in student services building. I had a meeting with Bill Riley, who was the Dean of Students at the time. And I looked down at that desk, and I said, "Ohh, that's familiar."

SB: Was that your only interaction with Dean Turner in your time? What was he like as a, as a, as a person? If you recall anything.

JR: Well, he would come to the fraternity house for a dinner here or there. You know, an anniversary celebration.

SB: Oh, he was an SAE! That's right!

JR: He was the national president of SAE. As was Tommy Arkle Clark for ATO. So they were both dyed-in-the-wool Greeks. He was sort of a, gave the impression of being sort of stern, but I think he was, he was, most of the time, jovial, friendly.

SB: So, when he when he called you all into his office to discuss your appropriation of the flowers, was his attitude disciplinary or was it more like, "Well, if it had been in my time I wouldn't have gotten caught"?

JR: I think it was, I think it was more like, "Don't embarrass me again," OK?

SB: He wasn't someone you wanted to be on the bad side of. And you wanted to not embarrass him.

JR: Well, no, I mean back, back then, there were many opportunities to be dismissed from the university and the, that, you know, discipline was one, I mean. Uh. You could be dismissed from the university for having an alternative lifestyle back then.

SB: Even as attitudes were changing around that sort of thing in the 60s, it was still there?

JR: Well, see I think, I don't know exactly the timeline. But I think Dean Turner did not adapt well to the changes in society and I think he was given the opportunity to chair the Centennial celebration at the university, and so basically, "Here's a great opportunity. Wish you take this opportunity and so." So that was a way of easing him out.

But he was not. I mean, he was he was definitely an old school, you know? This is how gentlemen behave. This is how gentlemen do things, you know.

SB: Well, think of where he learned all of that.

JR: Yeah.

SB: From the traditionalist himself.

JR: Yeah, so he was very traditional, you know and the same thing. The Marching Illini by the late 60s, was steeped in tradition. It was all male. It did military maneuvers. The drill was military. It played traditional marches and you know, occasional, you know, popular song. And membership, because many of the upperclassmen at the time had come in when it was a means of getting out of ROTC, of satisfy the ROTC, so I don't think you have the, you didn't. Certainly, you didn't have the enthusiasm and esprit de corps you have today. OK, it was traditional and traditional was not a trending term in in the late 60s, so it was, and the director Everett Kissinger. He was an old school guy. You know, he was probably in his 60s, he was a, you know, Fred Turner like-guy, you know this is a disciplined military thing and it was and, so he was resistant to change and even before they opened ROTC up to women. I think that was in 1970.

You know, he had been approached about, you know, admitting women into the, you know, over my dead body, you know, this is the way it is. This is the way, you know, because and he had the had the the justification was well, they're not allowed in ROTC, so they're not allowed in band, which is and adjunct of ROTC.

And most of the other schools that had compulsory ROTC and whatever had integrated their bands long before.

SB: We were one of the holdouts?

JR: We were one of the holdouts. Mark Hindsley, who was the director of bands, he was called into the service in World War II. He was a Lieutenant Colonel, he directed, you know, he was in charge of all the Air Force bands, Army Air Corps bands. For the war. So he was a traditionalist too. And, so by the time, you know, 71, 72 new guy, Gary Smith comes in as director of the Marching Illini. And Gary is a young, energetic guy, he's not tied to the past and he introduces a whole lot of, I mean, we got women, we do all kinds of formations, play pop music, have themed halftime shows and stuff like that. And Gary's great guy. And he did great things with the band. But you know he takes credit for reinventing the band. And the, "Gary, you know, Santa Claus could have reinvented the band." OK? It was, the morale was not there and the time that... You know, that generation of leaders, Fred Turner, Everett Kissinger. They just did not react well to the changes to society in 1967, 68, 69 and a lot of the Deans and faculty members, you know, that was their cue to move on.

SB: Hang it up.

JR: Hang it up. So, you know, interesting to have lived through that time and as I've said earlier, I said, you know, people that were in my pledge class in the fraternity came in the fall of 65. By 1969, 1970 you sort of, self-defined, either fell into the old generation or fell into the new generation. And I was, I fell into the old generation.

SB: You weren't the one that Roger Daltrey was singing about in "My Generation."

JR: No, no.

SB: But you've been here for so much of it, which is just, which is just remarkable. But this is...

JR: But I would, I would say. Since the days of Fred Turner and Dan Perino, and people like that. I don't think there's very many people in town that have a span that goes back to 1952, you know, interrupted, but never disconnected. Never disconnected, interrupted, never disconnected but the problem is, most people aren't interested.

SB: Yeah.

JR: You know, they live in the present as you say.

SB: Well, that's why we're here at the archives and that's why, I mean, I get, I don't know if I've mentioned to you, my folks are both alums a couple of times over. So, I grew up in an Illinois household.

JR: And now, you're from, where?

SB: The southwest suburbs of Chicago.

JR: Lemont?

SB: Lemont, yes. So, not far, but...

JR: One of my sons is in Oak Forest.

SB: Oh, right by, yeah.

JR: Another one is in Evergreen Park. Daughter's up in Rogers Park. And then one son here in Champaign.

SB: Oh, so they're all relatively close by. That must be very nice.

JR: The Chicagoans married South Side Chicago girls and they won't live anywhere but. My Urbana High School grandson repeats history. He marries a Champaign Central girl. And they won't move out of the area bounded by Kirby, Springfield, State Street and Mattis. So they're fixed.

SB: That's another way of approaching your life down here in Champaign. So interesting, so he was, you were an Urbana man who married a Champaign girl and ended up in Urbana. He's an Urbana man who married a Champaign girl and ended up in Champaign. Well, Joe, you know, I, we've been speaking for two hours and I just cannot thank you enough for coming by these two times and sharing your story with us. And you know, we'll, and I'll be sure to get you a transcript when I've written it and copies as well. And this will eventually go up on our new oral history portal, which I can show you before you head out today.

JR: Well, I hope you edit it down.

SB: Maybe a bit.

JR: Please do.

SB: But no, it's just remarkable.

JR: I mean, I have some comments about personnel, the university that probably would ruffle feathers.

SB: What are they going to do, fire you?

JR: Can't do that.

SB: Well, Joe, thank you so very much, I can't tell you how much. I appreciate it. So, save that, and see how... END.