



Darlene Hooley Oral History Interview, February 3, 2014

Title

“From the Playgrounds of Oregon to the War Zones of Iraq: A Life in Public Service”

Date

February 3, 2014

Location

Hooley residence, Portland, Oregon.

Summary

In the interview, Hooley discusses her early life in North Dakota and Salem, Oregon, including her experiences working in a cannery and attending high school and Pasadena Nazarene College.

A significant portion of the session is devoted to Hooley's recollections of her two year undergraduate experience at Oregon State. Her decision to transfer to OSC is recounted, as are her living arrangements in Corvallis, her participation in choir and field hockey groups, her academic load and campus social life.

The remainder of the interview focuses primarily on Hooley's entry into the political realm and the gradual evolution of her political career. Hooley notes the playground injury suffered by her son that first spurred her interest in political action. She also discusses her involvement with the West Linn city council before detailing her experiences as a member of the Oregon legislature and the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners.

Hooley's session concludes with a detailed reminiscence on her years as a Congresswoman in the United States House of Representatives. She speaks to her early experiences as a House Whip and remarks on her involvement with veterans affairs, including a trip that she took to Iraq in 2003. She also recounts her work advocating financial privacy and individual access to their own financial information. The session ends with Hooley's general thoughts on her time in Washington and some advice that she would give to students today.

Interviewee

Darlene Hooley

Interviewer

Janice Dilg

Website

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

Transcript

Janice Dilg: So, today is February 3rd, 2014. I am Janice Dilg, and I am here with Oregon State University alumna Darlene Hooley, at her home in Portland, Oregon. Good morning.

Darlene Hooley: Good morning.

JD: So, I thought we would start a bit at the beginning and just have you talk a little about where you are from, and how your family came to Oregon.

DH: I'd love to talk about that. I'm originally from North Dakota, and my family homesteaded in North Dakota. And we came out to visit my father's relatives in Oregon. My mother fell in love with Oregon, and she said, "I want to move here." And so they looked for some houses. My dad said, "If we find one for \$6,000 or less, you can buy it." And my mother didn't find one, but on the way out of town, we were all packed up ready to go, and she saw a house for sale, and she said, "Stop. I want to ask them." My dad said, "It's going to cost too much." My dad was a pessimist, by the way. My mother was the optimist. And she went up to the door, and knocked on the door, and she said, "How much?" The woman said, "\$6,000." My mother said, "I'll take it." Never went inside. So that's how we got to Oregon. And when we got back to North Dakota after that trip, we talked my uncle and his family to also moving to Oregon. So six in our family, and six in their family, all moved at the same time.

JD: So that means there were some siblings, as well as you and your parents.

DH: Right. I have three—two sisters and one brother.

JD: And so you were living in Salem.

DH: Salem. Uh-huh.

JD: And attended local schools?

DH: Attended Highland School. I attended Parish Junior High, and then went to Salem Academy, which is where my older sister went. And I had no reason to go there, except that I adored my older sister. She was my hero, and so I thought, this has been good for her; I guess I'll go there. And I picked berries and strawberries, and worked in the cannery, and paid for my own tuition. And my parents said, "Fine, if you want to go there, as long as you can pay for it." So I did.

JD: And how was the decision made that you would go to college?

DH: You know, I never for a moment, did not believe that I would go to college. I mean, I absolutely believed that I was going to college. My parents didn't push me. It was just something that—I don't know who influenced me on that, but was—I was going to go to college. I wouldn't get married until after I was out of college. I was not going to support some man in college, and not get my education. And so I was pretty determined to get a college education.

JD: So then, how did you go about deciding where you would go, and what you were going to major in when you went off to college?

DH: [Laughs] Well, my first thought was: where is it sunny? I'm going to go to a school where it's sunny. And so, I went to the Luther Church in Salem, but my sister had gone to this Nazarene College in Pasadena. And I thought, that's nice. It's sunny. That would be a good place to go to school. And so, I applied and was accepted, and worked in the canneries—two jobs in the canneries so I could pay for my college education. Went to Pasadena. And after the first two years—and I was working on a Bachelor of Arts—I decided I wanted to do my graduate work at Oregon State. And so, I came up and visited Oregon State, and said, "I've got to change from a Bachelor of Arts to a Bachelor of Science, and I might as well start now, and I might as well go to Oregon State right now." So I did.

JD: And so, what year was it, then, that you transferred to Oregon State, and you said you were a junior at that point?

DH: Right. 1959. Seems like a long time ago. [Laughs] It was.

JD: So, reflect a little on your first impressions of the campus and the college when you arrived.

DH: Well, it was so much bigger than the school I'd been going to, so it was sort of overwhelming to me at the beginning. I moved into a dormitory. I knew one person at Oregon State [laughs] at that time. And I just sort of settled in. And my biggest problem was changing from a Bachelor of Arts degree—because I'd taken philosophy and psychology, and language—to all of a sudden going for a Bachelor of Science, which meant I had a whole lot of science to take, to make up. [0:05:03] And I decided that I wanted to go into something that was—because eventually I wanted to be a counselor.

So I decided to go to something that actually had me interacting with students on a little different level than just standing up in front of them and giving a lecture, or talking to them. So for me, it was either going to be music or P.E. And I decided to go into Physical Education, which meant all of a sudden, I had to take all these science classes: Physiology, Anatomy, and Human Biology, and all of those things. But I settled in. Took a huge load, and I think carried 21 hours, or 23 hours, and said, "This is what I want to do, and I want to graduate in four years," which I didn't do, but—[laughs]. That's what prompted me to go into Physical Education. But I kept up on my music; I sang in the choir. I was in musicals in Oregon State. So I participated when I was at Oregon State.

JD: We'll come back to the music aspect of it. As you were talking, in doing some research, I realized that the Physical Education major had really been established not long before you were there.

DH: Right.

JD: And I wasn't sure if you were aware of that, and kind of what the thinking was, and whether the program was changing at all when you were there, or had they pretty much decided—?

DH: It was a very small department when I was there, so I don't know what changes had happened, but I do know—and I will never forget this—when I did my student teaching I loved the woman I was working with in Corvallis High School. And my supervisor told my supervisee teacher that she never gave an A to a student. And my teacher I was working with in the school said, "I will never take another student unless you give her an A." So I got an A for my student teaching, which was wonderful. I love kids. I love working with kids, so it was a good field for me to go into.

JD: And a good fit. Yes.

DH: Yeah.

JD: That's obvious. You mentioned when we were talking earlier that you lived in a dorm, but then at some point you wanted to move off campus, or move into a different living situation. And maybe the school wasn't completely on board with that?

DH: [Laughs] The school was not on board with that. I was going to move in with a friend of mine that I had met, and her father, that lived at Corvallis. Well, the school said, "Absolutely not." I said, "Well, let me bring you a note from my mom and dad that it's okay." And I brought them a note, and they said, "No, you can't do that. You cannot move off campus." Which is very different [laughs] than it is today. So, I decided that I would join a co-op, which I did. And had a great time—I'm glad I did that.

JD: And can you talk about what the co-op was?

DH: Well, it was like a sorority, only you didn't have to apply to get into it.

JD: Mm-hm.

DH: But it was operated the same. We had officers in the co-op. We had all of our bunk beds in the co-op. We stayed up all night long studying or talking, or laughing. And it was a wonderful way to meet—really get well acquainted with a smaller group of people. And you know, I took advantage of everything at Oregon State. When they had a concert that was going to come to Portland that I'd have to pay a lot of money for, I went to it at Oregon State. And other people would say, "I've got to study." And I said, "Oh, you can always study afterwards. Let's go. Let's go." [Laughs] So, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Oregon State. It was a wonderful experience!

JD: So was this the one that was called the Co-Ed Cottage?

DH: Uh-huh.

JD: And how did you get selected for that?

DH: You know, I don't remember. I just know I signed up for it, and somehow or another, I got in.

JD: Mm-hm.

DH: And I don't know that there were any really high standards to get in. Although I thought all the girls that were in that co-op were wonderful. It was a terrific time for me.

JD: And was it located on campus, or off? Does the building still exist?

DH: I don't know if the building still is there. You probably would have a hard time telling the difference between that and a sorority. I mean, it was on the outskirts of the campus, actual campus.

JD: Mm-hm. [Pause] [0:10:00] And so you mentioned musicals and being in the choir. Talk a little bit more about what you did in those, in the musicals, or in the choir.

DH: Mostly I was in the chorus. I don't think I ever had a leading role. But, it was something—I loved music. And it was something I had done when I was at my school that I went to first in California, and it was something that I kept up there, and it required me to take more hours than they wanted me to take. So I carried—because I was trying to make up for all the classes I needed to have under a Bachelor of Science, I also couldn't give up my music. And so I participated in the plays. And then when I graduated, I joined a civic choir and also participated in some musicals, and sang in a small group. But that was—and at one of the schools, I actually taught music, one of the high schools.

JD: Mm-hm.

DH: After I got out of school.

JD: Any particular memorable parts of any of the musicals you were in, or which ones the school did while you were there?

DH: I believe we did *Annie Get Your Gun*, which was just fun. I also did—I think we did *Oklahoma*, and I did a lot of the makeup for that. One of the things participating in any activity in school required everybody to do whatever part they could do, as well as taking a role in it. And sometimes it was, you know, being in the background chorus, and maybe having a couple lines to say, which was very exciting! [Laughs] But it was just mostly participating. And it was a love of mine. I had so much fun at Oregon State, because I decided to try all kinds of new things that I had never tried before.

JD: I think—isn't that part of the purpose of college? [Laughs]

DH: I hope it's part of the purpose. I encouraged my kids; I said, "You know, this is your time to experiment and try, and do something different than what you've always done." So, I had a chance to be on the rowing crew. And I'd get up at six o'clock in the morning, and those days we wore big curlers in our hair, and we'd sort of sleepily go down to the river and practice in the morning. And I played hockey, hockey on the ground—?

JD: Field hockey.

DH: Field hockey—thank you. And you know, we got to travel. We went up to Vancouver, British Columbia. So that was fun. These were all club sports. But I tried my hand at a whole bunch of things. And had a great time.

JD: So, this was certainly pre-Title IX era women's athletics.

DH: Yes, yes. It was! [Laughs]

JD: So talk a little—you said they were team sports, which was one of my questions. Talk a little about how they were organized, what kind of facilities and equipment were available to you all.

DH: Well, there weren't that many things available, first of all. Whatever was there, I would try to participate in. And none of the teams were—they were all club sports. So you didn't have some coach out there working with you day after day after day to get better. Now, did we practice? Sure we practiced. But it was not at the same intensity level as if you had a sport where you were playing seriously against some other school.

So we picked up games where we could. If somebody had field hockey, then we'd go play them wherever they were, but not on a regular basis. Not on how well your league's going to do. It was just a chance for us to participate in that sport. And the good thing about it was you didn't have to be that good [laughs], because it was usually we needed to get a team together. But at that time, there really were no sports where women competed on the same level that men competed on. And so it was—we got the dregs in terms of equipment, in terms of time. So it was whatever was left over that we could get into that spot, or onto that field that we got to participate.

JD: And were there ever any comments or discussions among yourselves about a desire for something more than—?

DH: You know, there wasn't. But when I started teaching, that's when I really understood the disadvantages for women in sports. [0:15:05] And I taught physical education. And there was no way that kids could play against—girls could play against other teams at other schools. And so I had a long conversation with another physical education teacher that was in our league, and we decided that we would start a league program, that that was the only way we were ever going to get girls to participate really at the level that they needed to participate in.

So, we first started with track, and we got the entire league involved. And we went to the state track meet, which at that time, it had big schools, middle schools, and small schools. And I came from teaching at a small school. But I mean, we did really well. And in fact, I was teaching at Gervais High School, and it was the first trophy for league championship they had ever won, which was in girls track, the first year we had girls track. And we took a ninth in the state. I mean, I thought we did fabulous! But I was so surprised that there weren't—that schools didn't play one another. I mean, it was all sort of pick-up games that we'd try to play before the boys' basketball games. And once we started track, then it spread to the other sports.

JD: Mm-hm. Did I understand that you played some basketball as well?

DH: Oh, yes, I was terrible! [Laughs] I played when I was in California. And at that time, you had three girls playing at one end, three girls—there were six people on a team; three on offense and three on defense. And I figured, I never needed to learn how to shoot a basket because I was always on defense. [Laughs] And I mean, I played, again, because they didn't have that many people come out. And I liked it, and I worked hard, but I wasn't terrific playing basketball. And again, as long as I only had to defend, I was a little better. [Laughs]

JD: [Laughs] Well, and field hockey is not that well known. And it often actually is played at a lot of Ivy League colleges in the East and the Midwest. Do you know how field hockey came to be at Oregon State? Maybe you could talk a little bit about the game, and what it is.

DH: Well, field hockey is a little bit like soccer, except—I mean, the same idea as with soccer, although you're playing with sticks and little—and little hard balls. [Laughs] And it came about, like most sports for the girls at that time, because some professor, or some teacher liked to do that, and just wanted kids to participate, just as I did when I taught. Getting kids to participate; giving them more opportunities. You know, a teacher did that, and they did that not because they were being paid thousands and thousands of dollars. It was, "I want to make sure that I give these girls this kind of experience. I really like field hockey; I'll see if we can put together a team. I'll go with them to play at various places—anywhere we can get a game." And so it was a teacher that took that extra time, and that energy to do that, and not get paid for it. And I will forever be grateful to all those women teachers that allowed us to participate in a mix of sports.

JD: It's definitely an important part of your development and experience.

DH: Absolutely. And I tried to copy what—I mean, they set the example. I'd like to say I was the first one to do it, but no. They set the example. I had the same desire they did, giving these kids opportunities to experience a lot of things in life. I

mean, I took field trips so they would know what it was like to ski. I'd arrange for a swimming pool one night, and one of the companies came over so they could learn to snorkel and dive. And it was trying to give them experiences for lifelong sports that they—hopefully something would click within them to have the ability, or the desire, to go on and continue with that sport. [0:20:01]

JD: So as you mentioned, you carried a very heavy academic load, as well as experiencing as much as you could outside of the classroom. Did you have any time to just hang out, and if so, what did look like in 1960, '61 Corvallis?

DH: [Laughs] Well, it meant no sleep, is what it really meant. And then I broke my leg skiing, and that was during winter term. And I will tell you the biggest motivating factor as I was carrying this 21 or 23 hour load, winter term, with a broken leg, and because I had changed from a Bachelor of Arts to a Bachelor of Science, the classes were from one end of the campus to the other. And I thought, I just can't do this, and I'm going to drop out this term. So I started up the stairs to go in to drop out for that term. And I had this vivid image of working in the cannery one more summer, and I thought, you know, I can do this! [Laughs] I did not want to go back to cannery work, and I knew I would have to until I graduated but, I thought, I can do this. It's easy compared to going back to work at the cannery, so. That's what I did. Excuse me.

JD: And so did you have a campus job? Or jobs in the summer in between years?

DH: You know, at that time, I could make enough money in the summertime. And sometimes it was working double shifts, and working seven days a week, and working overtime. But I could actually earn enough money in the summer to go to school. And I needed a little bit of money for—just for simple things. And so, I did some babysitting. I did some work—I started a little kids' birthday party business. [Laughs] Well, because one of the people I babysat for, they wanted me to help them with their daughter's birthday party, and I said, sure. And I did games, and I mean, I love kids, so I had a great time doing this. And all the other mother's said, "Would you come and do my daughter?" "Would you come and do my child's birthday?" And so, I ended up with this little business, and got other girls involved, and said, "You can make some money if you want to go to do this. And I'll teach you how to do it, and it's easy, and it's fun." So that was how I picked up a little extra money.

JD: Very resourceful. I know that the year that you graduated, the school had its name officially changed.

DH: Yes.

JD: How did that play out on campus?

DH: I think people were excited that it was going to go from a college to a university. I think all of us liked the name of, sound of a university. I don't know that much changed, but we all liked the sound of university, as opposed to college. So, it was really an exciting time to have that, go through that name change. And I don't think many people opposed it. I think it was pretty—a majority of students and faculty thought that was great, that we would become a university.

JD: And were there any particular events that marked the occasion, that you recall?

DH: You know, I don't remember. There may have been, but I just don't remember.

JD: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And what about campus traditions, or events that were specific to that time period that you were there? Anything that you recall that you enjoyed participating in? Or were glad when it stopped being a tradition?

DH: [Laughs] I love sports, so, I loved the fact that as a—not like today, but I mean, students went to see the games. Whether it was a football game or a basketball game, or baseball game, or track meet, we actually participated in the fact that we went to see them. And we would crowd into the gymnasium. And I can remember having a broken foot and trying to go up stairs, walk up stairs to see a basketball game. But we participated in those. We had a lot of campus activities, and even if you weren't in a fraternity or sorority, there were still dances that were held that you could go to. [0:25:00] And there were some things that happened in the dormitories that we could participate in.

JD: Such as?

DH: But there were a lot of activities, and a lot of entertainers that were coming up to Portland to do concerts. They were really encouraged to also come and give that concert at the school. I can remember several times, I took—again, I took advantage of all of that. And I can remember trying to get someone to go with me. And they'd say, "Oh, no, I've got too much studying to do." And I'd say, "Look, how often do you get a chance to see—," you know, whatever the group was. Peter, Paul, and Mary. How often do you get a chance to see them? And so, I always went. Even if I had to go by myself, I always went. And couldn't understand—you could always put off studying until the middle of the night. [Laughs]

JD: [Laughs] So, Corvallis was a smaller town then.

DH: Right. Right.

JD: Talk a little about your impressions of the town, places that you recall—just what your experiences were, there off campus.

DH: I didn't have much to do with the town. Really. Almost everything was on campus. I lived in Salem, so it wasn't that far from Corvallis. And I didn't come home every weekend, but I would come home occasionally, and that's really when I knew more of the stores and more of the places. So, be back in Salem. Excuse me. [Coughs] [Pause] Also, my activities were—not that many people had cars. My activities were pretty well focused around the university. That's where I got to see my entertainment. That's where I got to play sports. That's where I went to classes. I don't think I had any money to do any shopping! [Laughs] So it was pretty much everything happened—that I participated in—happened at the campus.

JD: And as you've been talking about athletics or housing, and you mentioned that they wouldn't let you live off campus—was that gender related, or can you talk a little about sort of what the rules were for female students at that point in time?

DH: Well, at that time, since I was going to move in with my friend and her father, they didn't like that. And I said, "But my parents know them." My parents wrote a letter saying because of the cost of housing, that we want our daughter to live here, and we know the family and we approve this. And they said, "Absolutely not." And I was a senior in college, and I couldn't move off campus! And it was so frustrating to me. I was just beside myself, that I'm an adult, and I mean, that's one of the things that you actually try to become in college, is an adult, and to make some of your own decisions. I was so disappointed, and frankly I was really angry about it. And I said, "If I can do this, I can save some money. My parents approved it. I'm a senior. I'm old enough to make these decisions." And they just said no. So, and I think I went through every appeals process possible. So I went to live in a co-op, and actually I had a blast. I was really happy I'd gone there. It was disappointing that I couldn't save some money, but it was really, in the end, a very good thing for me to do.

JD: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And did the school have certain rules and regulations that the Co-ed Cottage to abide by, or was it sort of self-governed?

DH: Well you know, I don't know. I am sure the college had rules and regulations, because at that time they had rules and regulations for everything. And it was an official co-op on campus. It wasn't some outside organization. So, they had, like I say they seemed to have rules and regulations that involved any place that you lived, including not letting you live off campus.

JD: Mm-hm. I mean, in talking to some other people who went to OSU around that time period [0:30:01], the women dorms—women had to be in at a certain time. And so were those kinds of policies in place at the Co-ed Cottage as well?

DH: Yes. We had restrictions of what time you could be home.

JD: Mm-hm. And was there like a house mother or an adult who was making sure that you all followed those?

DH: There must have been, but I have no recollection of those. [Laughs] But there must have been, because I know we also had—when we ate, we had table manners that we had to learn. Yeah, there were some restrictions, but I found that the time that we had to get in—I could participate—I mean, I could get to the library at night. Again, I don't think I missed a concert that came through town. I thought, what a wonderful opportunity. You know, I just stayed up a lot of nights, and had a lot of sleepy days in classes. [Laughs]

JD: And was there a dress code, either on campus, and/or at the Cottage?

DH: I do not remember that we had a dress code. But I don't remember anyone objecting to what we had to wear. I think we wore—I don't think we wore pants. You know, it was skirts and sweaters, and blouses, and dresses, so I don't remember ever being allowed to wear pants. But other than that, I don't remember a dress code.

JD: Fair enough. So today, university students are going to have computers and smart phones. What technologies were in play when you were in school, or that you remember as being important?

DH: I think we had a typewriter.

JD: It was your personal typewriter?

DH: We had our own personal typewriters. I believe—I can't remember if the dorms had any typewriters that were for general use, or if we had to use our own. But everything we did, and every paper we did, we were on a typewriter. And I can remember in the co-op staying up rather late at night with several girls who were busily typing away, and reading a book, and trying to get their research project done. So it was typing in a lot of inappropriate words as they would rip it out, because you could only have so many mistakes on a page, or so many even erasures on a page. And if you wanted to carbon copy it, which was a pain, you'd get three-quarters of the way through, and make a mistake, and erase it, and then realize you shouldn't do that, so we'd rip it—you'd hear this RRIIPP! [Laughs] Putting new paper in so we could retype it.

JD: For younger listeners to this interview, you might want to describe what carbon copies were.

DH: Oh. [Laughs] That's right. It was a piece of carbon paper that would print on a page. So when I typed on that first page, the carbon within would do the letters on the second page. Or it would go through, so you had a copy of it. And a lot of times you did it because you wanted to save that carbon copy, because you turned in the first, the one that wasn't carbon copied, the one you typed on, to the professor. And if you wanted to save it, you usually had to use a carbon and save that other paper. And I wanted to save all of mine.

JD: And do you still have them?

DH: No. [Laughs] It's amazing how important it was for a period of time that I—because I thought I did some good work, and I wanted those around. And as you grow older, and as you move, you go, "Eh, I don't really need that. When am I going to use that again?" It's just taking that space, so I got rid of most of the things.

JD: Mm-hm. So there's a certain focus to life at a university and what's going on right there. But certainly there's state, and national, and international events even that were occurring during the time that you were at Oregon State. I could either name a few, or if there's some that you remember, whether it's the civil rights movement [0:34:59], or something that was going on that sort of made an impact on the campus, or an impact on you.

DH: You know, I don't really remember much of that. What was going on outside of campus. I was so focused on what happened in campus and my classwork, and I don't even know that I read a paper during the time I was in college. [Laughs] Which is awful to say, but. And we didn't have the technology available. And research was a very tedious thing to do, because there you would have a stack of books, and you would be trying to get ideas, or copy things down from this book, and this book, and this book, so writing a paper was really a difficult thing to do. And that was one of those things that if you put it off to the end, you weren't going to get it done.

JD: There was the library only; no online resources to access at one in the morning.

DH: No. No, no, no, no. It was just the library. And I don't remember some of what was happening. I mean, the big thing was the Kennedy election. That was huge, and lots and lots of debate went on around that election. And I'm trying to think of what else that I knew, outside of campus life, that went on during that time. Oh, I did go to the Rose Bowl when Oregon State was there. I do have a piece of the wooden uprights, because we all ran down to the field, and they tore the goalposts down, and everybody was trying to get a piece of wood from it. So.

JD: Well, talk a little about what year that was, and what you remember about that Rose Bowl game.

DH: I remember that Oregon State won. Do I need to remember anything else? [Laughs]

JD: [Laughs]

DH: No. And it was fun, and our whole family went down, which I was sort of surprised, because we didn't take very many vacations. But I had a sister living in Pasadena at the time, and we were going to go to that Rose Bowl game. And it was so much fun! But, every single person in that stadium just piled onto that field afterwards, and literally pulled the goalposts down and tore them apart. Which you could never do today, because they're not made out of wood.

JD: Well, but that was a big deal.

DH: Oh, it was a huge deal! Are you kidding me? How would Oregon State like to go back to the Rose Bowl? We would! [Laughs] No, it was a very, very big deal. And people went down to the game; they drove down to the game. And at that time, I don't think many people flew. You had to drive most places. There wasn't—I did not fly in a plane until after I was married. So it wasn't, "oh, jump on a plane and go someplace;" it was, no, you drove to wherever you went.

JD: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

DH: Which is a huge change, when I look back on it, about where we went and what we did. And if you were going to Washington, D.C., it was a long drive, is all I could tell you. [Laughs]

JD: So, what would you consider either your greatest, or one of your greatest accomplishments at OSU?

DH: Graduating. [Laughs] I can't think of anything that was a great accomplishment for me, other than being able to pay for my own school, and getting through school. I mean, just getting a college degree. My dad had a fourth grade education; my mother had a high school education. I was the first one in our family to graduate from college. I was absolutely determined to go. Nothing was going to stop me, and I paid for my entire college, which I could do at that time. You could work in the summer, and make enough money to pay to go to school. So my parents were unable to help me. Never thought a thing about it; just thought, yeah, this is what I have to do. I'll pick up money for expenses any way I can. [0:40:01] But college was at a rate that you could literally work in the summertime, and you might put in long hours, and you might do awful work, but the fact is, you could pay for yourself to go to school. And for me that was—being the first one of the family to graduate, that was a big accomplishment.

I also really gained such a richness of opportunities there, and my goal was to take advantage of every opportunity that came along, whether it was trying to be in a musical, or playing some sport I never played before. Field hockey—getting to go to Vancouver, British Columbia, where I'd never been before. So it was the opportunities the school provided, and I took advantage of them. And to me, that's an accomplishment. But mainly, my goal was to get through school, and I did. And that's what I wanted to accomplish. I don't think I changed the world there. But I did speak up; I did. I participated in everything that I could.

JD: And then you continued to do some coursework at OSU.

DH: Right.

JD: After you graduated. Talk a little about what you continued on.

DH: Well, my goal was always to get a degree. I wanted to be a counselor. And at that time—and it was one of the reasons I ended up choosing PE, is I wanted a subject where I could really get to know the students you were working with. And I wanted that degree in counseling because I thought I had something to offer. Now, I don't know why I thought I had something offer, but I did think I had something to offer. And of course, I thought I knew how to do it. Then when I started taking classes, I realized I didn't know how to do it at all. But, it was my way of saying, "I've gotten this degree. How do I now help someone else?" I mean, I felt great about my life. I had a wonderful family, and I just wanted to give other kids the same opportunities that I had. And so it was all focused on what I do to help somebody else.

JD: And so you did start to teach. You mentioned it briefly a couple of times.

DH: Uh-huh.

JD: Talk about sort of going into teaching, and how that worked.

DH: Well, I started out—again, I was going to school. I was going to work on my master's degree. And I got a call from a principal who was desperate for a teacher, and he told me it was only going to be for a half a year. I said, fine, perfect. So I taught at Woodburn High School, and again, participated and provided opportunities for those kids in a variety of ways. And then the principal from Gervais, which was the school only about five miles away, came and observed me, and asked me if I would teach at Gervais the next year. And I said, "Well, I just need time to figure out where I want to teach, and what I want to do." This all happened so quickly. And then he came back and asked me again, and told me how much he would pay. This is when teachers negotiated their own pay. Then he worked with my principal, because my principal I was working with really liked me.

So they sent me off to Gervais for a whole day to observe what happened at Gervais. So I went there, and again the principal—superintendent offered a little bit more money. And I said, "Well, you know, I just haven't had time to think about this." Finally, made me an offer I couldn't refuse. I said, "Okay. I'll teach here." Plus, I didn't have time to look for anything else, so. I thought, oh, I can go there, and didn't look from there. But I went to Gervais. My goal was to give these kids the same opportunities that I had gotten at Oregon State. So, I started a track team, and we took the first trophy in our league, ever—Gervais. Then we went to state level, where we played against all sizes of schools at that time, and we took sixth in track. Felt very good about that. [0:45:01]

These girls were so hungry for this, broadening their scope, that it was fun to watch them blossom. And I can remember getting in trouble with the principal at my school when I called track practice. Again, I wasn't getting paid to do this; it was trying to offer opportunities. And he said, "You went out there," and just chewed me out, and I said, "I cancelled it. They went out there on their own. They were out there on their own, the relay team, on Saturdays and Sundays, working together." So it was—I did it because of the joy it gave them, and how much they wanted that activity to happen, that they wanted to be part of that. They wanted to compete at that level, and so I just gave them that opportunity.

JD: So you taught for about eight years?

DH: Uh-huh. I did.

JD: And somewhere in there, you were married; you started a family. You had two children of your own.

DH: I got married, yeah. Right.

JD: So, as we move forward in time a little bit, your son, Ryan, injured himself—

DH: Chad. Chad. Chad.

JD: Chad. I'm sorry.

DH: That's all right.

JD: And you decided that the response to his injury wasn't adequate, and that kind of started you down a new path in your life.

DH: Totally new path! One that I wouldn't for a million years dreamed I would be involved in. But when my son fell off the swings and hit his head, it sort of dawned on me all of a sudden that there's cement under all this equipment. And this is crazy! So, I did a little research, and I found out—everywhere we went, I'd stop at the park. I'd call the Parks and Recreation director, if they had one. I'd say, "What do you have on your ground to protect the kids on playground equipment? And how much does it cost? And much does it cost to maintain?" I'd take pictures of it. And then once I had done a bunch of that, I came back to the city and went to their city council meeting and said, "I would like to change what's on the ground under our playground equipment. My son got injured, and this is the research I've done, and how much it cost, and I found volunteers to help put down sawdust if that's what you want to put down." And my city council

turned me down flat. And I thought, how can this be? How? This is so simple. This is a no-brainer! Come on, folks. So they didn't do it.

And so I thought, well, there was an election going on for mayor, and so I went to one of the guys running for major, and said, "I want to run your campaign." And I said that because he had run for something else and had done a terrible job, and I really liked him. So, I ran his campaign, and he won. Then, he started a Park and Recreation Board, and he appointed me to the Park and Recreation Board. Now, you would think this is such a simple thing to do that you wouldn't have to go through all of this! And so we start the Park and Recreation Board. They came back to City Council and recommended that we get rid of the cement under the playground equipment. And again we were told no. So I thought, okay, the only way I'm going to get this done is to run for city council. These guys have all been on here a hundred years. I'm going to run for city council!

JD: And this was in West Linn?

DH: In West Linn. So I ran for city council, and I won. By one or two votes; it was pretty close. [Laughs] Then I was on the council, and I thought, well, turns out you still have all these same people that turned you down. I need a few more people on city council that would be with me. But I thought, this is going to take forever. So I found out about this program where money came from the federal government to city government to county government for parks. And every year the county held a meeting for all the cities to distribute this money for parks programs. And I found out it by chance, and went to it. And when we went around and they said, "How much money do you want?" I made up a number. [0:50:01] And it was an uneven number, so they didn't think I didn't know what I was talking about. [Laughs] And then they went back, and one of the guys spoke up and said, "West Linn has never gotten any money for their parks. I think that should be our priority."

So I got the money I asked for, my made-up number. And then they said, "Oh, do you have matching funds?" And I said, "Absolutely, don't worry about it." [Laughs] We had no matching—I went back and I told our city manager, "Look at this; I got this; this is great." And he said, "Well, we don't have any matching money." And I said, "You know, we can find some. And if we get volunteers that counts as matching." So we started on this program, very strategic. We changed the equipment at the most visible, most used park, so that the other people in other parts of the city would complain that they didn't have the same thing. And put up some new equipment; had a different surface put under the playground equipment.

But that took me—from beginning to end—seven years. Now that says I'm either very ineffective, or it tells you how long it is to change the simplest of things. But it was one of those things I was determined to make happen. And I have found, throughout my career, that things don't happen easily. You think the simplest things could happen tomorrow, and they don't. So it is your willingness to just keep pushing, and working on it, and working on it. I mean, look how long it took for the civil rights. Look how long it took for a change in women's sports. Look how long it took to get kindergartens in Oregon. Things take a long time, and it takes someone who is going to be willing to be very persistent. And this was a small thing, but it was something that I was determined to get done, and I was not going to stop in the middle of it, and not get it done.

JD: You mentioned kindergartens.

DH: Yes.

JD: Which could work as a segueway into, after you were on the West Linn City Council, at some point—

DH: Yes. We tried to get kindergartens.

JD: —you decided to move to a different legislative body.

DH: Yes.

JD: So talk about that move, and that decision.

DH: Well, again, politics are going into any elective office, and it never ever occurred to me. It was not something that I particularly—since it hadn't occurred to me, I didn't want to do it. And I was very narrow in my purpose, although I think

a lot of other really good things happened when I was on city council. But very: this is what I want to get done, and I'm not going to leave until I get it done. And from that I had some people come up and say, "We want you to run for state representative." I thought, I don't know anything about it. I don't know how to do that. And they started talking to me, and they said "We really want you to run, and we'll help you."

Well, it wasn't a lot of help, but once I decided, I figured out how to do it, and was in the Oregon Legislature. And we had tried—when I was in West Linn, I also worked for the group of people to get kindergartens in our schools. So I was on the education committee, and thought, aha! This is the time to get kindergartens. And we got kindergartens in our schools. But it was an important issue for me. And you know, now the whole preschool and early childhood is what the state is working on, and incredibly important. But we did not—we were very late state in getting kindergartens here. And yet, we know that's one of the most important time for kids.

JD: So you were first elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1980?

DH: Uh-huh.

JD: Talk about some of the other issues that were important to you, that you worked on in your years there.

DH: Well, there are a lot of different issues, but I was on—I chaired the environmental committee. And it was a time when they were looking at building three nuclear plants in Washington to help provide energy for Oregon. [0:54:59] And I went to a meeting, and thought of people that I thought really should know what's happening, in terms of forecasts for weather, and electrical needs, heating needs. And I just went to that meeting, didn't say much, and I thought, they're way off. We do not need that much. And began to realize that you could cut down on the energy that was needed by doing a bunch of really simple things that didn't require building a new plant: everything from making parking spaces a little narrower to making sure that when you went into a grocery store, that doors that covered their frozen food were doors that closed, as opposed to plastic things hanging, or nothing. And you went through all of the things that take energy, which almost everything does, and what were some of the simplest things you could do to drive down that energy usage, and even without people turning off their lights, or keeping their heat down, or what we think of traditional. How a refrigerator is made, and how much energy that takes. You know, could Oregon do that by itself? Probably not change the manufacturing, but if you hooked up with the state of California, you had a big enough population.

And if California did it, then we could—if we worked with them, we could then get it to happen nationwide. And so, I did a lot of work on energy, rewrote the land-use plan, which I spent almost a year doing because we had some things wrong in it, and it needed to be changed. So I'm very proud—and we got kindergartens in, trying for a hundred years to get a kindergarten program started. So I'm very proud of what I did when I was in the legislature. Also, since women's wages doing the same job were much lower, I worked on and I passed pay equity. So, a lot of things I did I felt really good about.

JD: There was an *Oregonian* editorial that was actually written upon your departure from the Oregon Legislature, but it was an overview of your years there. And they were specifically noting that somewhere between your first and second session, that they—how they described it was that overnight you grasped the legislative process and became this effective collaborator, and someone who could work with a variety of elected officials. Is that something you recall as kind of a light going off?

DH: Oh, absolutely! I mean, my first year, you have to understand, I had no idea how the system worked. I had no idea. I mean, it was like, well, do you have to write the bill yourself, or how do you—? You know, I didn't realize they had attorneys that wrote the bill. You'd give them the concept; they'd write the bill. So when you're thrown into something that is so new, and you have no preparation for that? I mean, they did an orientation, but you didn't learn a lot during that; it's only by doing it. So I was really not understanding the whole system. And I thought I kind of did, and I had served on city council, which was a whole world away from the Legislature. So, it was learning to do my job, and then getting—I mean, realizing that nothing was going to be easy. And if you wanted to change anything, that you had to be very persistent, find other partners that you could work with, and it was then that you could make the change.

And I can remember the first time—I called one of the agency heads from State Department, and then a couple of people from phone companies, because we were looking at phone charges, because we didn't have little phones that we could

hold up to our ear without a link to them. And what I found was they wanted to dismiss me. [0:59:58] You know: "Nice girl. Now, go away, and we'll go back to doing business how we like to do business." And I decided, "Uh-uh. Nope. Not going to happen. We're going to change this." And I get pretty stubborn when I think something that's wrong needs to be righted, and even though it didn't affect huge numbers of people, I didn't want to be patted on the head, and say, "Now, go away." So I thought, okay, I'm going to fight you, and I'm not going to give up. And I'm not going to sit—because they all thought I would just go away and give up. I said, "Nope, hm-mm. We're going to get this done."

We ran it like a campaign, and we got all the people in the community we were talking about to write letters, and we made a big deal about it, and it made it happen. I think that was finally the time that people realized that I was not going to be a patsy, that I didn't know what I was doing—which I didn't, at first. And I was going to get it done.

JD: And you continued to move to different legislative bodies.

DH: Yeah.

JD: You then moved from the Oregon Legislature to the Clackamas County Commission?

DH: Right.

JD: And what spurred you to switch gears?

DH: Well, I had decided that it was going to be my last session working in Salem, that I really wanted to go to the private sector, that I wanted to do something different. Well, I get a call saying, "One of our commissioners is leaving. We have never had a woman serve as a county commissioner in Clackamas County. We have never had anyone from the west side serve as a county commissioner, and we would like to appoint you to that position." So I thought about it, and a friend said to me, "Are you crazy? It's what you like. You're five minutes away from your job. You actually get paid something to do this job. It's perfect! And there's a lot of problems in the county that you can help solve." So, I decided to go to the county at that time, and I'm glad I made that move. It was a wonderful experience.

And, we changed so many things at the county, and it was easier, much easier to—if you had an agreement with the other two commissioners. Some things took a long time, because you also had to change the head of that department's thinking, and what they wanted to accomplish. But it was an easier forum to get change, and to make changes than it was in the legislature, where you're dealing with a lot more people. And it doesn't have the broad impact always that working in the legislature—which impacts so many people throughout the state. But this was really about our county, and trying to get our county back in order, which had lacked that ability. And there were things that—they were good staff, but they did things that took advantage of the county, which, as public employees, shouldn't have happened. So we changed that.

And we had this huge urban area that was unincorporated, that the county was supervising instead of the city. When I looked at it, I said, "You do not have one speck of green space in this whole large area." And the county employees never wanted to do anything about it. I mean, they just wanted to ignore that. I said, "No, no, no, no, no. We're not going to ignore this. We need something for kids to do. We need parks, we need—," and we started a parks district over there, and built a swimming pool, and added parks in the neighborhoods. But there had been not a single park in this huge population of over 100,000! And we got to do that kind of thing. We got to be very creative. Like, we have a lot of—in fact, it was kind of we had a lot of parks along the river, overnight camps, and we never had enough money to run them. So we took advantage of buying a piece of property that had started as a golf course. Well, we finished it as a golf course, and every bit of money that we made on that golf course then went to pay for the parks in that county. [1:05:04] So, we got to be as imaginative as we could be, and try some new things. And I think we made a huge difference in changing the whole culture of the county. So, that was fun for me. And that's all I ever wanted to do.

JD: [Laughs]

DH: And then I wanted to leave! [Laughs]

JD: And leave you did, for yet a different legislative body.

DH: Yes, and again, I never, ever, ever thought about it, dreamed about it, wanted to do it, and I had people coming to my office trying to recruit me, and I said, "No, I don't want to do it. I'm happy where I am." And then one day we were sitting in a meeting, and our receptionist came across and she said "You're wanted on the phone." I said, "Well, tell them I'll call them back." And she said, "No, no, no, no. The Vice President wants to talk to you." I said, "What Vice President?" I said, "I'll call him back when we're through." She said, "No, it's *the* Vice President." So I'm going, oh, that Vice President! So I took his call, and he gave me a—I mean, he talked about meeting me, and you know, serving my country, and all of those good things.

JD: And who was the Vice President at this point?

DH: Al Gore. And Clinton was President at the time. I mean, he really stuck it to me and said, "We think you're the only person that can win." Which is not true, but. And he said, "We need you. The country needs you. And you need to help us out." So I said, "Well, give me a few days." And I called about 200 people and said, you know, what do you think if I do this? I thought I was out of my mind, doing this. I was running against an incumbent. And people don't win against incumbents very often. So, and I talked to a numbers guy, and he said, "Well, if you do everything right, and your opponent makes a mistake, you can win by one percentage point." So. I thought, oh sure, okay. I'll do it! [Laughs] But I did it reluctantly. But he—it was a real call from him as to serving your country, and I said, "I'll do that." And he just got me hook, line and sinker into doing it. And I had a great time. I'm glad I had that opportunity.

JD: And so you were back in the Congress. From 1997—?

DH: Yeah, 1996 I was elected.

JD: Okay. To 2008.

DH: Right.

JD: And I think as we were talking a little earlier about your collaborative skills and your networking skills, that seemed like perhaps it came into play in some of the positions you held in the U.S. House of Representatives. Talk a little about just kind of the work that you did as a couple different titles of whips, as well as some of your legislative work and how that affected the state.

DH: Again, I had no idea how Congress worked. I knew how the state worked, now. I knew how the county worked; I knew how the city—but I had not a clue how Congress works. And I will tell you a little story to start out, how little I knew, is I got appointed—well, the first thing that happened was our freshman class got together, because we were all in the same boat, all new members, had some new member orientation. And I met with the women. And each of the women went around and said what their goals were, and what they'd like to do, in terms of leadership or whatever they wanted to do, or committees they wanted to serve on. And you know, one said, "Well, I want to be whip," and I didn't know what that meant. And another one said they needed—they wanted to do something else. And I said, "Well, I just think I need to sort of get the lay of the land before I want to jump into this." And they said, "Well, why don't you run for class presidency." And I'm going, "I don't know anything. How do I run for president?" [1:10:01] And they said, "Just put your name. We'll nominate you." I said, "Okay."

So, there were about four guys that were nominated, and me. And there I was in my tennis shoes, because I'd just gotten over a major foot surgery. And he elected me, and I'm going, "Really? You don't even know me." [Laughs] And so that was fun to do. And we worked with the republican freshman class, and our class, and you know, really had a chance to get to know one another and what they wanted. And so in that capacity, I then got to sit on the Speaker's committee, the committee that they ask advice from. So having the presidency gave me lots and lots of entrées to other people and to other jobs. And I will never forget the time that we wanted to—we were going to work on campaign finance reform. I mean, as a class, that was going to be our big project. So, other people also worked on this, and we wanted ours to be the one they adopted.

And so we decided that it was important that we go talk to the President. So we made an appointment to go talk to the President, why ours was a better campaign finance reform than any of the others. And the President wasn't there, but the First Lady was, and that was Hillary Clinton. And she asks us what we wanted, and she said she would relay it to the

President. Then she kept talking to us. By the time we left, we had all changed our minds about what we wanted to do. And we all walked out and said, "How did that happen?" [Laughs] We didn't talk to the President, and now we're on a different track! And so, somebody that had a lot more knowledge than we did. Anyhow, that was one of those moments I won't forget as a freshman in Congress.

And the other moment I will never forget: I served on Financial Services Committee, and what happens in Congress unlike anything else, or anyplace else I'd served, your staff, you know, who's working for you on that committee—they go to all the meetings, and they stand along the side. So I walked in, and I was introducing myself to people. I had no idea who they were. And then I was told—I'm down in the front row to the far side, because that's where they put freshmen who don't know what they're doing. And my staff came to me, and she said, "Do you know what you did?" And I said, "Yeah. Let's see. I walked in, talked to people, and came and sat down." I said, "What have I done wrong?" She said, "You went in the wrong door." I said, "Went in the wrong door?" And she said, "Yeah, you went in the wrong door." And I said, "What's the right door?" And she said, "Well, you went in the Republican door instead of the Democratic door." And I said, "They have a door for Democrats and a door for Republicans? This makes no—no wonder we can't work together!" [Laughs] So that was my first experience with my first committee in Congress, was I went through the wrong door. [Laughs] And I thought that was the stupidest thing I'd ever seen or heard of.

But anyhow, I had a chance to work on some really important committees. We did a lot of work on safety items, what's in your food, what's in toys, what needs to be banned. On financial services, we did a lot of work on how terrorism moved their money, and what we can do about that. What do you do when you have a low income area, and how do you get money into that area to help improve that area? So it was very interesting to me. I didn't know much about financial services, but I learned a lot in the whole process. And I thought we did some really good things there. I'm proud of that. [1:14:58] And then I served on Science Committee, where we spent a lot of time on the STEM project, which is about teaching math and science and doing it at an earlier age and at a higher level for our children. And then we did a lot on climate change. So that was, again, fascinating to me.

Then I went and served on one of the major committees that literally has to do with everything else in the whole world. [Laughs] On that committee, and it was consumer rights. It was healthcare. It was business plans. So it covered a huge variety of things. And again, I learned from some of the best and some of the smartest people about the subjects. It was fascinating. I loved my time in Congress, but it was unlike any other elected body. I mean, pure size. I mean, I would go through and see people, and I'd go, "Did they just bring in a whole new bus-load of men with dark suits on and gray hair on the sides?" [Laughs] Because it was dominated by men. And I was one of 35 women in Congress, and there had only been 200 women that had served in Congress when I got there. Now that's changed. And ten-thousand men. So, women were sort of a rare breed in the caucus. But that's grown; it's all good.

JD: [Laughs] I know one of your ongoing interests has been in veterans—

DH: Yes.

JD: And service people, too, who are active, actively engaged in the service. You were part of the vote of whether to use military force in Iraq.

DH: Right. I voted no.

JD: And talk a little about maybe your interest in veterans, service people—existed before your time in Congress, but talk a little about how you use that in your ongoing support of veterans.

DH: Well, I don't think that was even an area I'd given much thought to. And when the possibility of us going to war in Iraq, I went and read everything I could possibly get my hands on. There's a little room that you can go up to, that you have to have all the right badges to get into, and say you'll never tell what you saw in that room. And I read everything I could on it. And the one thing I came away with, well actually, two things. One is that we had time to have those inspectors there for a lot longer than what they had currently been there. And the second one was we were not prepared to go to this war. And I felt very strongly about both of those. I couldn't believe that if people had read that, how they could be voting yes. But they did.

And immediately, then I went to some of the meetings at the National Guard in Salem, when I was home. And people wrote about spouses, kids. And I began to realize that most of the complaints were: the armored vehicles they're supposed to have weren't there. They didn't have the right equipment, and they weren't—there was a higher standard of equipment that worked; we just didn't have it over there at that time. And I thought, you know, are these people, the parents, the mothers, the sisters, the wives. Are they exaggerating this, or how much of this is really happening? And so, I did a couple of things.

I went to Iraq. And at that time, if you talked to a guard, they had no idea if they were going to be there six months or six years. They had no idea when they were coming home. Which they said, "Just tell us. I can deal with it. But just, I want to know when we get out of here." And then I also—most of our soldiers were training at Fort Hood in Texas. [1:19:59] So I thought, I'm going to go down and see them, and talk to them, and see what's going on. I want to know and see and hear what's happening. Well, they hadn't opened up some of the rooms they were staying in. For years they had been closed, as they had gotten smaller in the military. And now all of a sudden they had these new people that they had. Once they were transferred to the military, one of the services—the National Guard then had no idea what was happening to them. There was no communication between the regular military and the National Guard. So I thought, I'll go find out for myself. And talked to them.

They had equipment that didn't work. They had, you know, where you carry your ammunition? They had it on one side; it was going to be on the other side when they were actually in the war zone. I thought, that two seconds it takes to realize it's on the other side could mean someone's life. And when you have the thing you look through going in the opposite direction of the barrel of the gun? I mean, they were working with defective equipment. There was mold in their dormitories. They were getting sick from the mold. And I'm going, "Because—?" The active military said, "Oh, we need to furnish this space." But had not really been—nobody was prepared for the National Guard people that came on duty.

No one—we weren't prepared for this war. And so when they got there, they didn't have toilet paper in their room. They didn't have soap in their room. I mean, just sort of the basic things. And I said, "This is crazy. So I called our Governor, Kulongoski, and I said, "Send your credit card down here. We're going to have who's ever in charge going and buying these kids soap and toilet paper, and whatever they need. And we're going to get them out of these rooms that have mold that are making them sick." [Coughs] So I started on the equipment, and it was yelling and screaming about these vehicles aren't armored. We need to up-armor them. We need to do a better job of the equipment they have there. We need to do a better job of the shoes they have there. When I went over, they were in this huge tent, and only one person could call at a time, could call home, and there would be this huge line in the middle of the night for calling home. I mean, we sent them so unprepared into this war it was—we should all be ashamed of it.

And so I mean, that's where I focused my energy. I did not want to see our kids, our young men and women, killed in this war. That was going to be one of those shock and awe, and all from the air, and we're not going to do anything on the ground. And you know, it didn't turn out that way. And I think because we had pulled back on our embassies, and pulled back on so many things in the country, we didn't know what was happening on the ground. We didn't know that their wells weren't working. We didn't know that they didn't have a water system. We didn't know that their electricity didn't work. We didn't know what was actually there. And shame on us.

So one of the things they did when we visited—I visited a children's hospital. And if you had a baby girl, only the mothers and grandmothers and sisters could come and hold that baby, because it couldn't be held by a male. And afterwards—the hospital was dirty. I mean, it was just disgusting. And afterwards we talked to a group of administrators and doctors from the hospital, and I asked the question, "If you could have anything you wanted for this hospital, tell me one thing that you would want." And I'm thinking, like, some machine. And they said, "Water and sewer." And we forget those are such basic healthcare needs. They are for everyone. And they didn't have either one of those. And so, that was a little revealing, and a little upsetting to me. [1:25:00]

But when we were there, we could hear them shooting, and we had to leave in emergency to get out of there. We were flying in black helicopters in the middle of the night trying to get to a different airport so we could get out of Iraq. But I'm so glad I did that. I'm so glad I went there. I went to more than one part of Iraq. And the visit to Fort Hood to see how unprepared we were for this onslaught of new soldiers from the National Guard—totally unprepared, and then how unprepared they were actually for the war. And some of this I knew, because I'd read about it ahead of time. But most of it was—I mean, I could not believe that they didn't have vehicles that were armed over there.

So, that's when I got involved with the National Guard and said, "We need to do something. We need to change what's happening. We need to get the right helmets on there to stop—" Brain injury was the number one injury of this war. And we had better helmets they could have had instead of the helmets they wore. And I think we've got to pay for all of that. And a lot of ruined lives.

JD: Mm-hm. And you have worked on that. At least one specific way is you have a scholarship for Oregon veterans that's named for you. Can you talk a little about that?

DH: Right. Well, I started—yeah. When we were in Congress, we sort of brought back a version of the GI Bill. And I was on Veterans Committee, and so I was really happy about that. But what we didn't do is do the same thing for our National Guard and Reserve. But we did some things for them. So if you wanted to go to school when you were out of the service, you could literally go to school for free. You had to pay some incidentals and some things, but your college was paid for, if you wanted to take advantage of that. If you were in the National Guard, you were paid for college tuition, and how much you were paid depended on the amount of time you had spent in the war zone. So if you'd gone back—I mean, if you'd just been there once, it was a small amount. If you went back again, it was a little more. If you went back for a third time—and each time you went back, I mean, it was detrimental to your health.

So I decided it was important, especially for Oregonians. We have no base in this state. There is no place for these young men and women together to talk to one another about their experiences, because no one else really understands what they've gone through. And I thought, the one place that that can happen—a lot of colleges will start a military group, so they can meet with one another if they're in college, but these National Guard kids, men and women, didn't really have the same opportunities. So I thought, if nothing else, we have to furnish them an education so they can get on with their lives. They also need a lot of health in mental healthcare. A lot of other things, too. But I thought, that's the one thing I can do to help is to supplement what they get from their GI Bill.

JD: So, any other thoughts that you want to share about your time in the U.S. Congress?

DH: Well [laughs] I'll just talk about one other thing. There were so many things that happened; I could talk all day about it.

JD: Sure.

DH: But, one other thing. Again, so many things I worked on really came from the people that I talked to in Oregon. I mean, I got all involved in the National Guard because of the families that I talked to, and then going and seeing it for myself. And the more I saw, the more involved I got. Well, I had a meeting and we were talking about housing, I think. And one guy brought up that his identity was stolen, and his credit card was stolen, and what happened to him. It was a young man, and because his credit card was stolen, and he didn't know, ran up this big bill that he couldn't pay. [1:30:01] And then to get out of that mess, how long it took him, and because he was in that mess with debt unpaid, he couldn't get into college. He couldn't rent an apartment; he couldn't buy a car. I mean, his whole life, a young man's life, was impacted by somebody stealing his credit card, his identity.

And so, I spent a lot of time working on identity theft, making sure—that's why you can now go through all three credit agencies, and get your credit score for free. What's funny is you finally get something like that passed that you think are going to help people, and somebody before you can even count to ten, have made a new business about: "I'll keep track of your credit ratings. I'll keep track of this; I'll do this." And I'm doing, "You can call up three times a year and get your credit score. You can keep track of it yourself. You don't need somebody else to do it." But it was—and just before the bill became a law, I was listening to the radio and heard all these things on credit reports. And I'm going, "They just took just advantage of everything you've done." [Laughs] So I thought, well, I guess somebody's out there looking for an opportunity, and everything. So that was one of those things that was really fun to work on, and spent a lot of trying to get something that simple completed, and hopefully it helps people from identity theft. Because if you're ever caught on it, it's an awful, awful thing.

JD: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. So if you were to look back, are there skills or experiences that you had at OSU that you think helped prepare you for your life, and the career that you had?

DH: [Pause] I don't know that anything prepares you for the career I've had! [Laughs] There were some things though, that happened at Oregon State, where—I mean fighting to live off campus was a real eye-opener to me. And how some things you think are so simple, and why can't you do this? To change it really requires a whole lot of things to happen. I mean, if you want to change something simple even, it's getting—you learn how to organize, and get people involved, and why is this not a good policy? Or why is it a good policy, something else a good policy? So, I think it really helped me look at a bigger picture, and it helped me not to give up, if you want—really want to get something done.

And you know, I bit off a big chunk when I had too many hours I was carrying, and had a broken leg during winter term, which is the shortest term. And I looked at that and I said, "You know, I have to drop out, because I just can't do this." And then I looked at it again, and said, "Yes, I can do this. I don't want to work in the cannery another year. [Laughs] I can do this." And so you do. And it is a matter of just being determined to get something done. And some things take a long time; others are much shorter.

But the one thing I discovered in Congress: it is very difficult to change anything. And it's slow moving. And there are lobbyists for every little thing you want to do, or there's somebody saying "How can I take advantage of what you want to do?" And you have to learn patience. And the other thing that struck me is we don't really want a country that takes big swings in either direction, and that it's not a bad thing to have things move slowly, and how long it takes to get something passed. When I look at, you know, the whole healthcare thing that's happening right now, how long ago that was started. [1:35:06] There was a real effort made when President Clinton and his wife were there, when they first started in office, until today. I mean, things just take time. And again, I'd like to see some things move a little faster, but I realize that it's not really a bad thing that it takes long. Otherwise you'd have a very unstable country, if you could be swung right and left quickly.

JD: Mm-hm. Would you have any advice for current OSU students?

DH: For current students? You know what? This is the time of your life that you should learn new things, take advantage of every single thing there. I mean, this is the time to explore. Don't do the same old thing you've been doing. Take on a project that you want to—what is that you want to change? What is it you want to contribute to this world? What is it you want to contribute to your university? This is the time that, honestly, take some classes you never thought you'd take. I think it's the best time ever for you to try something different. Just don't keep doing the same old thing. Try something different. See what you can make happen. If you don't like something, try to change it. That's how we get better, is when we try to change the world. We don't always change the world. But sometimes we can change a little tiny piece of it.

JD: [Laughs] And any final thoughts about the direction that the university is going these days, or hopes you have for Oregon State?

DH: I do. I think their collaboration with businesses, and to involve students in hands-on work in whatever profession they want to do, is really important. So I think any time they can connect with, collaborate with an outside group, or inter-mix groups on the campus, is good for students.

JD: Great. Any other final thoughts you'd like to make sure we capture?

DH: I don't know. You know what? I just had—to me, going to Oregon State just expanded my horizons. And there's not one thing that I would change and do differently than what I did.

JD: Well, thank you. [1:37:48]