



Chet Houser Oral History Interview, July 16, 2015

Title

“A Military Experience of Turbulent Times”

Date

July 16, 2015

Location

Houser residence, Albany, Oregon.

Summary

In the interview, Houser details his family background and upbringing in Albany, Oregon, noting the impact that was made upon him by his parents' divorce and also commenting on his experience of school and of major world events that occurred during his adolescence. He then discusses his transition to college life at Oregon State University, recalling the obligations set forth by the scholarship that funded his education, reflecting on his academic progression as a student in Agricultural Economics, and recounting his experiences as both a member and as president of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity.

Of particular note are Houser's memories of his years in Army ROTC during the escalation of the Vietnam War. In speaking of this time, Houser shares his thoughts on student protests of the era, noting in particular the Anti-Military Ball and the Black Student Union Walkout at OSU, as well as the Kent State shootings in May 1970.

The session then turns its attention to Houser's military career, including his multiple assignments at home and abroad, the advancement of his training as a war planner, and a few particularly interesting projects to which he was exposed, including early work on GPS as well as weaponized lasers. Houser concludes this section of the interview with thoughts on changes in military tactics since the Vietnam War.

The primary focus of the remainder of the interview is Houser's work as a civilian public employee. In this, he details his activities working as a trainer for Oregon OSHA, the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and the Oregon Parks Service. The session concludes with notes on family, activities in retirement, and words of advice for students of today.

Interviewee

Chet Houser

Interviewer

Mike Dicianna

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/houser/>

Transcript

Mike Dicianna: OK, today is Thursday, July 16th, 2015, and we have the pleasure of interviewing a member of the class of 1970, Chester "Chet" Houser. My name is Mike Dicianna, I'm an oral historian for the OSU Sesquicentennial Oral History Project. This interview is being conducted at the Houser home in Albany.

Chet, we always like to start with a short biographical sketch of our Beavers, like where were you born, early family life and childhood experiences.

Chet Houser: Alright, I was born February 9, 1948, here in Albany, Oregon. I lived out on Waverly Drive, which currently is part of a parking lot for Carl's Jr, across from Fred Meyer. But it was a half-acre farm. My family had a large garden, mom canned everything, we stored things in an insulated room that had sawdust for walls - it was probably eight by six - and just filled the shelves. One year - Dad was a dump truck driver, cement driver, and a mechanic - and one year we went through a recession and he didn't work all winter, and I found out from an uncle a couple years ago that mom was quite proud that they lived on twenty-seven dollars for the entire winter. Only because they could live on those canned goods.

At one time we had a milk cow, we had a pig, we had chickens. Basically we were poor but I didn't know it. We just lived like everybody else and we got by. You knew you didn't have brand new clothes or you didn't get to go to Disneyland like some other kids in the high school did, but we just did things, we got by.

One of the things that I remember is, dad would say, "when I say jump, don't ask how high." I remember walking behind him when he rototilling and I was picking rocks up, and that was the comment. You would talk about being tired or you didn't want to do that, that wasn't an option. You did it. He expected immediate obedience, there was no room for sassing. The same thing with mom, "don't sass me," was one of those quotes. I got a belt one time, I got cuffed upside the head by my dad a couple of times. I actually used to flinch a little bit with sudden moves, when somebody would move their hands near my face. I remember one time, mom took after me with a frying flipper, for sassing her. So discipline was an issue in the house that I grew up in.

My folks were divorced when I was twelve. It was a very trying time for my two sisters, my brother and me. It was a constant he said or she said, "what are you hearing there?" or "what did they say?" It was not a very harmonious thing. Sometimes you hear about amicable divorces, well, this was not one of those. It kind of had a bearing on us when we went to visit - it was a visitation kind of thing in those days. Dad remarried twice. We were always the extras, the step-children. One of my sisters actually did go to live with dad for a while and it turned out to be the Cinderella story. You know, "you get to wash the dishes and put the dinner on the table," the other two were primadonnas.

In terms of money in those days, we picked berries; I got on the bus and went out and picked beans. You did it because you needed to earn money for school, you learned to save and budget. Once the folks were divorced, I took a paper route because I knew I needed to get some money for school clothes. One of the toughest things I remember is I had to loan mom some money because we were short one month, and I was making about fifteen dollars a month with the paper route. I think we made about a quarter overhead on each. I had fifty-two people that I delivered papers to, and if somebody gave you a dollar tip, you were really in high form.

Mom worked at the Fire Department as a secretary and then the phone company, and she actually worked in the basement of one of the buildings over at Oregon State, on the switchboard. And we would go into the basement and see her down there. Eventually automation came through and she retired from the phone company.

I remember one time, in high school, the rage was everybody had vests. And so I asked mom to make me one and she made it out of corduroy. Well, nobody had them out of corduroy, they were all out of this slick stuff, so I wore it once and that was about it. But it's just interesting how, what is it, "Jolene," coat of many colors, Dolly Parton, it was a popular song. And I still reflect on how she went out of her way to make me a vest and, well, it wasn't the style.

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A little bit about dad. He was a World War II veteran. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a POW, when he came out of the camp he was about eighty-five pounds. And my aunt and uncle tell me that it took him three months to recover in a hospital down in California. He never really said much about those things to us. We'd ask him about things and he just didn't ever want to share it; like I say, I found out through an uncle years later. He died – basically from the effects of being starved – at fifty-seven, because I went to see a doctor when I was about that age, wondering if I was ready to keel over. And the doctor was very frank, he said, "you know, when you're starved of some of those key vitamins and nutrition, you just never really get over it."

He was very proud of his service, he reflected one time that he would have stayed in. They were going to make him a corporal and it was one of those decisions, you know, you always look back on life: would have, could have, what life could have been. So I think that kind of had a bearing on me when it came time to look at ROTC, in my thoughts. When I was commissioned he was very proud of it; he was there that day.

MD: One of the things that I've been asking folks lately, because it's a psychological thing that is well documented, that every generation has a significant memory that sticks with them, such as Pearl Harbor, the Challenger disaster for younger people, or landing on the moon. Do you remember when JFK was assassinated and does that stick with you?

CH: Yeah, it's certainly one of those memorable things. I mean, you don't come into November and that Thanksgiving week without thinking about it. You don't stop thinking about Jackie Onassis and that whole thing. The other thing that sticks in my mind was watching Robert Kennedy, when he got killed in the basement of that restaurant. We happened to be watching on t.v. on Sunday, waiting to go to church, and Jack Ruby stepped out from the masses there and shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald. So, those were things you just didn't think – first of all, it was live on t.v. It was really reality t.v. It's a little bit like Reagan when he was shot, you now can see that up close and more personal than any time in our previous history. You think about our parents would have seen, or grandparents, would have seen news reels for World War II.

MD: Or heard it on the radio.

CH: Or hear it on the radio. It was interesting just to think back on what are the things that I remember, and I was thinking about Patty Hearst. Was she kidnapped or was she a revolutionary? The Symbionese Liberation Army. She was holding the gun at the bank, and then it seemed like they died in the fire, and when they were finally about to capture them... Charles Manson and the girls he had with him, just thinking about that. And he comes up for parole once in a while and it jogs your memory, it pushes the reset button.

The other thing I was reflecting on was the haircuts. The Beatles came in and we all thought we ought to have long hair, and my dad and am mom were, "nope," we were getting haircuts at home. It was pretty much that. And so we here are today with grandkids and it's the same argument. I see these football players and people with dreadlocks and I just, "ok," they have their time and their day.

MD: That was my dad's saying, "don't want to look like one of them dirty hippies." And hair was just barely touching my ears.

CH: Right. That was the comment, yeah.

MD: Let's talk about your high school days. I assume you went to; it was just Albany High.

CH: Albany High at that time, yeah.

MD: Good student?

CH: I was a B+ student according to my transcript. I was in the honor society, but I just barely made it. I wasn't one of those that breezed through. And I remember joining the math club and photography club, but I didn't have a real nice camera, and the first club meeting, here are all these beautiful SLR's, so enough of that.

Having a single mom and no car, I couldn't really participate in sports or after-school activities. I didn't go to the Boys & Girls Club – of course they would have charged money for that – in middle school or freshman. So consequently, you

don't participate in the summer intramurals if you're out picking berries in the field, beans and things. So then when you do get into high school and you have the opportunity to play basketball, baseball, football, you're far behind those kids that have all had those Little League summer experiences.

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I got into high school, I was a little small for my age and couldn't afford the football shoes. It seemed like it was \$120 to be on the football team and I didn't have that, and I didn't know how I was really going to get there. But it was my sophomore year, I needed a car for a job for the summer, so dad got me a car and then I could be part of the team. So I volunteered to be what was really the sports manager. The coach must have thought I had some gumption because I signed up for a correspondence course and I took six weeks of training to be the sports manager on how to wrap feet and how to put people in the saunas – you can't cook them in the sauna – when to use ice, boils, it was just an all-around great thing. And I enjoyed being part of the team.

You want to know about college – mom demanded that I go to school, my dad's side really never saw any need for it. "You ought to go to work like your dad did. Why do you need to go to college?" I remember working as a concrete mason in the summer of '66, my dad helped me get a job with, basically, my uncle. And you're out there pouring concrete, laying sidewalks and driveways, and there was a fellow on the crew that his son was in the Army. And he wanted to know – one day he was just really kind of bitter – he wanted to know how was it, because I was a college student going to college, that I wasn't eligible for the draft? And for a while there, you were deferred. So it really struck me. And he was in Vietnam and the stuff hit the fan during that summer. There was this mountain, and I can't think of the name right off, but we went up and down it six or seven times. And, of course, we took casualties. We conquered the mountain and then we would pull out and, the next thing you know, the Viet Cong would come back. It just didn't make a whole lot of sense to the general public then and it doesn't make a lot of sense now.

MD: Did you apply to other schools or was OSU basically where you were going to go? And was ROTC in the picture right off the bat?

CH: It was not in the picture. I went down and looked at the U of O. I didn't really care for the campus, it just seemed to be spread out, it was in the middle of town. And then, of course, mom working at Oregon State in the basement over there, I was very familiar with it. I knew the Commons, I knew where the football field was, I had been to some games. So I just felt at home there.

And then I got a scholarship from a transportation company. They were involved with Oregon State through their Research Department to find out the best and most efficient way to transport goods from A to B. When do you put them on railroad? When do you put them on ships? The whole thing of moving grain from eastern Oregon. So part of the deal to have them be part of that research was to sponsor a student. So I got a nice scholarship for the tuition – of course, the books and housing and everything were extra. So that went on for all four years and during the summers, I actually worked on the loading docks up in Portland. I worked in Yakima and I worked in their main facility out in Littleton, Colorado, with their computers. We tracked trucks and what was on them. Somebody would call and want to know where the truck was, "we need it tomorrow." And, of course, you'd find out it was in the snowbank in South Dakota or something. But it was a great opportunity.

The funny thing was, to get that scholarship, I had to go into the Agricultural Economics department. Which, primarily you were transporting agricultural goods. I don't know why they put it in there, but that was the department, so I was registered through that.

I didn't have a lot of money and I always just thought that fraternities cost extra money and you had to wear a suit or a coat, high muck-muck, and "who are you?" So I started out in college at a co-op over there on 9th street, and it's still there. I think it's probably a multiple housing thing. After a while, I got tired of the party atmosphere there – there were kids that were just there, I remember one of the guys I ate dinner with was getting a 1.2 grade for fall and talk about studying winter term, he was off to the movies. So I went and visited a couple fraternities and I ended up joining the agricultural college fraternity, AGR. And that was primarily the selling point was they had the files on the professors, or they at least knew what kind of tests they gave. And I was struggling in some of the courses, so I thought, "you better go

where you can get a little help." And quite frankly, I got tutored on English skills from a fraternity brother, and I probably would never have got out of college English. So it was a lot of benefits and I hope I gave back as much as I got.

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Then in summer of '67, I decided to join ROTC, primarily because I needed money. It was \$110 a month or something, which was a lot of money; I think tuition was \$495 probably or \$600. And then I also think the college deferment was out, and my draft number as 15, and I thought, "ok, I'll just go into ROTC."

MD: So you had just a tremendously low number.

CH: Yeah. So what they did is they sent me to Fort Benning for, basically, basic training, which the guys that were in ROTC the previous two years had already had through their college. And then I went to ROTC summer camp in '69, and then I went to the officer basic after graduation in '70.

MD: So your whole time at OSU, your major was Ag Economics, but it was more economics? More business?

CH: It was a little of both. A lot of our classes were – we took accounting and macroeconomics, microeconomics. But then I also took poultry science and horticulture and farm science. Interestingly, I learned how to do ANOVA statistical analysis in the farm classes, because if you have a field of wheat and you put three different kinds of fertilizer on it, you want to be able to compare what has the best bang for the buck. So it was interesting, when it was time to go into the statistics class, I had already had a bunch of that. And when I got into a master's program and took higher-level statistics, lo and behold, here we are doing the same thing. And you think, "oh well, what do those farmers know? They're out on a tractor." Well believe me, it's a cut-throat business. You have to know how much water to put on and water costs money. Fertilizer. So it's fascinating to look at those variables and look at a straight line analysis.

MD: Well, the College of Agricultural Economics has a long history at OSU and it's interesting to see how the business end of it fits into the nuts and bolts of Ag. So it's neat. Did you have any favorite classes or professors there?

CH: The interesting thing I want to talk about on the Ag Econ is, when I came out, the employers really didn't know what to do with you. I remember being a senior and sitting there in the economics class and people were saying, "we're not getting any calls for interviews. They're not asking us. We're out there with the general business class – the business class, they had it easy, here we are with econ taking all this math and statistics." And the guy said, "well, really, we don't know what to do with an Econ major or Ag Econ in the business world. You need a master's degree really to be of any value, and you might work for Penney's or Con-Agra or another big Ag company. But if you want a real job, you have to have a Ph.D. And then if you have a Ph.D., there's only so many slots on college campuses, and you have to wait for me to die to have my spot."

So it was really frustrating. Here we are, we spent four years in school, and the interview I had – I had two of them – one was with Penney's, they wanted me to sell shoes; you know, start out selling shoes. And one was with, I think it was Simplot, but they wanted me to go around and measure the moisture in the potato fields to make sure they had enough water on them. Well, I had all kinds of fraternity brothers that had taken four years of soils and crop science and knew everything about that. So at that point – that was in the middle of the year of, basically, '69 going into '70 – so I then went down to the Army office and I said, "why don't you sign me up for the full-time Army instead of the Reserves." Because I knew, at that point, I might as well go in for three or four years and maybe they would teach me some skills and things that I could really get out of it. So that was how that decision was made to go what they call R.A., Regular Army.

MD: Your time during OSU, it's an interesting time in the United States and it's also a very interesting time on campus. One of the things I find when I look at the yearbooks is that some of the greatest rock and roll acts of the decade played college venues, especially Gill Coliseum. I see Simon & Garfunkel, Donovan, The Doors, Iron Butterfly all during your time. Did you go to any of these events? Or were they too expensive?

[0:20:15]

CH: Well, part of it was the money, but I did in fact take a date to see The Doors. And "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" still rings in the back of my mind. But I remember they had an overhead projector and they were bouncing bubbles all over the

ceiling in Gill Coliseum. And the whole night it was kind of just tune in, drop out, whatever the LSD thing was. But I just felt out of place there; it was really where the liberals, whatever, went to that. I can't remember the other ones but, you're right, when you're scratching with the chickens to make ends meet, twenty dollars or ten dollars for a concert ticket was real. And I didn't go to a whole lot of basketball games, didn't go to a whole lot of football games. It was just, there are those that live down there and those that don't.

You had asked about favorite classes or professors. One of the classes I remember most, number one, was "History of Economic Development: The Industrial Revolution, 1750 to Today," and it was a senior seminar, and the instructor came up from the U of O, and we met at McMamin's, which is still out there on 3rd street or whatever it is. But yeah, you'd have a beer and french fries and a hamburger, and there were about five or six of us in the class. And it was Socratic, one-on-one, you had to have your stuff together. We would read a chapter in the book and it would have some questions at the end, so you could at least prepare ahead of time, but just the give and take, and the debate at times – comparing England and Germany, and why countries survived and succeeded, and why others didn't. It was fascinating. I used some of that less than a month ago when I did a presentation for the Boston Mill Society – Thompson's Mill. They asked me talk about the impact of mills on Oregon, specifically Albany, Oregon. And of course the mills came in about 1870, with the canal. So it was fascinating to reflect back on the whole thing about the steam engine and water power.

The other one I remember most was, we had to take classes outside our major, and so I took a class on horticulture and landscaping, and I use that every day out here around the house. I know how to take a cutting and get it into rooting, hormones, and get things going. So it was just interesting having that. I don't think I've ever used the poultry class other than to know that you have to turn the eggs when they're in the brooder. I enjoyed a class on Shakespeare, but it was like a foreign language to me; it takes a while to get the feel of the flow of the words. But partly because of my poor English skills and partly just because of who I was, I ended up with a D and I was working on an F, so I dropped the class, but I still enjoy going to see Shakespeare plays down in Ashland. You know, *The Moor* and *Iago*.

MD: Some things are just universal.

CH: Some things, you're just not made to study the language and understand it. I can remember the test question was compare and contrast something from *Merchant of Venice* to *Midnight Summer's Dream* or something, and I was just [shakes head].

The other class that I really enjoyed was anthropology. And today, if I was going to go into a major or focus somebody, I would really encourage them to be a cultural anthropologist, which looks at the culture of us and where we are as a people and how we got there. And I would really recommend to anybody that they read the one on guns and germs and steel or something like that. Fascinating book on why Europe developed the way that they did, and different from Africa; it was more than just resources.

MD: Were you part of the Inter-Fraternity Council? Because you were part of the house; president of the house.

CH: Yeah, I was on the IFC as the house representative, I think junior or sophomore year. And then because I was the house president, I was automatically part of it. But I was not on the Senate; I guess that was the college that had the Senate. We had another person that did that in the house.

MD: I've always wondered about some of these bodies during this period of time, the turbulent '60s – did that affect some of the decisions and some of the things that the council dealt with? Was the outside world part of campus life?

[0:25:16]

CH: You know, it just seemed like were insulated. Yes, the *Barometer* tried to bring some things in, but I don't remember some of the contentious editorials and two different views that you see in today's *Barometer*. I would have to commend that *Barometer* today for the way that they represent, side by side, analysis and things. I would have to go back and look at the *Barometers*, but I just don't remember that. It seemed like we were more focused on the IFC Sing or what the girls were doing for rush or some sorority fundraiser, rolling a beer barrel, you know. One of those criticisms that people have is, "how can you live in the bubble like that?" But pretty much, it just seemed to me that the IFC was pretty well neutral during those days. The Senate was certainly neutral because I don't remember the Senate ever coming out and demanding

that we put up a casket in the middle of the Commons. I don't remember if we ever put flags all over to represent the dead; it seems like they've done that more recently. I just don't remember Oregon State doing that.

In AGR, I know the fraternity brothers, we just felt like we were there trying to stem the tide. It was pretty much a conservative farming background. Kids came in there and, yeah, you looked across the street at some of the other houses that will remain nameless, and they seemed to be party headquarters – *Animal House* was real for a couple of those fraternities in those days.

MD: That's the whole thing about campus life; there's things that never change and things that are directly related with the times, however the times were. Especially with the late '60s, OSU seems to be, like you say, insulated. The real radicals, when they wanted to protest, they went down to Eugene.

CH: Right. I mean, you heard about Kent State and there were some other places where those things were happening. The SDS – Students for a Democratic Society – you heard about those and you might have read about it in the *Barometer*, but it just was out there.

MD: SDS did have a chapter on campus. We've got an interview with a person who was a member of that and they went to Eugene for the real stuff. [laughs]

CH: The real stuff, yeah.

MD: One of the things that I really am anxious to capture the story of is this whole idea of ROTC and the military versus what we had in the way of anti-Vietnam protestors in this turbulent time. So you were there, basically, during the height of most of the unrest on campuses across the United States. I've seen a number of articles in the *Barometer*, which I've shared with you, against the war and against ROTC. Did that have an effect on you and your fellow members of the force, the cadre?

CH: We certainly worried about it. One of the things, of course, was financially, if they stopped the program, what would that mean for us in the middle of it? We knew that there were colleges all over that were losing their ROTC detachments. I think Western lost theirs during that timeframe, or wanted one and didn't get it. But you know, I was talking to my wife, neither one of us can really remember ever having any offensive actions taken against us. You would walk through the quad and you might have seen some signs, you may have heard people talk about being called "baby killers" and things. We do remember that there were times we were encouraged not to wear our uniforms. In '69 and '70, things really started to heat up and they just thought it was easier. So I can remember going to a Business class in the morning, going back to the house, changing into my uniform, and then getting over to the Armory for the class.

The thing that always struck us was, if people wanted to get rid of ROTC on the campuses, we would end up with a professional military. And that should be the liberals' greatest fear, because if you have a country like Chile, Argentina, Thailand, to name three, or Greece for that matter, it's very easy for a professional military to do a coup. Once you control the tanks and the guns, there's not a whole lot that the Democrat or Republican party can do, except stand there on the moral high ground, when the Army swoops in. So when people say we need to get rid of ROTC, that's probably the worst thing you can do.

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When people talk about the Mai Lai Massacre or some of the other war crimes, if you have nothing but a professional military, it's very easy for them to cover those things up. It's very easy to shut the press off and to not have them come in. What was it, McChrystal, the interview there, part of our freedom as a democracy is to make sure that we have children coming out of everywhere and any background – any culture, any race, religion or belief – that they can go into the military. So it's easy to become insulated and other countries have paid a horrible price.

MD: Checks and balances.

CH: Yeah. I mean, you look at the German example during World War II. During the inter-year wars, the Prussians pretty well run the military academy, they decided what would be taught and how it would be taught, and unfortunately, some

radicals decided they would throw their hat in with Hitler and they lost touch with reality in many respects, and they lost their ethical backbone.

MD: One of the things in the 1968 yearbook that is just fantastic is the ROTC and the cadets, for a hundred years, have had a Military Ball each year as their big event. Well in '68, they had the first Anti-Military Ball. It was quite a controversy; apparently a smoke bomb went off in the event – they had it in the basement ballroom at the MU. Do you know whether ROTC was blamed? Do you remember the event?

CH: I think we were blamed, if not explicitly, there were an awful lot of people who would have felt like that would have been done by somebody. The only place you would have got a regular smoke bomb would have been through a ROTC summer camp – Army, Navy, Marines, whatever. I don't have any real memories of it other than it happened. The thing that we really worried about in ROTC was retribution. At the time there were things – firebombs, you hear about gasoline Molotov cocktails – and MacAlexander Fieldhouse was ancient timber, wood, and the thought of just how quickly that could burn down. And there were college campuses where they burned down their Armory.

MD: Eugene had attacks.

CH: Eugene, for one. So that was the thing. You hope that people are reasonable and thoughtful and, "ok, this is a democracy and they can do their fun and games." I do remember going to a rally in the basement – it was kind of an anti-war rally – and I just wanted to see what was going on, who would show up. But I almost felt like a spy standing there in the group and then I thought, "oh my gosh, they'll do an investigation on me to have a secret clearance, and it'll come out that I went to this anti-war rally." So I worried about it for a year I think, you know, "well, I guess if we don't get into ROTC, the regular program, it'll be because..."

MD: Yeah, you get attached to the commies.

CH: "How dare you," yeah, sucked in.

MD: Another significant event that happened – one after the other after the other – was in 1969 and the huge controversy over the Black Student Union walkout. This thing had a negative effect on the campus as well as OSU Athletics for many many years. Do you remember the hub-bub on campus?

CH: I remember the hub-bub, and the *Barometer* certainly covered it well, and I think it was in the Corvallis paper. I mean, it was out there. But the tragedy of the thing was there were very few Blacks in any of the classes that I took. If you saw them on campus, they were a basketball player or a football player. I can't think of any of the classes that I had; I might have had one in a class. So it was a good thing they did protest, it increased their visibility. But it was just the nature of the beast in those days that – I mean, you can go back and check the statistics: if you took all of the athletic scholarships out, how many Blacks would have been in the school?

[0:35:04]

MD: A handful.

CH: A handful.

MD: It's one of the significant events of OSU that always comes up.

CH: But you lived in a bubble, you know? The Civil Rights Act of 1964, but that was in the South, that was *there*. The Freedom Riders, the buses, the burning of the buses, Wallace standing in front of the school – that was always *there*. That's *those* people. So we needed to have a protest of some kind, just to wake us up in Oregon. And to this day. I mean, look at what we have in Albany; what's the percentage? How many Blacks do you see?

MD: Yeah, in Oregon in general.

CH: The one Black that we have in our church is from Jamaica. She has the cleverest, the cutest, little accent, but she doesn't represent Birmingham or, God forbid, that place where the guy went in and shot and killed nine church-goers; Charlotte.

MD: There again, down South.

CH: Down South. It's out there, it's there. And then every night on the news, you hear about people being shot and killed, at least once a week, in Portland right now.

MD: Daily.

CH: And an awful lot of that is Black on Black. Gangs. So our whole thing over racial and cultural identity, and who were are and where and when, we're still working on it. And I think Oregon State's gone far beyond where they were in 1969.

MD: Again, in this turbulent time, in May of 1970, there was the shooting of the students at Kent State. Now we actually, at OSU, had a day – they closed classes for a day because of that. Did you remember?

CH: I remember it and the reaction. Some of us felt like – I hate to say it this way – but it was justified. What we had heard was they may have fired on the soldiers; that was the first rumor. And maybe it happened. You go back and look at history and it seems like it was Lexington or Concord, where nobody knew who fired the first shot. But it was fired and you know what happened, all hell broke loose. You also had an interesting dichotomy, a conundrum, because you had the National Guard called in that had all been drafted or avoided the draft by signing up for the National Guard. And then here are these college kids, uppity-ups that didn't get subjected to the draft. It's just a powder keg waiting to happen. It was an interesting reaction.

If you grew up like I did where you were supposed to do what you were told, there was no sassing, to have that kind of a demonstration and who knew where it would have ended up? But by the same token, look what happened in Ferguson, Missouri, where they burned the town. So you have a group – anarchists have been shown to have been part of Ferguson and then that other community that they went through and burned part of the town.

MD: Baltimore.

CH: Baltimore. And yet there are other cities where they've had some of those issues happen and the city came together and said, "no, this is not what we do in our town." So this whole thing over the riot in Kent State, it could have been a totally different thing. Had they not fired anything, where would they have gone? What would have happened.

MD: Yeah, because there was a big march starting in downtown Corvallis. And a number of students – I've seen different amounts – but they marched back onto campus and the university president, Roy Young at the time, actually spoke and they had a huge rally. So you would think that the ROTC, anybody in uniform on campus, would have been somewhat of a target.

CH: Yeah, but I just don't think it was that way. There were those that might have said something, but it was just a different time, it was a different era. And I think they just realized that some of us were in ROTC because.

MD: Before we graduate and move on, are there any other significant OSU memories or recollections that you have that need to be brought in at this point?

CH: It was interesting, I think back on my time in AGR, and I'm still a little bitter about some things – the harassment, being a pledge. And I still remember being stood on the front of the fireplace and the bright lights shining. It was very frustrating when I became the house president, because the election, it very vividly sticks in my mind that we one guy that was really the party animal and I was the one that said, "gee, we need to study." And it was a close vote but I got it, and then I spent the next year in a term of office, basically fining some of my fraternity brothers; we would fine them like three or four dollars.

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But to this day, there are those who basically think I'm the prude and the jerk. But we also had a fellow that went on to become a vet, we had somebody else who went on to become a dentist, and a couple of people became college professors. So you have people that clearly had to be there. But I remember walking to library on many an occasion so I could go study in a cubicle. Thank God for the library and those little cubicles, that you could get away and have a quiet space and time. I hope that that's still available.

MD: Yes, it is.

CH: I remember taking dates to the movies, walking downtown, walking them around on campus and the elms and maple trees, particularly in the spring and the summer. And then in the fall, the leaves were all beautiful colors and they're blowing across the street and things. Walking with what became your wife, walking her back on campus. And then, of course, the rain.

I remember working as a hotel night clerk to make money. I think if there's one thing I think about, it's working extra jobs. The kids today can't be picking berries. And you hear about kinds have a \$30 or \$40,000 debt, yeah there's some part-time jobs and it did help me, but it certainly wouldn't have made up what you had to have for tuition. I still recall – and a little bit of bitterness – I worked an extra week during the summer because I was making good money on a loading dock. By the way, it was six dollars and hour.

MD: [laughs] Oh, that was big bucks.

CH: It was big bucks because we went to overtime and we were making a dime a minute or something like that. I guess that would be six dollars, so it must have been less than that, but I just remember. But I then got fined because I missed Rush Week, so they took all the money I made that week and took it away from me. So the whole issue of how do you get kids to make enough money during the summer? And when do you do rush and when do you do the week before rush? Which some of the sororities and fraternities do, make you come in early to get the house ready. So that was something I wanted to bring up, just historically. I don't know what it's like today over there and how they get ready for rush, but if you've got a summer job and you know you need the money. By the same token, then I was house president and I needed everybody there. I needed everybody back. "Get out there and collar those young boys and bring them to the house."

MD: I haven't really had anybody talk about what Rush Week is like and what Rush Week was all about. Just that fill that in a little bit because it is a tradition.

CH: It's almost a mating dance. It's almost one of those things where you have these two grouse going around like this, you know. You'd have a function, there would be people that would come to the house. You'd mingle and get to know them, see who they were. The best way to get the kids for the house was to have somebody know them. If you had a fraternity brother that went to school with them or a dad that recommended them, then you got some good quality, high caliber. The other times, it's kind of the luck of the draw of who they were and when they came in. Grades was always an issue; you didn't want to have a kid come in and promptly flunk out on you. And that happened, you lost kids that just weren't ready for college.

The interesting thing is I remember bringing kids in more during fall term and winter that missed rush, because then it was a one-on-one. You would meet them in a class, you'd realize they were a GDI – golly darn independent – and you'd bring them in, you'd set them down, you'd eat a meal with them and chat with them and sell them on the fact that you had the files on the professors. So I remember bringing in several people that way that stayed with me, because of the classes I was in too. But it was an interesting way to recruit. You'll have to talk to some of the women about sorority rush because it's truly a thing all unto itself.

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But yeah, basically, I don't recall ever doing a meal for the whole group, I don't even recall doing finger foods. It just seemed like you kind of stood around and yakked. The other thing was, because AGR, by the by-laws, is supposed to have students that are agriculture-related when they come in, we were limited to Forestry and Ag and Ag Econ, they've loosened it up a little bit. And then, of course, we also had people that changed majors once they got in the house. So you take that whole slice out of a hundred men that are going through college in the Ag-type curriculums, or Forestry – let's

say twenty percent or twenty-five percent – so you're not going to have the chemists or the engineers. But you still had a common bond. There were kids in there who, if you started talking about a steer or mountain oysters, it was pretty well a done deal.

MD: Don't want a bunch of city boys.

CH: City boys. And at least half the house wore cowboy boots and had kids that chewed Copenhagen. I never knew – that was a cultural enlightenment [laughs] to have them spitting in the cup.

MD: Well, you actually graduated with the class of 1970. Did you walk?

CH: I did. I wore the cap and gown, and I recall there were a couple of people that I knew that had lettering or, heaven forbid, they actually wore shorts under their gown, they didn't wear slacks. It's nothing compared to some of the things they do now, but it was just a, "oh my gosh, wow, they've violated the code. They've put something funny on the top of their hat."

MD: Was it in Gill?

CH: Gill Coliseum, yeah.

MD: And then you were also, at the same time, commissioned into the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant. You said something about Officers Training School. During World War II, they went from college to an OTS and came out, usually, as a First Lieutenant from that.

CH: Yeah. There's OTS, which is a different program. The ROTC-type program gives you the general military schooling. When you graduate, you then get sent to your specialty. So mine was infantry. So you may have been talking to someone – unless they were a General, in which they case they become a General Officer. But otherwise, if you talk to somebody and they were in the Army, they were and engineer, they were a signal officer. My first choice was transportation, because I had been in the transportation area for four years. And the professor of Military Science called me in and told me I got my first choice and I was thrilled, and then read that it was infantry. [laughs] He said, "this is now your first choice." Of course, Vietnam was still going on, so that was where the need was.

So we got married. We graduated, got married, and about a week later we took off for Fort Benning, Georgia and I spent twenty years in the military.

MD: So what did you early years in the military look like? What was your job and where were you assigned? Did you go overseas?

CH: I started out – I went from Fort Benning to Colorado Springs; Fort Carson, Colorado. In those days it was called mechanized infantry, we would run around in a 1 1 3. If you see any of the movies from Vietnam, you know what that looked like. It was the precursor to the infantry fighting vehicle and all of the things that you see now, much more sophisticated. The 1 1 3 was pretty much an advanced feature – mechanized-type things for infantry to run around in were new. Of course, you'd had tanks since World War I, and in World War II, of course, you had some, but you didn't have armored vehicles that infantry could ride around in. So we were on the cutting edge on that. I was a Motor Pool officer; I was responsible for about \$160 million worth of armored vehicles.

I recall, the whole time, it seemed like entire military career was worrying about the Russians attacking us. "Coming through The Fulda Gap," was what we always talked about. I remember working with kids, when I first started in '70 and '71, there were kids coming back from Vietnam, they still had six months or so left on their enlistment. They really didn't even want to be there; the best thing for the Army would have been to cut them loose. But there were those – some of the hung in there and did their thing, and some of them were outright dirt bags. I ended up throwing a bunch of kids out that just shouldn't have even been in there. But as the war was winding down and they couldn't get enough people, they didn't want to have a higher draft, they said, "we'll let people in that don't have high school degrees." They were called "McNamara's 100,000." And frankly, they were nothing but trouble. They gave us the numbers to fill the companies, but it just never worked.

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I do look back fondly, if you will, on my time in the service. I felt valued. I felt like I was serving the country. I was doing what I should have been doing. Of course, my dad appreciated it, he respected me for what I was doing. I liked the challenges I had, the opportunities, the comradeship, and the orderliness. Clearly, you knew when you moved you were going to have a house, you knew you were going to have a job, you were going to have a paycheck, you knew your kids were going to have a decent school. And no matter where you went in the world, you had that.

So I started out in Fort Carson, Colorado. I then got sent to Korea for one year, in 1973. That was shortly after the major was killed chopping down a tree, so they were hyperventilating when I got over there. You knew where your pistol belt was at and you were ready to do whatever had to be done.

Came back to Fort Carson for a while. I spent three years in Germany at Heidelberg at a higher-level planning headquarters. Here again we were planning on the Russians coming across the border and I was involved in developing war plans, and went out into the bunkers where we would have fought the war from. Went to Fort Leavenworth as a Captain and then Major, to take the advanced military training they do for Majors. Of course, I'd been to Fort Benning, I went to Fort Knox for the advanced course and then Fort Leavenworth.

I then went back to Fort Leavenworth and taught there for five years in, basically, infantry, armored tactics, and what we called the air-land battlefield, meaning that you combine the Air Force with the Army and their tactical air force. I did get sent to Monterrey, California – Naval Postgraduate School – which was horribly confusing to all of my friends, you know, "I thought you were in the Army?" But the Naval Postgraduate School had a class on systems analysis, and you could take it there or Houston. Well, I wanted to be closer to Oregon, but the Army knew they needed Captains and Majors trained on how to look at a problem, break it down, and analyze it. So when I came out of that program, some of my contemporaries did the tests on the new M-1 Abrams tank.

Unbeknownst to me, but in another part of Fort Hood, where I was at, they were actually testing what was essentially GPS. But at the time, they had this balloon that was floating around up in the air and they were bouncing signals off of it, and it seemed like the most stupid thing in the world to me. I was so thrilled I wasn't on that program, because when in the world are you going to fight a war that you can have a balloon up there? Little did I know that there would be satellites involved. But I remember we all used to kind of laugh, "oh this is great, air-land battlefield, we're gonna have balloons."

MD: Go pop that balloon!

CH: Yeah, you know, Firestone on the side. Little did we know that it would be what we have today. But yeah, I went to Fort Hood for that after I got my master's in Systems Analysis.

MD: That training is basically like going to college for a master's.

CH: Well, it was. It was a college-accredited program. The reason the Navy had the program, and still does – it's still there – specifically is because there are programs they do that deal with very confidential secret-type programs, particularly on anti-submarine warfare. And how do you teach, particularly the Navy officers, on how do you deal with and handle and analyze the technologies that they need to know how to use? And there were a couple of programs that I took at the school that were classified. We'd have somebody come in and talk about the latest developments on the M-1 tank at that time. It's interesting, in 1979, they had a demonstration where they destroyed a glass across on the other side of the stage, with a laser beam. We all had, in the room, security clearances. Well, last year or so, the Navy came out with a platform that will have lasers on it to destroy guided missiles. So that's the kind of research they were doing at that school. Part of a college, part of it was bringing people in that had the technologies.

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So yeah, it was fascinating, looking at the programs, and people got master's degrees by doing research on some of those high tech areas. My area, I looked at how to be more efficient and more effective in how we killed tanks with the different infantry weapons we had. A couple of my classmates worked on combat modeling. So we have combat modeling today that, the computer programs just get much more powerful and effective. And if you know anything about combat, it's an attrition-based warfare. So how do you kill more of them quicker than they can kill you? You look at Civil War

battlefields and it wasn't a whole lot different. So if you can model it and computerize it, then you can say, "ok, do we want to have an artillery weapon that is more accurate? Do we spend another million dollars in development? And let's say it costs \$10,000 more on each artillery piece to have it more accurate." Well, what we learned very quickly is, if you can put GPS on each of those artillery pieces, it knows where it is and then you can figure out where the bad guy is.

So that was some of the research and things they did. Fascinating things; I really enjoyed being in that. And it served me well, just teaching how to break a problem down, analyze it, evaluate it. To this day, I mean, I don't buy a new pressure washer without looking at the reviews and the ratings.

MD: So you retired after a full career. Did you end up as a Major?

CH: Lieutenant Colonel.

MD: So you spent twenty years?

CH: Twenty years and a couple of months. I ended up getting out in September of '90, and we went to war in Saudi Arabia and invaded Kuwait in about '91. So I just barely got out before they froze all officers. And the interesting thing is, the year before I got out, they wanted to transfer me to Florida to a joint training base. Little did I know that they were the ones that would end up running the war in Kuwait. It was a point where my kids, the oldest son was ready to graduate from high school. He didn't want to leave. He was at the point where he was coordinating with a neighbor to live in their basement with the sump pump, and we would move and go to Florida. And I thought, "you know, that's just not what we ought to do." So I agreed to stay one more year at Fort Leavenworth and then resigned and retired. But yeah, that was my choice; I had two choices and both of them were in Florida, and both of them would have been working in planning staff. Because I was a war planner too; I mean, it was right there on my historical records – transcript, as we would say in college. I'd been a war planner in two different assignments, so it would have been a natural assignment for me.

MD: You would have been alongside General Schwarzkopf.

CH: Yeah, Schwarzkopf, when he went in.

MD: The thing is, when you entered the military in 1970, that twenty years – the difference between that war and the Gulf War is like night and day. And you basically were part of that lightening change as far as how the military work.

CH: Yeah, and the interesting thing is all the training I did at Fort Leavenworth was to deal with that kind of a traditional air-land battle. And we went in and kicked butt, because the Iraqis couldn't stand up to the air-land battlefield, the way we were organized. So what happened was warfare changed. Now they use IED's, now they use suicide bombers, they use girls, they use women. So when you can't take on the F-35 jets and the new latest greatest tank, or whatever the Air Force has, then you fight the way you can. It's been that way through history – you fight as guerillas.

MD: Yeah, and the first time we ran into that was in Vietnam, basically.

CH: Yeah, right. When they realized they couldn't beat us that way, then they infiltrated; they got into the government. You wonder why the Iraqis run, well, you find out that their officers are corrupt, they're taking pay for soldiers that aren't there, or they've got a political appointment. Well, that's never worked; no army in the world has ever survived with that kind of corruption.

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MD: So you served our country and life changed. So what about life after the military? A whole new career?

CH: It was interesting because one of the last things I worked on in the military was, how do we defend against lasers? The enemy would have lasers and we knew at the time that, even with a laser designator on your tanks, that you could blind people if it was not tuned properly. So the Army started looking at special goggles. So I go to an interview at Oregon OSHA, and they're talking about lasers, and I just immediately started waxing eloquent, and I got hired on the spot. I didn't even get a second interview. I had come out while I was still in the military, did the interview, and they

hired me before I went to go back. So I knew, coming up on October 1st, that I had a job, which is really a great way to transition.

So I worked for Oregon OSHA for about a year. I was their training officer – we had eight or nine folks, we'd go out and do training on trenches and confined spaces. But I was always the second fiddle, because the managers that really counted were the ones that went out and did enforcement or advised. All I was was in charge of the trainers. Well, I was a B at that time and everyone else was a C. And quite frankly, it irritated me to no end because I was just considered a lesser being. But all in all, it was a good assignment. I loved helping people, doing it. I was frustrated that people seemed to wake up in the morning with a burr under the saddle – they were going to go out and hit some business. I can remember my dad complaining about having inspections by Oregon OSHA, and I just felt like the compliance people had the wrong attitude. They were out there to slap somebody when really they could have done things a little easier.

So partly out of frustration and partly out of lack of respect, I then went over to Voc Rehab, where I was a C-level training manager with one person to supervise – went from nine to one – and I then ended up in the Department of Human Services. They did a consolidation, the Voc Rehab used to be – talk about bureaucracies – Voc Rehab used to be a top-down from Washington, D.C. The money flowed through Seattle and came to us, and we were totally separate. Then all of the sudden they said, "you can't be out there by yourself; you're part of the Department of Human Services." Well, there was real head knocking going on, on how the money was being spent. And of course, the Department of Human Services wanted part of our money, because some of the things we were doing related to them, and we were doing things, sucking the state money in. At one point we were seventy-five percent federal and twenty-five state, we became fifty-fifty. Anyway, bottom line short, I ended up losing my job. They consolidated and got rid of my position and moved it up to DHS level.

So I stayed there for thirteen years. It was very frustrating; I did more travel, I did more training, I did more people than anybody else, but I got the same pay. And fairness is a big issue for those of us called SJs on Myers-Briggs, and I just never felt like it was fair. I changed jobs, I worked in a studio for about two years. We had the control panels and the boards and five microphones, and I did what was called Ed Nets, where we would actually – the precursor to Skype, if you will.

Very frustrating because you could train all of the state of Oregon in their offices, but you had to have control of the t.v. and you had to have the room to do it. Now, if you're in Hermiston, every Tuesday at 10:00 is when they talk about food stamps and people come in to get a food stamps class. Well, if you're trying to set up a statewide training on how to deal with long term grief for your seniors and disabled caseworkers, and the only time you can get it from Washington, D.C. is 10:00, you now have a conflict. And quite frankly, the Hermiston office gave more priority to food stamp training than they did to you. Or you get ready to do the telecast and you find out that somebody had turned the channels and you couldn't get the Ed Net satellite, but you could get *Sesame Street* because that is important for the kids; keep them occupied.

So there was no end of problems with that, but being a systems analyst, I actually developed a 200-page book on how to coordinate and present them, and I think I ended up doing about ten of them. At one point we got fined millions of dollars for a high error rate, so we had the head of the – Adult and Family Services did the food stamps – we had them come in and their primary chief muck-muck in charge of that program. And we basically laid the law down and told all the cases workers they needed to tighten up. [laughs] But it was absurd to me because we had a copy of the videotape, we could tell the feds that we had done our part, we're gonna do a better job auditing. The next year we had half the error rate, so you just had to buck up. It was an interesting time.

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I then, quite frankly, got frustrated with the bureaucracy. I didn't really enjoy being in a studio, I wanted to be out training real people rather than being in control of the microphones and the camera. So I went over to the Oregon Parks Department for my last five years. It was one of the greatest assignments; I can't say enough good things about the rangers, the park managers. Oregon is very fortunate. The sweetest thing that ever happened in the state of Oregon was when they got lottery dollars to help with the budget, because our director would go back to National Park meetings, and there were people who were lucky to have roadside rest areas and we have places like Honeyman State Park and Fort Stevens, with the military battlements there.

MD: Champoeg.

CH: Champoeg and Silver Falls. There are states that are lucky to have one park like that. So the budget getting like seven and a half percent out of the lottery is just a tremendous thing. And Oregon benefits from it. Tourists from all over the world will come to Oregon and talk about it.

But my job there was to help train the rangers. I look with great fondness, if you will, on getting contracts for chainsaw training to make sure guys and gals didn't cut their legs off, knew what to wear for the proper equipment. We did basic safety training and just before I got there they had a man that kidnapped and took hostage two rangers, and took one of them out and shot him, and the other one ran and got away. They finally caught the guy in Astoria. But that whole issue of whether rangers ought to have guns or not, was an issue. They decided not to have guns. Of course, shortly after that, they had a guy that was shot and killed by a National Park ranger up in Washington. The guy was crazy and took after the ranger with a baseball bat.

So our whole focus, just like any policeman, was prevention, and we trained our rangers really hard. I mean, we took them through two weeks of training on how to talk people down and get control of the situation, body language. It was just a great time. There came a time that I was eligible to retire. My mother-in-law had moved out to the Mennonite Village, we didn't have a huge house payment, and the bureaucracy again changed. I was spending my time sitting in the office updating training records and there were things that – everything was going computers, we weren't going to be needed in the field anymore, it was all going to be computerized. And that just wasn't me, so I thought, "now is the time to leave." And eventually they brought somebody else in and she did a great job and she's got wonderful computer training and videos. But that wasn't me; I'd rather press the flesh. The smell of the greaspaint and the roar of the crowd, [laughs] as the actors would tell you.

MD: So you actually retired a second time.

CH: A second time, yeah. Almost twenty years with the state of Oregon, so I'm a double-dipper, is what they say.

MD: I'd like to get a little bit about how you tie your OSU education and the classes you took into the things that you've done throughout these two careers. Did OSU serve you well?

CH: I think it did, yeah. So much of – you say two careers, there were two careers, but there were probably seven or eight major jobs that I did. The thing they'll tell a high school graduate now is you've got to be expecting to have eight different careers and, by the way, half of those haven't even been invented yet. I mean, if you think about what we're doing here today, the editing capabilities and the ability that you can do. When I was doing Ed Nets, we had to go into a studio and they'd have a huge computer to be able to lay out what was on the screen and the video to match the sound with it. And now, you can almost do it on your phone.

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MD: Yeah, you can, literally do it on your phone.

CH: People do movies on their phone.

So, how did it serve me well? It taught me to think about problems, it taught me to analyze, evaluate; critical thinking skills are always in demand. That's what most education is all about. If there's anything, any words that I want to pass on to other students at Oregon State, Stephen Covey said it best: "sharpen the saw and keep it sharp." You need to be learning all your life, no matter what the subject is. I just got a book on the Plantagenets, I want to go back and read about the history of England and where they came from. Why? Because I have an intellectual curiosity, and that's an important part of life. You've got to keep your brain going. I probably read two books a month sometimes, just because I enjoy reading. And, I don't know, twenty-five percent of them are historical. The guns and steel book is a perfect case in point.

MD: Now that you are kind of a gentleman farmer, you've been out here on Riverside Drive – when did you guys come here?

CH: We came here straight out of the military in 1990. My wife likes to relate that we came home, spent the night, and the next morning her mother had her bags packed and she was ready to move, and she went out to the Mennonite Village. She just knew we needed the house, with three kids.

MD: So this was the family home?

CH: This has been the family home. She came to live here when she was born; it was built in about 1948 and that's when she was born.

MD: And you've run this place as a bed and breakfast?

CH: We did that for a while. It was a dream my wife had, and we followed that dream. The problem we ran into is, as any real estate will tell you, is location, location, location. We're probably seven or eight miles from Gill Coliseum, and we're four miles from Albany. So if there's a basketball game, football game, people have to be able to find you. And we're not on the main freeway, so it means; people are just reluctant to come out in the middle of the woods, if you will. Those bed and breakfasts that do well are located in a place like Ashland. There have been several in downtown Corvallis that have tried to make it, and I'm sure there's any that have really made it for very long.

Part of the problem you have is the overhead. If you only have one or two rooms, which is typical for a small house, you have a million dollars of insurance coverage. It took us one to two lodging nights just to pay for the overhead, so if you're only getting one or two – particularly later in the summer, when nobody's coming here for baseball games. You could fill the house up on Moms Weekend, which is one weekend in May, and then you have some business travelers that come through that just out of curiosity might like it. But because of where you were in terms of relationship with being outside of the city, it was hard to make ends meet.

But you meet some of the best people in the world. The folks that will come to a bed and breakfast; people say, "oh, aren't you worried about people stealing things?" No, because bed and breakfast is just a category or class of people. And we enjoy going to bed and breakfasts; we've been to bed and breakfasts all over the world, and always enjoyed them, always felt right at home.

MD: Well, I can see how you would feel right at home here with Charlotte's cooking. That leads us to what's your status now? I know we're together in volunteerism and also your involvement with First Christian Church. How do you spend your golden retirement years?

CH: Well, right now the Monteath House, the oldest house in the city of Albany. I'm the board president. And there are things that come up – right now I'm dealing with the liability insurance we need for board, so we don't get sued. And we discovered the other day that one of the policies wanted to know what we've done for background checks for anybody that's talking and dealing with children. And we haven't done anything. Now, I also have been an elder and co-chair of the First Christian Church, and the two that work in the nursery have to have background checks. My wife's a mentor and a tutor in the third grade elementary school for our granddaughter. She had to have a background check. So lo and behold, here we are. We have basically five docents that have talked to second, fourth and fifth graders, in a room by themselves with ten kids. Right now we have a docent down there teaching and you can have a child come in with a parent. But yeah, we haven't had any background checks. So before we go out and get the liability insurance, we need to settle that. Because nobody wants to insure a board that doesn't have something to protect against a pedophile being in the house there.

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So those kinds of things tie you up. There are times you don't deal with those. I was on the search committee that got the previous pastor we had, eleven or twelve years ago. I'm now on the transition committee that's looking at how we move through to look for another pastor. But all in all, what do I do? Well, an awful lot of it is just keeping the farm up. But I would say for any of my counterparts or any college graduate coming out of Oregon State, find things to do outside your work. You've got to have a life. When I retired, both times, it was traumatic, because my whole social support – my network, my interests – were related to people I worked with. And when you work in Salem, you're not going to drive to Salem for a coffee for ten or fifteen minutes with your buddies. So you've got to make a life wherever you're at.

But I really encourage people – if you like theatre, volunteer at the little theatre. If you like gardening, become a Master Gardener. But you've got to do something.

The funny thing is, I went for my Medicare annual physical, and they want to know what I was doing? You know, "have you gone into the cave and you're just sitting on the front step in the rocker?" Because those guys die, they do.

MD: You've got to have everything working, your mind...

CH: Mentally stimulated and that's the nice thing about reading. The other thing is physical and three times a week we go over to the pool and work out in water aerobics. So you've got to be doing those kinds of things for your own health and well-being. Far too many people retire, they sit on the porch, they drink a six pack or more a day, and life goes downhill fast.

MD: Yeah, those are the people who they retire and they're done.

CH: They're done, yeah.

MD: The other thing that we endeavor to do is to catch up with our Beavers and their families, so how did you meet Charlotte and how long have you guys been married?

CH: Charlotte and I went to the same high school, but I did get up the nerve at one point, when she had broken up with this fellow for a while, I did take her to a dance. But otherwise, we then went off to Oregon State and, our junior year, both of us were house presidents. And she called up and said, "can we have a cup of coffee, I need to talk about what's going to happen," and out of that things took off, we discovered we were best friends and reunited. And then, the next thing you know, we got married and children came along in '71, '73, and 1980. And so, not only were the two of us Beavers, but it was pretty well understood that our three children would be Beavers. They did go look at some other schools, but we let them know that, really, if you're not black and orange then we weren't going to pay for it. [laughs]

MD: Yeah, there's incentive.

CH: In their interest, you go up to Linfield or George Fox, they do a great job of selling their school and their program. But the downside of it is that it's twice what it costs at Oregon State. And frankly, no matter what they say, once you've been out for about five years, it doesn't matter where you got your diploma. It's what you do and your performance that counts. Yes, if you went to Harvard or Stanford you'd probably start out in a whole lot better job, but for those of us mere mortals that's...yeah.

MD: The kids, we have grandchildren, you have a whole pack of them.

CH: We had the three children and each of them had three. And knowing about statistics, it was not an equal distribution. So we have one that has three boys, we have one that has two boys and a girl, and we have one that has two girls and one boy. So you think about the distribution of three, there's your statistics again.

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You ask how does it suit me? I can tell you that it can be very frustrating. I shared my earlier life and my upbringing and how I responded and my father's expectations. It can be very frustrating with today's laissez-faire environment.

MD: Especially when you have nine of them. They're never all in one spot at one time, it seems like.

CH: Well, we have one set that's in Tennessee. He had a job here in Corvallis and met our youngest daughter, and then got an offer of a better job, more pay, back east in Charlottesville, Virginia. In fact, he started out in Suffolk and then he ended up in another job and another job, and he's been working lottery-type issues, computer programming, for those machines. That company moved to Tennessee and then, lately, he's been working on a separate, totally different computer engineering software. The interesting thing, you talk about the modern global economy, he has people writing software in support of his project in the Ukraine and in Russia, which is an interesting thing there by itself. And, in fact, I think one of

the engineers moved twelve miles so he would be part of Russia or part of Ukraine, just so there wouldn't be that whole issue over the...

MD: ...sovereignty

CH: They're not banking or doing things with Russia. And then, somebody else is in England and somebody else is in Austin, Texas, so it is amazing when you have the internet that you can do software development all over the world, and he coordinates it.

Our son works in Portland and, because he's divorced, he comes down here – six out of every fourteen days, he has the children. Our oldest daughter is in charge of the preschool at the church. They're out on summer break now, but she and their family are pretty well involved. And with three boys and a husband that likes doing things – he has built his own kayak, built his own little sun fish little yacht thing, about twelve feet long, and then he has a little Miata sports car. And they have a baby farm, if you will, about an acre to take care of. So they're all involved and we try to do activities, we try to have Mother's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, we try to bring the clan together and we do family things.

MD: One of the things that I've always felt is important is for our interviewers to close things out and impart some words of wisdom, which you already have. But do you have any final nuggets for the Beaver Nation?

CH: For the Beaver Nation. There were those who went to school that were there to have a good time, and if that's your goal in life, that's ok. But what you find out is, to get into a master's program, you have to have a certain grade point and you have to be able to score well on tests. So I didn't know; I never envisioned that I would want to go for a master's degree. But I knew I needed to work hard and stay focused, and barely got into a master's program. So don't cut yourself short. Try your best, get the best grades you can. Now does that mean that you don't go to ballgames and have another life and extracurricular? No. But you've got to balance that and think about it. Don't have the door shut in your face because you went to too many parties. Challenge yourself, become involved. You may be fully involved in your house, your sorority, you may be fully involved on campus, but so much of what you learn and what you do when you get out...

You know, I went in the military and that was pretty much a closed society, but for those that come out of college and stay here in Oregon, you're going to run into people, you're going to find friends. And just like a job interview, if you know the person on the other side of the table or you know somebody who knows them, it makes a world of difference. So those connections – I worked in personnel in the Department of Human Services and Voc Rehab, I worked side by side with personnel types. So many interviews are decided by who you know or that you know somebody that knows them. Because quite frankly, up to twenty to thirty percent of people lie on their resumes. So how do you know if you're getting a gem or a chunk of coal?

Learn to get along, learn to work for other people, learn to supervise people. And for me right now, I would say you really need to learn how to work with volunteers. The care and feeding and motivating of volunteers is an art unto itself. And the last comment I would say is never stop learning. We need that as a democracy and you need that, intellectually, to keep your mind active. Just keep challenging yourself to learn about whatever is out there.

MD: Well Chet, on behalf of the Sesquicentennial Oral History Project, I want to thank you for your participation, thank you for your life story, and thank you for all your contributions and your service to this country. It's been a pleasure.

CH: Well, it was an honor to be selected and I hope that this will help the program and maybe I've imparted some wisdom that will mean something to someone somewhere someday. Thank you.

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